Internet Use and Political Participation: An Overview

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Abstract: Publications on political participation have increasingly focused on the impact of technology, especially the Internet, on the political activity of the general public. The aim of this paper is to review the literature on the effect of Internet on political mobilization and political participation, and how various internet tools, such as, youtube, myspace, and weblogs, etc have been utilized for various political activities by advanced democracies and developing nations of the world including Nigeria. This paper distinguishes several aspects of the role of the Internet in political activities that lend to political participation among society. The discussions in this paper specifically centred around the following issues, namely; the internet use for social and political mobilisation, new media use for political information seeking, internet use and political participation, new media use for voting, use of youtube and myspace during election cycle, use of new media and socio-demographics, and finally, the internet use and resources for participation. This paper argues that the Internet has the potential to transform the political arena in Nigeria, if properly harnessed. The paper concludes that the internet usage in Nigeria is rapidly growing, thus strategy and confidence is growing and that the internet may become an important element of future political and campaign communication tool. However, government and people should not view it as a panacea to solving elections and political problems in Nigeria because the tool is still controversial as to its relevance in political participation.

Keywords: internet use, internet and politics, political participation, online politics, facebook politics

1. Introduction:

Several years ago, there has been an explosion in the number of web sites that were dedicated to political campaign communications. This was brought about by the advent of electronic sources which has empowered the end-user in just the same way the invention of printing did 500 years ago. The sages and information rich priests and clerks, lawyers and scribes of those times saw their role change, as books became more widespread and cheaper. It is not surprising that the Reformation and the printing revolution were more or less coeval. And books were just as unstructured-without pagination, chapter headings, contents lists, etc, in the 15th century, as the internet is now (Pond, 2005).

Likewise, since the mid-1990s, the Internet and World Wide Web have been changing society remarkably. Government has provided electronic information and services through government web sites. Political parties have used campaign web sites for election campaigns. Almost all political candidates and their representatives have their own web sites to disseminate information and communicate with their constituents. Political use of the Internet, in particular campaign web sites, has become a common phenomenon. The interactive nature and massive information transfer capability of the Internet are implicitly assumed to produce positive effects on politics and democracy (Park & Perry, 2008). However, as of yet we know little about the effects this new medium, internet, has on political participation of Nigerian voters, both young and old. This has left many people in a state of equivocality as to the truth about the Internet for political use. In this regard, subsequent sub-titles and paragraphs in this paper have been focused on clarification of these issues.

2. The Internet Use For Social And Political Mobilisation:

However, with the emergence of new information and communication technologies, various scholars and politicians view the Internet as a new source of political socialization and a way to bring young citizens closer to the political process. High expectations emerged concerning the Internet's potential for the political mobilization and engagement of new groups that are currently excluded from politics (Quintelier & Viser, 2008). It was enumerated that the Internet is becoming an important source of political participation for young people, who are normally not attracted to politics (Best & Krueger, 2005). This refers to the potential of the

Internet to attract new people, who were under represented in more traditional forms of participation known as 'mobilisation thesis' (Norris, 2001).

Several other scholars highlighted that the literature about mobilization thesis provides four reasons for the potential of the Internet. The first expectation about the Internet's potential is that it provides a lot of opportunities for political engagement: online voting in polls, debating, blogging, and so forth. Second, the Internet lowers the cost of participation. Once someone has a connection, there is no extra cost for going online, which might lower the barrier for citizens to participate in online politics. People with a broadband connection are consequently more likely to engage in online activities (Quintelier & Viser, 2008). Hence, a justification for the argument that online participation is more open as it provides for more equality of opportunity in political participation (Bimber, 2001,). Third, the Internet is quick and up to date and that it can provide a lot of information necessary to participate in civic life and public discussion (Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). Fourth, as an interactive medium, the Internet can strengthen the workings of direct democracy and improve relations between citizens, politicians, and their intermediaries through processes like e-government (West, 2004). Finally, the Internet also might be a solution to the 'democratic deficit' that several political institutions experience (Norris, 2001). Further yet, research has indicated that young people are more enthusiastic about online political participation than are older people (Mossberger, Toblbert & Stansbury, 2003).

Considerable numbers of authors have argued that new technology could be the means to link youth to the political process. This is because the young people spend increasing amounts of time in the 'online world,' the Internet must not be overlooked or underestimated as an effective educational tool that can foster political learning and participation among youth (Weber, Loumakis & Bergman, 2003). The World Wide Web contains a wide range of educational and informational web sites, but the problem is that young people rarely access these sites. Therefore, efforts must be taken to make these web sites more accessible and appealing to youth. With the high penetration and popularity of the Internet among young people, high expectations emerged about the Internet's mobilization potential within this part of the population (Pasek, Kenski, Romer & Jamieson, 2006).

At this juncture, the researcher would categorically mention that political participation and citizen mobilization is a function of the amount of time that users spend online, and whether users actually access the appropriate political web sites which are meant for informational

and educational purposes. Hence, the next sub-section will be devoted towards elaborating on users' time online in relation to their political participation. The next sub-title deals with the notion of new media use for political information seeking.

3. New Media Use For Political Information Seeking:

Most political observers agree that some level of political knowledge or information is necessary for an active and satisfying participation in the political system in the US, information and knowledge about politics across the board appears to be low, but the problem is particularly acute among young citizens and women (Delli-Carpini & Keeter, 1996).

Low levels of political knowledge may also account for lower turnout rates among young citizens. For instance, the Millennium study of young voters' motivations for voting and not voting found that the young generation often cited the fact that they did not feel they had 'enough time or information' as a reason for not voting in 2000 (Murphy, 2000). In attempting to understand how a young citizen's perceived lack of knowledge may act as a barrier or 'de-motivator' to electoral participation, some researchers proposed conceptual links between the notion of general political efficacy and what they call political information efficacy. The general concept of political efficacy is usually defined as an individual's feeling that he or she has the ability to influence the political process (Kaid, McKinney & Tedesco, 2004). Whereas, others defined political information efficacy as the extent to which citizens are confident in their political knowledge and possess sufficient knowledge to engage with the political process, including voting (Kaid, McKinney & Tedesco, 2007). This concept is related to internal efficacy (Niemi, Craig & Mattei, 1991), but differs in that it focuses solely on the voter's confidence in his or her own political knowledge and its sufficiency to engage the political process, that it, to vote. Other researchers who have found evidence that exposure to political information in the form of debates and ads can significantly enhance political information efficacy scores (Sweeter & Kaid, 2008). It has been demonstrated that the web interactivity can also enhance political information efficacy levels for young citizens, but the concept has been tested in regard to exposure to blogs (Tedesco, 2004).

Research has also shown that a solid relationship between the channels of communication from which information is sought and the level of political knowledge one has. Older voters, who generally possess higher levels of political information and knowledge, watched both

national and local television news and read newspapers significantly more often than younger voters of 18-29 years old in the 1996, 2000 and 2002 elections (Kaid, McKinney & Tedesco, 2004). On the other hand, younger citizens are more likely to have access to the internet and are more likely to use it for political information seeking. Political information efficacy may be enhanced for those who are exposed to political information on the internet, especially young citizens. Recent research on the exposure to political information via blogs is even more relevant to the research reported in this current research study. For instance, the Pew internet and American Life Project has reported that blog readership increased considerable in 2004, with a majority of readers being under the age of 30. Furthermore, the report stated that 'political blogs' are attributed as a key in the growing popularity of blog reading, and many readers used them to get political information about the 2004 campaign and election (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2006). Moreover, if the Internet can arguably used to support political information seeking, then can its relevance in political participation be well-grounded and justified? The next sub-title sheds more light in this direction.

4. Internet Use And Political Participation:

Unlike the earlier period of the Internet usage, many scholars have refuted dystopian views of newer technologies. Many studies have found a relationship between informational uses of the internet and social capital (Shah, Kwak & Holbert, 2001), political participation, and civic engagement (Shah, Schmierbach, Hawkins, Espino & Donovan, 2002). Evidently, online interaction supplements interpersonal relations, resulting in increased voluntary association membership and political participation (Wellman, Haase, Witte & Hampton, 2001). Yet others claimed that the negative effects of using the internet on communication, social involvement, and well being (Kraut, Kiesler, Boneva, Cummings, Helgeson & Crawford, 2002).

While some expressed fear that news in the online environment may have resulted in societal fragmentation and displacement of community concerns, others view the online environment as a space for political re-engagement and re-engineering, particularly for young people (Delli-Carpini, 2000). Research has shown that online news use supplements rather than supplants traditional news consumption (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). In fact, online information-seeking is related positively to group membership, community involvement and political activity (Kwak, Poor & Skoric, 2006). Similarly, online information-seeking has

been linked to increases in online interactive civic messaging that ultimately result in higher levels of civic participation (Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005).

Several previous studies have discussed the effects of traditional media use on voters, particularly, use of television and newspaper news (Han, 2008). However, in this paper the researcher has highlighted on the use of the new media and its implications on voting habits. The social effects of new media adoption and use are moot issues for earlier studies (Kosicki & Yuan, 2001). Some scholars hailed the new media as they believe that the Web opens a new sphere in which people can learn to participate in the political world (Browning, 1996), which will consequently benefit democracy. On the contrary, though, some researchers have shown suspicion about the positive political implication of the new media because of the ease it allows the audience in filtering online information, which is capable of making them more disconnected from others in their communities (Kosicki & Yuan, 2001). Still others worried that the new digital technology would expand the information gap between the haves and have-nots (Graber, 1996). More scholars, because of the increasing literature, continue to discuss the two sides of the story, that is, the pros and cons of the Internet's effect on the democratic process (Scheufele & Nisbet, 2002).

The study of the relationship between voting behavior and traditional media use is a mixture of conflicting views, and so is the discussion regarding the extent to which the Internet use can promote voter turnout. The skepticism over the positive link between Internet use and the likelihood to vote has seemed to be plausible. For example, it has be found that there is no direct link between election-related Internet use and voter turnout (Bimber, 2001), even though other earlier study reported that Internet user are more likely to vote (Bimber, 1998).

In corroboration with the aforementioned, it has been demonstrated that controlling for other factors related to participation, Internet users are no more likely to be engaged in political processes (Pew Research Center, 2004b), and show no greater tendency to vote than do nonusers (Pew Research Center, 2004a). It is also the case that the audience for election news has shown less interest in engaging in online political activities than in retrieving political information (Pew Research Center, 2004b).

Moreover, it has been reported that use of political Web sites might be unrelated to the likelihood of voting for one or any particular election candidate or the intent to vote in general, although it might be positively related to the likelihood of voting another (Johnson & Kaye, 1998). Study has emphasized that the Internet is limited in promoting citizenship.

Nevertheless, there are substantial evidences that advocate the positive influence of purposeful or active use of new media on voter turnout (Scheufele & Nisbet, 2002). For instance, the audience for online campaign news in 2000 increased fourfold over 1996. More importantly, considerable numbers of election news consumers said online campaign news affected their voting decisions in 1996. The effect of online campaign news has been particularly evident among young people. Half of election news consumers younger than 30 years old reported the information they received online made them want to vote for or against a particular candidate. Based on the literature on various studies that have been highlighted above, the next sub-section delves to mention on the implications of the 'Uses of Gratifications' theory on new media users and their political information seeking in relation to their political mobilization and political participation (Pew Research Center, 2004b). On this regard, the Internet and its innovative use in politics cannot therefore be refuted. However, another line of arguments is the fact that the Internet is a multi-faceted and convergence of technologies with several other embedded tools, such as the YouTube and MySpace. The next sub-title focuses on the use of youtube and myspace during an election cycle.

5. Use Of Youtube And Myspace During Election Cycle:

In the U.S., during the 2006 election campaign cycle, both the YouTube and MySpace became the focus of the media's and the public's attention and were generally portrayed as the new technology tool to impact election campaigns. The use of these two Internet tools in the 2006 elections highlighted the benefits and potential they possess for political advertising, fund-raising, and volunteer recruitment as well as the challenges they pose to the ability of campaigns and campaigners to control their candidate's image and message. These challenges are embedded in the ability of YouTube and MySpace where the power for contents generation is in the hands of users and unregulated (Gueorguieva, 2008). The following sub-section focuses on the benefits and challenges that YouTube and MySpace have brought to the realm of politics.

There are considerable numbers of areas in which YouTube has profound effects in the planning and execution of election campaigns, namely; access to voters, the advertising campaigns, fund-raising, and the budget. The ability of campaigns to access voters through the YouTube is considerably without limit. It has been declared that the ability to

communicate effectively and efficiently is the function of a democratic political system. Therefore, the communication power that YouTube has cannot be overemphasized. This site has enhanced the ability of campaigns to use videos as a political advertising tool, and those videos can achieve broad dissemination via the Internet (Bryant, 1995). Not that video usage is new to campaigns, however, the practice of hiring staff to follow and film opponents has been further fueled by the advent and availability of broadband Internet and video-sharing web sites, which are user friendly and have changed the use cycle by allowing the videos to be uploaded and circulated more rapidly (Jalonick, 2006). But of surprise is the fact that research has shown that demographically huge segment of the voting age population is using YouTube and they can be reached through video clips (Gueorguieva, 2008).

There are many vivid testimonies of the communication power of YouTube during the 2006 election cycle. But one important case was the communication power of using YouTube was when it was used to generate controversy about some particular candidates by offering an unhindered look at their speeches, appearances and private lives during the election trail (New Scientist Tech., 2006). The effects of the videos of these speeches were further enhanced when the stories were picked up by the mainstream media. Some candidates have been cited using racial slurs on their opponent's supporters and were actually captured on videos in the acts. These videos were recorded by cameraman hired by another opponent party to follow their rivals around his or her public appearances and film them. Subsequently, the content of the tapes was used for press releases and YouTube videos (Johnson, 2006).

In addition, the potential of YouTube as a political advertising tool and as an alternative to television and radio, it provides free and broad dissemination of campaign messages and advertisements, thus affecting the campaign budget. In 2006, candidates and activists spent a total of $3.1 billion on political advertising, about twice as much as they had spent years before. Given that the site lets candidates reshow television spots they have already produced without the expense of broadcast airtime, and considering the $1.6 billion spent to broadcast advertisements on television in 2006, YouTube offers a cost-effective alternative to get the campaign message across. YouTube's 20 million unique users per month are a considerable audience (Gueorguieva, 2008).

By providing low or no-cost access to voters, YouTube also allowed lesser known candidates to divulge their political platforms during the 2006 election cycle. This is particularly

important in elections with incumbents running for office, who might have the advantage of better access to campaign financing and the media because of their incumbent status.

YouTube also has potential as a fund-raising tool. The Internet provides a way for campaigns to solicit funds from more people and makes giving more convenient. In 2004, one candidate was able to raise $80 million in online contributions for his bid for the presidency. In addition, in 2004, about five percent of small political donors and two percent of large political donors said online videos prompted them to make their first contribution (Institute for Politics, Democracy and the Internet, 2006b). Also, more than half of the Democratic contributors and a quarter of the Republican donors in 2004 made at least one online donation. This kind of practice was said to be nonexistence during the 2000 election cycle. Statistics have shown that from June to September 2006, video advertisements had generated twice the response as standard image advertisements (Double Click, 2007). Contrarily, it has been said that there are no accounts of YouTube's having been used for fund-raising in the 2006 cycle, though this role is worth considering for future election campaigning (Gueorguieva, 2008).

Likewise, MySpace featured spectacularly in the 2006 election campaign, however, in a different way as compared to YouTube's. MySpace was used basically as a tool to promote voter registration, recruit campaign volunteers, and achieve more public exposure for candidates (Institute for Politics, Democracy and the Internet, 2006b).

However, one of the effects of MySpace in the 2006 election was by promoting voter registration among its users. Some nonpartisan group, in connection with MySpace, had run a voter registration advertisements and giving members tools badges to place on their personal profile pages. Members who wished to register were redirected to a web site where they entered their personal particulars, which is to be sent to their state election officials. MySpace was also successfully used to recruit campaign volunteers. MySpace had provided an outreach channel for voters to register and submit their voter registration forms. MySpace was also successfully used to recruit campaign volunteers. For example, some candidates for state comptroller have recruited more than 80 percent of their volunteers online at MySpace and Face book (Gueorguieva, 2008). The arguments for the capability of youtube and myspace in an election cycle have been delineated, yet more controversies are still raised as to the implications of this new media (Internet) and sociodemographics of incumbent and

prospective users. The next sub-title discusses the role of sociodemographics on new media use.

6. New Media Use And Sociodemographics:

In traditional media studies, demographics and socioeconomic status (SES) have been discussed as predictors of media use (Kosicki & Yuan, 2001). A series of nationwide surveys during the past decade discussed not only the significant correlation between demographics and socioeconomic status and traditional media use (Stempel & Hargrove, 1996), and a changing standard of pattern in the relationship between internet use and socio-demographics in terms of age, gender, education, and income.

In a study, it was reported that only five percent of their respondents regularly used the internet and online services in 1995. The usage increased with education and income and usage was considerably higher amongst 35 years old and above (Stempel, Hargrove & Bent, 2000). In an updated survey in 1999, they found that considerable number of the respondents became regular user of the Internet, and users of online services also increased tremendously in 1999. Meanwhile, men used the internet substantially more than women. However, the heaviest users have been people younger than 35 years old, and the study showed that there was huge difference between those less than 35 years old and more than 55 years old (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 1999). Income and educations have remarkably positive correlations with the use of Internet and online media.

In addition, on Internet use, it has been reported that 23% of Americans went online in 1996 and 41% of American adults used the Internet in 1998. Generally, Internet users substantially younger (80% younger than 50), better educated (70% college educated), and more affluent than the U.S. average, and among them, men (52%) outnumber women (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 1999). Most recently, Pew Internet and American Life Project's surveys revealed that 26% of Americans age 65 and older go online, compared with 67% of those ages 50 to 64, 80% of those ages 30 to 49, and 84% of those ages 18 to 29. Twenty-nine percent of those in sub-secondary education have access to the Internet, compared with 61% of high school graduates and 89% of college graduates. Internet users living in the highest-income households not only have the highest percentage of access to the Internet (93%) but also are most likely to have a fast connection. Corroborating this, a survey

data showed that 71% of them have a broadband connection at home (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2005).

In General, the gender gap in Internet use is gradually diminishing. Men, especially young, white, well educated, and fairly affluent men, were the earliest adopters of the Internet. Report has shown that about 58% of the online population was male. Five years later, Internet users were evenly divided between men and women, although the difference was still significant. A decade later, the respective proportions became almost equal. Some 68% of men and 66% of women are now Internet users, with no statistically significant difference between the groups. Younger women are more likely than younger men to be online, whereas older men are more likely than older women to be online (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2005).

As to specific engagement with the Internet, nevertheless, gender difference is still there. For example, a survey conducted in 1998 has reported that heavy online news consumers include more better-educated men than women (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 1999). But there are no real age differences. As follow up, another reports in 2002 confirmed the persistence of this pattern of online news use. That is, online news audience tends to be young, well-educated, and affluent male. Gender gap and education gap remained pronounced (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2005).

It was further stressed that, compared with women; men are more likely to use the Internet to get political information. Men communicate more with online special interest groups and are more likely to engage themselves in online charting or discussion groups and are more likely to engage themselves in online chatting or discussion groups than are women. In order to stress further, researchers highlight that despite the continuing increase of the "online citizen" in America, their demographic difference cannot be ignored. Gender, college education, and high income influenced considerably online news use (Scheufele & Nisbet, 2002). None the less, the argument has been well entrenched that disparities do exist among various users of new media and the Internet in particular as a result of certain sociodemographic implications; therefore, this could encourage selective participation among users. The next sub-title is devoted to the discussion on the aspect of costs of participation.

7. The Internet Resources For Political Participation:

According to one of the most influential models in the study of political participation –civic voluntarism – the ability to face the costs of participation is a determining factor in the decision of whether or not to participate: the higher the cost, the lower the activity. Depending on the resources available, people can participate more or less easily. For members of the public with little time, money or cognitive or organisational resources, the costs of participating may be too high and they may choose not to participate. Thus, the impact of costs on participation is conditioned by the level of resources available (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995).

However, as to why the Internet influences the level and type of political participation is that, it is a new resource in itself and modifies the costs of participation. On the one hand, one can argue that technological skills provide a resource for participation. Workers in information-intensive sectors develop specific skills in the medium which are then made central to the production processes in the knowledge society. In the same way, these skills can be useful when carrying out effective action with a political end: having a good knowledge of the virtual world and being able to engage in specialist uses enables both the preparation (information acquisition, searches for other successful campaigns, etc), and the practice of acts of political participation in a simple and efficient way. For example, knowing how to advertise a campaign on the Internet and develop attractive interactive materials, such as videos or banners, since political messages can be decisive in achieving an aim (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995).

On the other hand, the use of the Internet can increase the availability of other resources. Carrying out certain tasks online supposes savings of time and often money, and therefore the increased availability of those resources that are fundamental for participation. The use of the Internet, a largely written medium which is at the same time sophisticated and interactive, can have a positive effect on the cognitive skills with which one is equipped. For example, searching for information about a specific subject requires a series of complex cognitive operations such as selecting the relevant information, evaluating the credibility of the sources and summarising and using some of the data found to satisfy the aim of the search. This is particularly relevant in the framing of controversial and technical issues. In this sense, the use of the Internet frequently offers experience in the processing and analysis of the information,

which can be very useful for those wishing to carry out political activity (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995).

Finally, the characteristics of the Internet involve a reduction in some of the costs associated with participation. For example, the possibility of acting anonymously on the Internet transforms some of the limitations that are characteristic of protest actions. The use of the Internet therefore provides a new configuration of resources for participation and of the associated costs, thus stimulating participation in general and certain activities in particular (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995). The next sub-title focuses on some the criticisms that have been leveled against internet use in politics.

8. Crtiticism Against Internet Use In Politics:

The pessimistic view is that new information and communication technology (ICTs) have made participation more feasible, but only for a certain subset of the population and, as such, the benefits of information technology are not widely spread. 'Digital Divide" is the terminology in use to explain the gap in access to and benefits confer by the Internet (Norris, 2001). The argument is that the digital divide follows traditional political, economic, and social divisions; people who are poor, uneducated and lack political rights are the same people who are deprived of access to the Internet (Norris, 2001).

Likewise, studies have demonstrated that this view accords well with the elitist theory of politics which argue that societies are stratified by a technocratic and political leadership group above, and others below, in order to provide "Responsible government". These different views can be understood as part of a large debate over the role of technology in historical change (Sharma, 2013).

9. Conclusion: Can Internet Use Actually Affect Online Political Participation?

Moreover, there is broad agreement around the notion that the Internet may provide new opportunities for new forms of online participation. It is also agreeable that the Internet can modify and often reduce costs of information and participation online and that, technological resources and skills are important for online participation. After an initial period of negative

expectations, today it seems that Internet use produces changes in attitudes not unfavourable to political participation (Anduiza, Cantijoch & Gallego, 2009).

However, there are several other debates that are still open for consideration. In the forefront of these debates is the issue of how relevant to political participation is the new forms of political activity carried out via the Internet? To be specific, is online communication political participation? This question is clearly related to the ongoing debate on the enlargement of the meaning and empirical referent of political participation.

There are also opposing views on the question of whether Internet use affects offline participation. Is there a significant effect of Internet use on offline participation controlling for other relevant variables? Does Internet use lead to a change in the levels of offline participation? If so, is the change positive or negative? Does Internet use disproportionately foster involvement in specific non-conventional activities? Does the Internet provide better information for participation purposes? Early debates offered contradictory theoretical expectations. Empirical research is beginning to offer some specific answers to these questions, but at this point it is premature to state that there is agreement on the conclusions.

Another important debate is whether the Internet may increase or reduce participatory inequalities. Some authors point out that it reinforces inequalities because it allows interested and resourceful citizens to have more means to be informed and involved in politics. For others, it reduces some traditional inequalities particularly by increasing the political participation of young citizens. It is unclear if and how these statements are compatible with each other.

There is obviously need for further research before conclusive answers can be given. But there are also other aspects that need to be addressed and have not been so far. We need typologies of participation modes that include online activities, and must also pay further attention to the question of mobilization: are individuals who use the Internet more likely to be the targets of attempts to mobilise them politically? Are the initiators of these requests different from those who mobilise using other methods? Do online appeals result in more participation in non-traditional activities? Are new media, particularly the Internet, one of the reasons why the repertoire of action is changing in advanced industrial democracies? Are new participatory inequalities emerging because of the unequal distribution of online skills?

However, in Nigerian context, the ICT and internet penetration is a rapidly growing, likewise strategy and confidence is growing that it will be an important element of future political and campaign communication tool, but users should not view it as a panacea to solving elections and political problems in the country, Nigeria.

Finally, some of the most common obstacles to ICT adoption and implementation are the lack of confidence on the part of users, the lack of provision of adequate skills and training programme, the inadequate technology infrastructure, planning and program deficiencies, the lack of human capacity and expertise, inadequate economic resources, the lack of recognition of knowledge or educational equivalence, and the neglect of learning conditions and cultural aspects to some extent.

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