ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to understand the role of bloggers in driving viral information. More specifically, we develop a new methodology that creates a map of the ‘life cycle’ of blogs posting links to viral information. Our dataset focuses blogs linking to the most significant viral videos of the 2008 US presidential election. To do so, we gathered data on all blogs (n=9,765) and their posts (n=13,173) linking to 65 of the top US presidential election videos that went viral on the Internet during the period between March 2007 and June 2009. Among other things, our findings illustrate the importance of different types of blogs: elite, top-political, top-general and tail blogs. We also found that while elite and top-general blogs create political information, they drive and sustain the viral process, whereas top-political and tail blogs act as followers in the process.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

General Terms
Information Theory, Viral Information, Blogosphere, Networks, Gatekeeping

Keywords
Blogs; Virality; Diffusion; Political Information, Information flows, Network gatekeeping, Blogosphere, New media, Viral video, Dissemination

1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of information virality in networks is drawing increasing attention from scholars and practitioners, who seek to understand factors that influence the process of virality [3]. We define virality as the process which gives any information item (picture, video, text or any other audio-visual-textual artifact) the maximum exposure, relative to the potential audience, over a short duration, distributed by many nodes. Despite a growth of general blogs, top-political blogs and tail blogs. We also found that while elite and top-general blogs create political information, they drive and sustain the viral process, whereas top-political and tail blogs act as followers in the process.

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"A type of marketing that infects its customers with an advertising message, which passes from one customer to the next like a rampant flu virus"). Some marketing scholars study the virality process using a bottom-up approach, examining factors like trust, perceived risk and perceived cost of recipient’s acceptance and active participation in further diffusing the message [31,32]. However, most of the marketing literature has focused on a top-down approach. That is, they identify and seed gatekeepers or influencers with a message in the hope that doing so will leverage the links these well-connected actors have in the network so as to maximize dissemination of a marketing campaign message [24]. Recently, the topic of information virality has started to receive attention in information science, political communication and political science [8,36,5]. This new literature has focused mainly on the diffusion of information, rather than analyzing the process itself or its technicalities, as their peers in marketing have done [34,33,25,13].

Since our study explores the behavior of blogs, it is important to for us to describe the three stages of progression in political blogging research. At first the literature focused on...
recognizing political blogging as a novel, yet significant, form of political engagement and participation [37,27]. The second phase of blogosphere literature focused on the interrelationship between bloggers and traditional mass media (e.g., the appropriation of news in blogs and usage of the blogosphere by mass media as an alternative) [17,26][11,18]. Finally, the latest phase of research has moved towards more critical investigations of the structural dynamics of blog ecologies, and that structure’s impact on the flow of political information in digital communication systems.

Of particular importance to our paper is this third phase of literature, which highlighted the power law distribution of actors in networks [2] and particularly of political blogs [1,10]. This literature showed that blogs follow a skewed distribution (when sorted, for example, by visitor traffic or incoming links), and that top blogs capture the majority of attention from mainstream media elites and readers, and further, that they receive a disproportionately large number of links compared to other blogs. In other words, nodes that are rich in ties are likely to become even richer over time. Farrel and Drezner also claimed that the top blogs influence political elites through media actors who read them frequently [10] and act as network gatekeepers [4].

Our investigation arrives at this key intersection, where both elite and non-elite blogs have different types of power to shape the flow of information, especially in the political domain. Contrary to the general consensus, which focuses on elite actors within the political blogosphere, we present empirical evidence illustrating that the interactions between elites and the general networked-tail of blogs is more complicated. Moreover, we introduce a new methodology for studying the dynamics of the behavior of blogs linking to content, wherein causalities between the different types of blogs and information diffusion are uncovered. A key contribution of this paper is that whereas previous literature has focused on identifying static patterns of links between blogs, we study how blogs are dynamically linking to content where that content’s origin is external to the blogosphere.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This paper attempts to address a gap in the literature about the way in which political blogs link to content. Specifically, the content we consider are videos that went viral during the 2008 US presidential election. Our hope is to illuminate structures of behavior of political blogs in reference to content. We address the following research questions: What are the relationships between different types of blogs and political viral information diffusion? What is the difference between elite blogs and tail blogs in that process? Are there other types of blogs worth our attention as scholars? What would a life cycle that represents the chain of information diffusion in the context of blogs and content posting look like?

The literature presented above has certain limitations that we hope to overcome. First, it focuses mainly on static maps of blogs linking to blogs, surveys or static design analysis of blogs. Second, it focuses on elite political blogs as representatives of the blogosphere, neglecting the role of other types of blogs, which may distort our understanding of the ecology of the political system. Our methodology is aimed towards minimizing these limitations. Moreover, the contributions of this paper to the literature are numerous: First, we provide a dynamic analysis of real behavior of bloggers linking to content. Second, we identify four types of blogs that are factors in driving a process of political information diffusion, not only elite-blogs. The four types of blogs are: 1) elite, which refers to the “elite of the elite” political blogs; 2) top-political blogs; 3) top-general blogs; 4) tail blogs. Finally, we suggest that general blogs (and not only political blogs) should also be taken into account when analyzing political information diffusion. Their role, as we will see later, is critical to the understanding of the political virality process.

3. DATA COLLECTION

3.1 Collecting the Viral Videos

Since we are looking at political blogs linking to content (specifically, videos), we collected data that represents those links and the videos that went viral during the 2008 election. We used the following methodology in collecting that data. The set of videos was drawn from ViralVideoChart.com on January 20th, 2009. We drew the top 100 videos over the preceding year in the following categories: over all Top videos, top 100 political videos, and top 100 election videos. The lists were combined and any redundancy was removed. Four researchers (a faculty member and three PhD students) coded the videos as related to the election by answering the question: “Was the content related to the 2008 presidential campaign?” For a video to be included, all four had to agree that it was related to the election. The result was 120 videos. Daily view data was collected for these viral videos using the data service TubeMogul. We were able to gather complete daily view data for 65 of the 120 videos that spanned from March 2007-June 2009.

3.2 Collecting the blogs

Our next goal was to identify blogs linking to those videos. For that purpose, we identified the most popular YouTube URL (i.e., unique identifier) for each of the 120 viral videos identified in the previous stage. We created scripts which automatically harvested all of the blog posts with links to these viral videos on a given day for a given video. The scripts harvested the list of blogs through the Google Blog Search tool. These searches resulted in a dataset of over 13,173 blog posts from 9,765 unique blogs linking to these viral videos during March 2007 and June 2009.

3.3 Identifying four types of blogs

For the purpose of separating our list of blogs into logical types, we gathered monthly unique-visitors traffic data from data service Compete.com. Compete.com tracks viewing data at the site level (i.e., site.domain.com and domain.com), so blogs in folders (i.e., site.domain.com/myblog) and blogs without a full domain match were excluded from our dataset. Where there was no Compete.com data, we assumed the blog had a very low unique-visitors traffic data and kept those as tail blogs. The resulting list contained 3,101 blogs. Figure 1 shows the power-law distribution of these blogs in terms of daily unique-visitors, which also helped us categorize the types of blogs into four types: elite blogs, top-political blogs, top-general blogs and tail blogs. Next, we will give justifications for the existence of each type, define them and explain how they were created.

---

1 We harvested any blog post, not just from top-blogs nor political blogs as done in previous studies.
3.3.1 Elite Blogs

We found that Huffington Post and Daily Kos were unique blogs in our dataset, in that they have the highest number of blog posts linking to videos (64 and 49 respectively). They are recognized as influential political blogs. Also David Karpf, recognize them as influential political blogs and calls them “the elite of the elite” [22:40]. These two blogs receive high unique visitors traffic. Furthermore, our statistical analysis showed that differentiating this group is significant.

3.3.2 Top-political Blogs

Most scholarship on the blogosphere focuses on this group of elite political blogs. Note that in the literature they are often called elite blogs or A-top blogs, and that in our study we have three types of elites: elite, top-political and top-general blogs. Our set of top-political blogs was drawn from David Karpf’s Blogosphere Authority Index (BAI) [22,21], which is a measure of a blogs authority. Note that the rankings of blogs may change from week to week. Our set contains the top 25 conservative, and top 25 liberal blogs from the week of August 8th of 2008. Also note that since we place Huffington Post and Daily Kos in our elite group, they have been removed from our list of top-political blogs.

3.3.3 Top-general Blogs

Our set of top-general blogs was created by taking all blogs from our dataset (excluding those listed in the top-political and elite blog types) that had more than 250,000 unique visitors as listed by Compete.com. Figure 1 shows that 250,000 unique visitors is around the inflexion point, meaning, this is roughly the point when the curve goes horizontal, and therefore, anything above it seems to be more influential in terms of traffic than the ones below it.

3.3.4 Tail Blogs

Every other blog that linked to our viral videos, that is not in the other three types of blogs, is considered a tail-blogs. In other words, tail blogs would represent the blogs of users without high authority.

4. MODELING

4.1 Multiple-Regression

In this section we describe the quantitative method employed in testing our research questions, a multiple-regression model. The model tests for relationships between our blog sets and daily view counts of the viral-political videos. The model is as follows:

\[
\text{VIEWS}_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{elite}_t + \beta_2 \text{top-political}_t + \beta_3 \text{top-general}_t + \beta_4 \text{tail}_t + \beta_5 \text{views}_{t-1} + \beta_6 \text{sum}_{10\text{d}} + \text{FACTOR(\text{video}\_\text{id}_{ij})} + \epsilon_t
\]

In other words, our model generally examines relationships between our dependent variable and the flowing independent variables groups:

\[
\text{VIEWS} = \text{ELITE} + \text{TOP-POLITICAL} + \text{TOP-GENERAL} + \text{TAIL} + \text{CONTOLS} + \epsilon^2
\]

We will explain each one of these variables below:

VIEWS – Our dependent variable is the daily view count for any given video on any given day. Figure 2 is an example of what a viral video looks like, in terms of daily-views. The plots show the video “Yes We Can Obama Song by Will.I.Am” from when it was released in February 2008, until May 2009. As frequently happens in our collection of videos, the number of views spikes within a day or so of release, and generally declines more slowly over the next few days or weeks. In this example, the video “went viral” twice.

ELITE – This variable set represents our Elite Blogs type (Huffington Post and DailyKos). It contains the number of links from these blogs to a given video on a given day.

TOP-POLITICAL - This variable set represents our top-political blog type.

2 Error - represents unexplained variation in Y (the dependent variable).
TOP-GENERAL - This variable set represents our top-general blog type.

TAIL - This variable set represents our tail blog type.

CONTROLS - These are variables that attempt to hold constant certain exogenous factors that could influence the virality process in our model. These includes: VIEWS\_t\_1, SUM\_UNIQUE\_VISITORS, VIDEO\_ID (these sub-variables are explained later).

Since our primary goal is to present a life-cycle of blog-post timing in the political information diffusion process, each independent variable group contains two variables:

1. A count of links from blogs in that category to a given video. For example, ELITE\_t, would represent all the links from the elite blogs to a given viral video on a given day t.

2. A one day forward-lagged version of the link count variable to the views. This variable associates links from day t+1 (tomorrow) to view counts of day t (today). For example, ELITE\_t\_1, would represent all the links from the elite blogs on day t+1 to view counts for a given viral video on day t.

Thus, our model is:

\[
\text{VIEWS} = \text{ELITE}\_t + \text{ELITE}\_t\_1 + \text{TOP-POLITICAL}\_t + \text{TOP-POLITICAL}\_t\_1 + \text{TOP-GENERAL}\_t + \text{TOP-GENERAL}\_t\_1 + \text{TAIL}\_t + \text{TAIL}\_t\_1 + \text{CONTROLS} + \varepsilon
\]

In our data set, the vast majority of posts from blogs containing links to viral videos are on, or soon after, the day when the video receives its maximum number of views – its peak. Thus, we assume that statements made about the relationships between blogs and a video view count will be most applicable around a video’s peak in the viral process.

For each of our independent variables a positive or a negative relationship to daily video views have the following meaning: If \[\text{variable}\]\_1 is positive, it means we find evidence that blogs of this type are posting links to a video on the day of the peak. If \[\text{variable}\]\_1 is negative, it means we find evidence that blogs of this type are posting links to a video during the wind-down from its peak. This can be seen, for example, in figure 1, where after the first peak daily views decline. If a blog posts during the decline, the link count is increasing while daily views is decreasing, which is a negative relationship. If \[\text{variable}\]\_1 is positive, it means we find evidence that blogs of this type are increasingly posting links to a video on a day \[t+1\], when the views on day \[t\] are increasing. When we look the peak as a reference point, it means that blogs of this type are posting on the \[day\ after\ the\ peak\].

The CONTROLS variables include the following sub-variables:

- VIEWS\_t\_1: This variable represents the views of a given video on a day \[t\-1\]. This variable tries to control the momentum effect, wherein people who view a video may watch it again.

- SUM\_UNIQUE\_VISITORS: this variable controls for the effect where some proportion of blog visitors will click on the link: traffic begets views.

- VIDEO\_ID: This variable controls for the specific characteristics of a particular video. It contains an id number for each of the 65 videos in our dataset.

### 4.2 Hypotheses

**H\_1A**: We expect ELITE to have a positive relationship with VIEWS because we expect these blogs to be posting links as the daily view count is rising. Since daily views rises sharpest at the peak (generally at the beginning of the viral process), a positive relationship here implies that our elite blogs are posting links at the very beginning of that process.

**H\_1A**: We expect not to find a relationship between ELITE\_t\_1 and VIEWS. Since we expect the elite blogs to post on the day of the peak, we do not expect them to post on any other day, thus, this variable ought not be significant.

**H\_3A**: We expect to find a negative relationship between TOP-POLITICAL (H\_3A), TOP-GENERAL (H\_3A), or TAIL (H\_3A) and VIEWS, which reflects the idea that if they are followers and not leader blogs, they will be unlikely to post as the view count is rising, and more likely to post while the view count is falling.

**H\_4A**: We expect TOP-POLITICAL\_t\_1 (H\_4A), TOP-GENERAL\_t\_1 (H\_4A), or TAIL\_t\_1 (H\_4A) to be positive with VIEWS, which means that a higher number of views of a video on
5. RESULTS:

The results (see Table 1) show that the model explains 96.5% of the variance of the daily-view count of our viral videos, and fits the data well. Moreover, it appears to be statistically significant (see F-statistics), indicating that our selection of variables explains the majority of the variation in daily viral video views. Table 1 also shows our variables and their associated coefficients.

Table 1: Model Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Coefficient Est.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELITE</td>
<td>0.082*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELITE_t1</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP-POLITICAL</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP-POLITICAL_t1</td>
<td>0.142***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP-GENERAL</td>
<td>0.067*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP-GENERAL_t1</td>
<td>0.114***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAIL</td>
<td>-0.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAIL_t1</td>
<td>0.053***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTROL VARIABLES: Coefficient Est.

| VIEWS_t1              | 0.912***         |
| SUM_UNIQUE_VISITORS   | 0.010***         |
| VIDEO_IDX             | X<0.05           |

Significance codes: 0 ***, 0.001 **, 0.01 *, 0.05 *

Model Performance: Coefficient Est.

| R-Squared | 0.965 |
| F-Statistics | 7831 (74 & 21099 df) |

We ran Variance-Inflation Factor (VIF) tests, to ensure that multicollinearity does not negatively impact our results. Each variable’s VIF was under 4, indicating that multicollinearity was not an issue in our model [20]. We also ran a Durbin-Watson test, which tests for autocorrelation in the model. The resulting test statistics was 2.49, indicating a lack of autocorrelation [30]. Also, our Durbin-Watson test statistic is higher than our R-squared, which is generally accepted as indicating that our model is not suffering from spurious regression [12]. Finally, note that because the dependent variable and two of the control variables (VIEWS_t1 and SUM_UNIQUE_VISITORS) follow a power-law distribution, we transform these variables using a natural log, so they are closer to a normal distribution.

5.1 Verifying Regression Assumptions

We ran Variance-Inflation Factor (VIF) tests, to ensure that multicollinearity does not negatively impact our results. Each variable’s VIF was under 4, indicating that multicollinearity was not an issue in our model [20]. We also ran a Durbin-Watson test, which tests for autocorrelation in the model. The resulting test statistics was 2.49, indicating a lack of autocorrelation [30]. Also, our Durbin-Watson test statistic is higher than our R-squared, which is generally accepted as indicating that our model is not suffering from spurious regression [12]. Finally, note that because the dependent variable and two of the control variables (VIEWS_t1 and SUM_UNIQUE_VISITORS) follow a power-law distribution, we transform these variables using a natural log, so they are closer to a normal distribution.

5.2 Hypothesis Test Results

Next, we will explain the relationships found, which relate our hypotheses 1-4 to our findings.

Elite Blogs (H_1 & H_3): We found that there is a positive relationship between the number of links from elite blogs and the number of video views (H_1A). We also found no evidence that elite blogs are responding to video-view counts, meaning that H_3A was not significant, as expected. This means that elite blogs are posting as the video is going viral, however we don’t find any evidence that they post during any other time in the life cycle.

Top-General Blogs (H_3A & H_4A): An important finding in our analysis suggests a recursive relationship exists wherein top-general blogs both drive and were driven by video views. This finding is supported by a positive relationship between top-general blogs and views both on day t and day t+1 (H_3A & H_4A). This means that they are posting right around the peak, but in contrast to tail blogs (discussed below), they don’t post to a video that is beyond its prime time. This also suggests that top-general blogs will generally refrain from posting news or content that is old.

Top-Political Blogs (H_4A & H_4A): We found that top-political blogs respond to video views. However, we found no evidence that they drive views. The relationship between top-political blogs posting the day after is positive with video views (H_4A), but we do not see any correlation between posts from these blogs on day t with the views on day t (H_4A). Consequently, we find that top-political blogs are followers, posting only after the elites and the top-general blogs.

Tail Blogs (H_4 & H_4A): Here we found strong support that tail blogs respond to views (H_4A), and that the relationship of tail blogs posting links to viral videos is negative with a video’s daily view count (H_4A). This strongly suggests that they post on the day after the peak and while the viral cycle is winding down from its peak. In other words, one might infer that the blogs in this group are following blogs in the different top-blogs (elite, top-political and top-general blogs).

Figure 3 represents our findings in an illustrative way. It shows the life cycle of a viral process of a video during the 2008 US presidential election. In this life cycle, one can see when different groups of blogs are driving the view count for videos. Clearly, elites and top-general blogs are first, followed by top-political and finally tail blogs. Note that top-general blogs are the only group that drive and are driven by views in the initial viral process.

6. DISCUSSION

In the following section we would like to discuss a few phenomenon found through our results. We discuss these phenomena, while acknowledging that a presidential election might have specific characteristics that influence virality.

6.1 Elite blogs do not represent blogs

Most blogosphere research focuses on elites, either as explicit representatives of the blogosphere [14,22,21], implicit representatives of other blogs [6], or as boundary spanners and intermediaries between blogs and other political and media actors [35]. Regardless of how studies have used blogs in the literature, they overlook the heterogeneity of this sphere. Some researchers acknowledge the un-monolithic nature of the blogosphere [6,29], but our research is one of the first studies that is able to empirically show how these different types of groups in the blogosphere are significant factors in the process of information flow. More than that, it argues that top-political blogs are followers of the top-general and elite blogs. Therefore, in many cases the top-political blogs do not socially construct frames nor do they set the political agenda. Instead, they replicate the agenda according to the frames created by the elite (the “elite of the elite”) and top-general blogs.

6.2 The importance of general channels of diffusion
The role of top-general blogs in diffusing political information needs elaboration. Bennett suggests that new-media forms, like blogs, have transformed public communication by removing intermediaries and emphasizing direct contact with individuals [7]. If this is true, then blogs impact decision-makers and influence agenda-setting directly. On the other hand, Drezner and Farrell [10] suggest that journalists play the role of boundary spanners between political elites and the blogosphere by focusing the attention of political actors on important information that exists in blogs. For them, the journalists are intermediaries in this process. Our paper shows, by looking at the life cycle of virality, that the chain of political information diffusion during elections is much more complicated. There are several intermediaries in the viral process before information comes to the attention of the public. More importantly, virality is ignited mainly by the top-general and elite blogs who are the first movers. This finding is of high importance since “bloggers possess first-mover advantages in formulating opinions” [10:17]. Our findings suggest that elite and top-general blogs possess this advantage. But, in order for political information to reach the general public and decision makers, boundary spanners (the top-general blogs) need to diffuse this information to an audience that is more general, and less focused on politics. Otherwise, the chances for that information to go viral are slim. This is also why we see the top-political and tail blogs as followers.

6.3 Igniting and sustaining the viral process

As previously mentioned, Farrell and Drezner suggest, that top-blogs scan the blogosphere and highlight important information for decision makers. Their claim implies that tail blogs create content, and that top-blogs are mainly responsible for replicating and highlighting original content. When it comes to viral information we see otherwise. While we don’t get into the discussion of who creates the original content, such as the viral video itself, we see that elite and top-general blogs are mainly responsible for creating new information in the form of blog posts. These posts act as both a means of propagation of the original content, and add value through additional analysis and spin. According to our picture, tail and top-political blogs serve as followers. They are far less influential than previously thought. Even when taking into consideration the vast number of tail-blogs, collectively they are not powerful enough to create or sustain the viral process alone. Rather they are responsible for reducing the rate of decay of viral information.

Thus, like Wallsten argues [35], we see that tail blogs are dependent on the elite and top-general blogs to ignite the viral process and reach the attention of wider audiences. Nevertheless, since attention here is measured not only in passive terms of viewing, but also in active terms of posting links and creating content, this may imply that the tail blogs are also dependent on their tail-peers. In contrast, top-general blogs show a recursive relationship, implying that they generate and respond to their own information eco-sphere. So basically, top-general blogs will post information that is similar to their peer-competitors. For example, if BoingBoing posts information about Obama’s contributions, Wired.com will quickly pick up and report on the same story. This was also noted in a study done by Barzilai-Nahon and Hemsley, which found that a bandwagon effect exists among top-blogs [5].

6.4 Transient elites in the blogosphere

The phenomenon of a power law distribution in the blogosphere is documented in many empirical studies [2]. Farrell and Drezner point out that this skewed distribution has important consequences for the salience of different blogs with respect to their position on the distribution [10]. They also argue that a high degree of disparity in visibility of blogs leads some blogs to become elite blogs; attracting attention from both other bloggers and political elites. In other words, their argument implies that the role of elite blogs is a transient and dynamic one. Similarly, Karpf suggests that YouTube creates “a dissolution of elite control and the creation of more porous elite networks” [23]. Our empirical investigation shows that the degree to which a video goes viral may determine the salience of blogs that link to that video within the blogosphere. This supports the idea that elites are transient, and that the identification of what constitutes an elite on the Internet changes dynamically over time. Castells asserts that power relationships between elites and non-elites are mainly framed by domination [9]. Moreover, he asserts that “Conflicts never end. They simply pause through temporary agreements and unstable contracts that are transformed into institutions of domination” [9:14]. However, if the roles of elites vs. non-elites are so dynamic and interchangeable, then the meaning of domination by elites needs to be revisited. In our case, the elites are not only determined by their ability to attract views; they are also constituted by the masses (all other blogs) that actively link to them, and actively crown them as elite. In the blogosphere, these transient elites cannot rule without active participation and support by the masses.
7. CONCLUSION

Our paper identifies dynamics of virality of information on the Internet (specifically videos) at the time of the 2008 US presidential election by looking at relationships between blogs producing information (posting links) and users following these links and watching the videos. We have presented a new methodology in Information Science borrowed from econometrics, time series analysis using multiple regression which has allowed us to create life-cycle map of the dynamic behavior of blogs. Thus, we have examined the linking practices of blogs to the most significant viral videos of the election.

Our methodology addresses some of the gaps present in the blogosphere literature. These gaps are exemplified by: i) focusing mainly on static maps of blogs linking to blogs, surveys or static design analysis of blogs instead of dynamic behavior of blogs linking to content; and ii) focusing on elite political blogs as representatives of the blogosphere, neglecting the role of other types of blogs.

Among other things, our findings illuminate the importance of different types of blogs: elite, top-political, top-general and tail blogs. We also found that while elite and top-general blogs create political information, they are responsible for driving and sustaining the viral process, whereas top-political and tail blogs act as followers in the process, who reduce the rate of decay of viral information.

While this research explicates the life cycle of information virality of blogs linking to content during the election, further explanations and analysis need to be developed in order to explain the results from an electoral point of view.

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