



The researchers found that overwhelmingly, conversation online was what added to a politician's influence on Twitter, and that the Greens were more effectively using Twitter to engage with Australians than Labor or the Coalition. That dialogue with voters means the Greens' views are being dispersed to a wider audience through 'retweets' and their party is getting more political space online than they have received in the mainstream media.

Dr Grant - aka @willozap on Twitter - said that by using Twitter for dialogue with Australians, the Greens are extending their reach to voters beyond the conventional media.

"Greens politicians are more likely than those in either the Labor party or the Coalition to use Twitter for political dialogue," said Dr Grant. "And those politicians who engage in dialogue through Twitter get statistically more out of it, because their [tweets](#) are more likely to be retweeted - passed on or endorsed."

"The lesson for politicians and their parties from this research is that if politicians want people to pass on their ideas, then they need to engage in conversation. If they don't, they'll be either ignored or ridiculed."

The researchers also looked at comparative mentions for political parties in the Twittersphere set against what those parties had received in [mainstream media](#), and found that minor parties were punching well above their weight.

"Where previously the Greens have garnered less than 3 per cent of the traditional media attention given to politics, in Twitter they're gaining more attention, getting around 12 per cent of mentions of Australian politicians."

The researchers' paper, 'Digital Dialogue? Australian politicians use of

the social network tool [Twitter](#), will be published in an upcoming issue of the *Australian Journal of Political Science*.

Provided by Australian National University

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