

Where are the EU Twitter communities?

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Governments and politicians have attempted to exploit social media for their own ends. However, a study published in the International Journal of Electronic Governance reveals that governmental Twitter accounts across the European Union have almost totally failed. These accounts do not widely engage members of the public and have not created the "communities" their advocates desired in the quest to elicit public adoption of e-government.

Konstantinos Antoniadis and Kostas Zafiropoulos of the Department of International and European Studies at the University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, and Vasiliki Vrana of the Technological Education Institute of Central Macedonia, in Serres, Greece, have explored mentions and replies on the well-known and popular microblogging platform Twitter. They found that mentions and replies to networks of 56 ministries with Twitter accounts in seventeen EU countries do not suggest that any of those accounts have built communities.

Twitter had at the last count well over 300 million monthly active users a mere fraction of those of another social media service, Facebook with its almost 2 billion active users. Nevertheless, these are significant numbers of people that might be engaged by any person or any organisation with the wont to engage them online. The growth of Twitter was eventually noticed by governments and their advisers and has been adopted by them as a tool with which they might disseminate government information, provide access to services, connect with the [public](#) and "listen to the voice of people".

The team suggests that the concept of e-government is yet to mature. There are signs that some "authority" users of [social media](#), the members of the public with large, highly engaged followings themselves, may well represent a springboard for notices and responses from governments but this is yet to manifest as the desired Twitter communities the politicians seek.

More information: Kostas Zafiropoulos et al. Community characteristics of Twitter followers in EU-countries governmental accounts, *International Journal of Electronic Governance* (2016). [DOI: 10.1504/IJEG.2016.10002284](#)

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