

*These transcriptions may contain errors, especially in spelling of names. These are unfortunate, and we regret that we do not have the resources to fix these errors. Still we believe these transcripts will be valuable to many users.*

## **Social media adoption in the public sector: From early informal experimentation to institutionalization**

**Ines Mergel**

>> Thank you so much and I'm also a lecture participant from 2002 I think. [Applause] Thank you so much for having me back. [Inaudible Remark]

>> Amazing.

>> And I'm coming to this topic from a very different angle and 10 years ago, when I was here, I actually felt completely out of place because I didn't have the quantitative skills to do these big data analysis that everyone was talking about although I was really interested in how organizations are picking up internet innovations. And so I tried to find my own way in studying these kinds of topics. And so what I did was when I started to teach at the Maxwell School in 2008, I had designed this just regular e-government class telling my students how, you know, the IRS let's you upload your tax returns. So those were great innovations at that time and then the Obama campaign happened throughout the semester. And so basically, I switched my whole syllabus out and said we're only focusing on social media from now on. And the other thing that's really particular I think about my case is that I had this really diverse background and then I came to a school where there is a very deep disciplinary focus for junior faculties. So they want us to publish in public administration journals only to have a very specific audience. So going outside of the five journals that we know is basically not allowed for the first five years. So I decided to look at how the lessons learned during the Obama campaign were then institutionalized in government. And the way that emerged was that we saw so many social media innovations popping up and all kinds of different departments so DHS is using it for emergency management to reach out to audiences that they usually don't reach. Obviously, Obama is doing these huge collaborations with Twitter and Facebook and the White House is really at the forefront of innovating with social media. Interesting enough, our innovations like the FBI have recently started Facebook pages to crowd source evidence basically and try to find murderers or, you know, people and try to find crowd source basically, information from the public. They are very bad in organizing and keeping track of the commons that are made because it's--they, you know, citizens are only bashing government in those comments so they are not really helping out. Then the revolutions are obviously happening around the world. Everything kind of mitigated by Twitter. And at the same time, government understands that so many people are on social networking sites. So that kind of awe drove me to try to understand how people and government perceive these technologies and what kind of decisions are they making to then actually adopt social media? And then environment that is very much not driven by social interactions. That's a very formal press release kind of communication style. And so what happened in parallel to people experimenting with social media was that one day after the inauguration in 2009, President Obama then send out this memo and said, you know, my government is driven by the transparency and open government initiative and I want all the executive department of agencies to harness new technologies. And he followed that up by a lot of different speeches saying that, you know, we need someone like Mark Zuckerberg from Facebook to be someone in government who as entrepreneurial. So we need to empower government employees to be the next Mark Zuckerberg but in the government agency. So this, you can define that as a mandate for the executive departments if you want. They were actually very slow in reacting to us, so a year later, there was a deadline set for all of them that they actually have to come up with a plan within the next 60 days and how they would accomplish this because there was, you know, government agencies usually react slower than other types of organizations. So, for some of them, it was a mandate. For others, it was, "Yes, let's do this." Finally, we allow to do innovative things but no one really

knew how to do it. And so that's kind of the context in which I'm operating and I decided to go out and see what do we know about ICT adoption in government? Everyone always says this like this 10 year time lag between what happens in the corporate sector and all kinds of other organizations to what then happens in government. And we know from the literature that innovative technology views is mitigated by all the rules that are already in place. So my understanding was therefore that okay, if there are so many rules that really are not tailored towards social media, then probably, government agencies are not adopting them. On the other hand, we saw all these great examples popping up so it's a real paradox why they would be adopting social media. There are kinds of theories out there on how innovation is diffusing so most of them that over time more and more people jump on the bandwagon and then they're adopting. Others look at the location where the innovation is coming from. And then obviously, a lot of them are looking at stages, you know, going from early adopters or innovators to the laggards that you will never get onboard 'cause then there is already the next wave of innovation coming in. Or that they are moving from the simple uses of technology to more complex kinds of technologies. And what my colleague Stuart and I have recently done is to look at what types of technological innovations there were in government and we kind of define social media as kind of the first wave of e-government. So following the internet and e-mail, there was about 10 years ago when government started to use, you know, more intact of types of technologies. Nevertheless, the way I look at it and what I also find in my research is that social media still stays a huge paradox for government. They have this really strict rules and this information vetting processes internally. And what kind of information goes out? The press release rule is there are so many steps involved and so many feedback loops and so many people involved and managers who have to sign off and counselors and lawyers and so on until you actually get the final product up on your website. It takes weeks sometimes so it's a real conundrum or a paradox to the way that the fast and furious exchanges you see on Twitter and Facebook and on blogs where people are commenting. And then they're expecting offices like government comments back and response to that comments. So I always like to use this picture of the six blind men touching an elephant and everyone would describe the technology or the use of it or what they understand the tools can do for them as an agency in very different words, right? And I mean it also fits in with how Twitter describes how you can use that technology. It's what you make it, right? All of you are now experiencing the back channel, note taking kind of things that are going on maybe even for the first time. Others might not be tweeting at all and for others, this is just you are reading through it and it's nice to have. So for everyone, it's kind of a different animal that you are describing there. So for me going in to this research, I tried to understand how are those managers, those public managers are then making the decision and why are they using social media? And when they make the decision--so opening up this black box of the decision making process that then leads to the publically, observable behavior that you--most of you are starting by just looking at Twitter feeds. So there's--it's usually a really black box, what's the decision making process that leads up to the decision? Yes, it's okay to set up a Twitter account or yes, we want to engage on Facebook and after that decision is made, what are the tactics that they are using? And it's--so, I went in with those really global questions and my case as I mentioned before were all those agencies who receive the official mandate. So it's a very small sample but I'm a qualitative researcher so I decided to go for the four senses, basically saying all the executive agent--departments in the executive branch of the US federal government. About 10 percent of those people who are responsible for social media are located in the IT departments and most of them are actually in the public affairs offices. So it's already--if I should put a label on this, they are in the right position to actually do the communication part and don't just see this as, you know, we have to provide the technologies for others to use it. I got a pretty high response rate in terms of people that are willing to talk to me and so I decided I also add highly intact of agencies that I thought they were really innovative in what they're doing. I also asked last night, how the hell did I get access to those people? And that's a very valid question because those are elite agencies, right? They have this one person; it's usually a director of the department. They don't like to talk to the media especially in situations like this where here in the US, the general services administration is going through this huge organization crisis. I don't know if you guys heard about this but they spent money on a conference in Las Vegas where they had clowns dancing for them. They had this team Axis High [phonetic]

that's where they build really expensive bikes for themselves. And then they came up with DAMMY Awards so that they were allowed to actually spend money on dinners because there was an award. So they stretch the rules plus then they had the social media of highest storm of GSA and for use creating YouTube videos. So everyone is extremely guarded at the moment because they know they are spending lots of money on social media and it's obviously a public channel, right, and if you don't want to compromise your position in times of budget crisis and organizational crisis. So what I did was for a very long time, I just observed who in government is actually using Twitter. I've done other studies on Congress and non-profit and corporate but I followed the hashtag #f20, it's just who is interested in government seriously, also changing to social gov. That's really interesting hashtag just to follow to see what are the hot topics right now? What is the government concerned about? What are the problems that they are facing? Who are they reaching out to? Who is responding to their questions? 'Cause we really have those issue networks around specific problems and challenges and people who want to help. And so, some of them, I contacted on Twitter, followed everyone's e-mails, they were all very generous in 2010 and '11 when I did my first run of interviews. And then I also ask some, "Hey, I don't have a contact at CDC, who is that person?" Because there's no public phonebook in the sense where you can just say, "Okay, I just want to see all the social media directors" because this position doesn't exist officially and--when I started. Now, we have GovLoop.com, they are trying to keep up with that and actually created that online phone book where some of those people are. So that was my approach and I was relatively successful in getting lots of people. Okay, so in terms of the data collection, what I decided to do is that I'm doing elite interviews. Usually, when you go out and you are collecting your data, you have--in the US; here, you have to go to an internal review board process and an approval. Government employees are exempt from this approval but you still have to submit your questions so that your institution knows what kind of research you do and that you're not harming your subjects. But--well, okay. So, I came up based on a literature and based on some of the assumptions and my observations and the website codings that I did was a highly structured interview guideline. So, first of all, I try to ask some questions about their own background. Obviously, how did they come to being the person in charge of social media? Then try to trace back how did their organization make the decision. So, how did you start to talk about social media? Where did that come from? Why do you think this is an appropriate tool? Then how does the social--do they even have a strategy? Do they have policies in place? How does this policy then fit to the mission of their organization because every government agency has a very different mission obviously? Then do they even have an idea of who their audience members are? Audiences are not necessarily only those people who you know, who you can count as your Twitter followers, right? And then in terms of the audience who is on Twitter that might be a different audience that they actually want to reach. So, many of those federal agencies in Washington have, obviously, all of the American people as their audience. But then some of them are highly specialized. So FCC, for example, might have more lawyers and more researchers and scientists that are interested but not the person who really wants to be in touch with the mayor in their local towns, right? So it's a very--sometimes, very specialized audience. And then I asked them about their daily practices based on what I had quoted before on their websites to understand what their interactions are online and where the innovations were coming from. So when they--then they started to do new things I ask them so where did you see that, why are you doing this. And then also, my biggest question was usually kind of the downer at the end of the conversation is, so how do you know that you are effective with what you are doing? What are your own--what do you define as your own success in doing all this? I added lots of coding of archival documents, obviously, I had to go back and see and what kind of context they are doing all those, what are the laws and regulations that guide their behavior. And then congressional reports from the General Accountability Office that gives reports to Congress and says, "You know, federal agency should be doing more in protecting privacy when they're using social media." And then I also asked all of them to give me their social media handbooks, guides, strategies however they called us that we have I think ten different terms for that. And I did all this what I would call participatory observations of the hashtags I'm teaching at the--at GSA's Digital Government University. So I tried some of the things that I find in my research. I tried them out with the audience, with my audience at the Digital Government University. And the last one was really eye opening because we cannot develop my own plan

of how a social media strategy should be implemented. I developed that a little further with the audience in the room so that was kind of a cool interactive moment. And then I'm really involved with having online discussions mostly on Twitter with all those people. As I said, I quoted all the sites, all the official government websites but most of them actually, they were really hesitant at the beginning to even place the buttons to the social media icons so I had to search for them. There was this and I will tell you more when I show you the model. So it's--there was this hesitance of marketing social efforts that's very interesting. And I followed Darrell West's idea of how e-Government services were coded on websites. So to give you a little bit of an outlook on how I use the method. So this is the method process tracing comes from political science. And it really tries to open this black box on how we arrived at the final policy document that then is presented to the public. And that's--so if you look at the open government initiative, there are three different directives basically. Government has to be more transparent, more participatory and more collaborative. So the transparency angle is kind of checked off because of Data.gov, lots of data sets uploaded and that's kind of the flagship initiative. Engagement and participation, so when we look at social media, lots of information is kind of pulled into government but it's unclear how citizen feedback is actually used to come up with new decisions, with better strategies, with the final policy document. So the whole collaborative angle, how we are working together to then finally come up with the new policy is the black box. So my goal was to use those kind of method to basically use my interviews and all the different data points to trace back how these decisions were made. And some people would tell me, "Well, that was really before my time." But what I heard from other people was that, you know, they just started to experiment or at some point, a manager come in and said, "Let's do this." So I tried with the narrative, I tried to trace this back. And the goal is to really understand what the cause of chain was. Who was involved and what times, why were those decisions made and what was the final outcome? And what we never see was to find a policy document that's really polished and nice and you can download it from the web is, well, why those disagreements, right? What were the struggles that people had to reach their decisions? What were the constraints in those decision making processes? Or what were the rules that they thought they cannot change or the reasons and the perceptions that people have so that's why I used interviews in my research. And so, I recorded with their permission on the interviews, I have over 600 pages of transcribed interviews. I use this software that's called QSR NVivo. Others might know Atlas TI, it's basically the same type of software. It's a big database where you upload your work files with the transcript, you can also add PDFs, pictures, videos, and then tag them basically with codes and you got a really rich data set by adding--you see the coding stripes on the side so you're kind of quantifying almost your qualitative data. So you're trying to find [inaudible] are and the way that people talk about their decision making processes. And then I also asked them--I mentioned earlier the locus of innovations, so how did they hear about how you can productively use Facebook pages for your agency. So I wanted to trace the network behind this and the social awareness network, where do they hear about innovations and I use Ucinet and Netdraw, it's a very simple way in which I use it. Obviously, people like Bernie and Mark are [inaudible] in completely different levels but I thought it would be nice to just visualize what the social awareness network is. So what are my findings? First of all and this is not surprising at all, there was a complete lack of formal instruction. What really guides any kind of online interaction even until today is the 2002 E-Government Act. 2002, that was before Zuckerberg started in 2004 I believe Facebook and how about call it trade. That was before the times of Twitter. That was really to help agencies understand how they are allowed to use the websites. What interactive elements they are and the most interaction there is, is maybe a contact form or an e-mail address. But there's very little follow up, so if you send in an e-mail to an agency, if you are lucky, you get an automated response back but there's a huge lack time and responsiveness. So all the existing rules and regulations and policies were focused on government hosted internet platforms or websites but they did never included third-party platforms like Twitter, where the technological features are completely in the hands of that company. Government has very little to say and when Facebook decided to kill the Facebook groups, that there was actually huge amounts of data that those people and government have created because of the conversations that they had on those private groups, right? So government has very little say in what happens with the technological features when a company decides to shut things off, right? So none

of this was--is regulated so what happens? People are creating those informal business cases and note the language. So in my world, a business case does not exist in government basically. But basically, they are trying to understand how they can use they're creating anecdotes to then say, "Okay, we have this one example and really worked well, so let's do this." Instructions and rules is non-followed up and this might be interesting to you to understand from an organizational perspective because government kind of forced all the social media providers and I think they have by now a more than 30 of them listed on HowTo.gov in case you are interested to look that up, to create new terms of service agreements. So those are the things that you just check off every time you are creating a new account and you are not reading through the 20 pages of rules that Facebook comes up with, what happens with your data, right? So government is not obviously, cannot give away the rights to all the data into all the pictures that are posted on their government pages. So they had to come up with new rules for that or that there is, you know, context relevant advertisement on the Facebook page and these kinds of things so then pre-negotiated those terms. There are other things that they came up with, records management. Elizabeth, I know you're working on that, so the National Archives came up with kind of a memo that states this is what happens with social media records because everything--every time we're interacting with government or government publishes something, it has to be recorded and archived. So that those are all huge things that left people in this vacuum of not wanting to adapt because they didn't know what happened with all the stuff that they're putting out there on third-party platforms, right? And then they lifted the cookie policy, Twitter had promised to kind of download everything to the Library of Congress. I believe it hasn't happened yet. And then they also came up with the plain language guide that's not just imparted for websites but also in the way that you're interacting on your social media platforms. So one of the other findings I had was given the lack of top down advice is that they're trying to understand where--from what direction and who are people looking for in terms of guidance and what's appropriate and how shall we be interacting on social media. So as you can see, the most--the biggest innovator there where a lot of people said, you know, I look what the White House is doing and had this great transition team with Kathy Stent [phonetic] who is now at Twitter. And so lots of innovations are coming out of the White House and then other agencies. I think it's appropriate to pick that up. Obviously, let's all focused on one person, right? That's a very different type of focus than other agencies have, right? The EPI is not just one person or a CDC is not just the director of the CDC. So it's a very different locus but you can see that for those of who are in that area that other agencies that we already know are very innovative like the CDC was on the zombie preparedness attack is one of the innovators. EPA where Jeffrey [inaudible], who was also the organizer of the Web Managers Council, it was very influential and very much out there. So people and the Department of State, obviously, it was Hilary Clinton and her eDiplomacy team. So you see that those who you are observing and who are in the press and in the media often times are also thought out to be, you know, kind of those in their passive observation at work. That what they do is okay so we are looking at them and then really are just emulating that. And that's what I also found and when I asked them, you know, how do you know if this is appropriate or not. And it's really copying and pasting a lot of times. That people say, "No, I'm just borrowing ideas." In government, that's not a problem. You can just copy what other people are doing. There are no property right issues. It's not like in the corporate world that perhaps it came out with the cool campaign and then we are copying it, that wouldn't be cool. But they say in government, everything is a fair game and that they just do it. If I see something, I just emulate the practice and that's where innovation is coming from. Sorry. So what that tells me is that really the traditional technology adoption paradigm that we know from the public sector does not really hold true for a social media anymore. So traditionally in government, that's usually a top down decision. There's an investment decision, people are testing different tools, let's say a new e-mail system supposed to be implemented. They have to send out an RFP. Big vendors are responding to it and then there is a selection process. And then there is a top down investment decision where it's a little bit of testing and maybe within the IT department or a test department. Then all the other departments are instructed. Monday morning, you have a new e-mail system. Here is how it's working. And then there's bottom up implementation basically, so bottom up use. Now, what social media and what my research showed, this is very different. Instead of having this official top down decision, what happens is as

it's emerging bottom up experimentation. I have the lighthouses in there so a lot of people pay attention to what a few people in this very dispersed system are doing. Now looking at kind of guidance of what works in some areas and then they're adopting it. They are looking at what comes from outside of government, so how our citizens using these tools? We better respond to that. If we are mentioned so many times online, then something is going on and we should be part of those issue networks. So tons of experimentation that started and then there were retroactive decisions that were then made top down and where then top managers said, "Okay, it's probably--okay, given the changes of the rule so we can now use this." So based on those kind--that's kind of the context, I came up with three-staged adoption model and that's really driven by my research. So the first stage is that a lot of people told me, you know, social media using government is like the wild west. There's tons of really informal experimentation going on. I call these people who are willing to take the risk to go out there and just set up an account and try to double around with that on there, you know, it's really there a private time in addition to their official jobs so no one tells them, "From now on, your job description includes this." Instead, they had just started to do--to be social. And so, that really mavericks in the way not in Sarah Palin's way, [laughter] in the way that they are working really outside the given IT infrastructure, outside the rules that existed. And they are departing from that. It's a high risk environment that they were doing this in. It's a lot of uncertainty in what we saw and there's--those time, it's mostly pushing out. So, whatever goes on the website, okay just try to also put that video up on YouTube and send out a link to this press release out to Facebook and Twitter. And the reasons behind those tactics were that people who saw their market driven innovations so that citizens were there. So we probably have to be in those spaces and we needed to get the message out to those people that might not usually be engaged with us because they felt that there are different audiences on Twitter than you usually have in your e-mail context newsletters and so on. The second stage is what I call coordinated chaos. In the way, you know, all those social media business cases are then creating more awareness within the organizations. Okay, something goes on there, probably, we should be paying attention. But also, people noticed that in different agencies' initiatives, teams and departments were then--the overall EPA, they were then several different Twitter accounts that pop out posting to the same types of audiences. Sometimes, misleading messages and it's never really clear what's now the official EPA account or is that just for this type of audience. So you have a lot of overlapping practices and so people notice that and find that probably, we should be streamlining what we are doing here with social media. Nevertheless, there's a still--relatively still uptake because of the lack of guidance and external regulation. But in the stage, I notice agencies who are in that stage, they said "Yeah, we started to kind of informally type up our social media guidelines or policy or common policies and so on." So they have an informal document that they are adding to and trying to understand what are the things that we should tell people. But to the extent, one of my interview partners actually said I'm never putting that on files but basically, it's like we're giving people a context in these documents, we just say, "Don't be an idiot." Obviously, you can't give that out as a policy but, you know, the Anthony Wiener scandal and so on drive people to saying, "We probably have to regulate our social media use a little bit so that we're not too expose to criticism." Oh yeah--sorry [laughter], okay. So the tactics on then also evolving, people have more experience with us. They are more--they're trying to also pull in information, great example is when they have contest, when they ask citizens to send in their pictures. USGS is doing this great thing with--where they're mapping Twitter messages, where earthquakes are and adding that to their traditional--to their official and formal scientific evidence and measurement techniques. Yeah, but they understand that just pushing out information is not the only tactic. So they are developing more and more interactive tactics. The last phase is where then it really gets to the institutionalization phase. So HowTo.gov was, for example, developed was really clear guidance from GSA, from one central agency that said, "Okay, we need a few tools that help us understand how you can write up a social media strategy and so on." So this last stage is really about formalization where the formal guidelines established not just to guide how employees and official account holders are behaving on those social media accounts but also, what is appropriate for the citizens that are trying to interact with us. So people are posting their common strategy policies sent on their Facebook pages and they are at that stage, also confident enough to actually take down comments of citizens and not to say that we are censoring free

speech or anything. These are comments that have foul language and they are not in line with our commenting policy. Very clear information vetting processes are set in place similar actually, so we are now going back to the formal press release communication paradigm where, you know, rules are set in place, hollow block post has to be written, who has to confirm that this is actually legally safe to post this and so on. And then there is also formal resource allocation and a budget and people are set in positions and to the have the title of being the social media director or the social innovation director or however you call them. And more interactive strategies and tactics that they are trying to be part of the network and the issue networks where people are discussing stuff, they are pulling in internal knowledge experts to be part of the whole social strategy and also responding to citizens' request and so on. One great example of how the sets evolved is how--you can all download this. So in 2010, the army came up with a very great social media handbook just saying, you know, we are now social and we do all these things, this is what you can do. Next, they actually said, you know, this is how you do Facebook, this is how you do Twitter, this is how you set up an account, and this appropriate online. They also edit them in mobile strategy. And then this year, they came out with saying, "Okay, our audience and our guidelines are not only important for all members of the army but also, we are extending that to their family members." So they get--bring out guidelines and that very much is in line with how the army works anyway, right? Army--family members live on a compound, they have to follow the rules. They are not telling anyone where their spouse is stationed right now. You don't post geographic locations of war ships and/or where you are in Afghanistan right now. So that fits again nicely into the mission of all of these organizations. I have how much longer, five minutes? Okay. Then let me switch real quick to some of the, I think, open questions maybe because that might be interesting to you. So some of the open research questions that I see and that you might be interested in trying to answer are we really need to measure impact. And I know that a lot of you are trying to analyze Twitter networks and for me, that's really very much on the citizen's side. So, how are citizens engaging on Twitter using these tools but it doesn't tell us much about how they actually feel, how we are changing behavior of government, how we are changing perceptions of how citizens feel about government, right? And on the other hand, now that we have all that big data coming into government and they have means of analyzing it, right now, they--one of my interview partners actually say, "Yeah, measuring, yeah. We know how many follows we have but really, what the measure is return on ignorance." So they're not really measuring right now, so there is this initiative going on right now where people are trying to find the appropriate matrix. So we can help government understand what they should be measuring to be more effective, more efficient, be more participatory and transparent and so on. So on the government side, that's really interesting, help them analyze, understand the matrix, interpret them and then change their behavior and their tactics based on that, right? And on the citizen's side is what the whole big data discussion is about, how do people react to it, what kind of impact are we making when we are social and that our people are changing their political attitudes and so on. The other question that I have and that's more, I guess, an information management question is, so how can we really create those organizational capabilities and governance mechanisms that change government in the way that they are responding and transforming institutions that we are creating with social media. So now that we're allowing them this, what kind of collaborative capacities do they need? So how do they fit through all those comments? How do they extract knowledge from them? How do we then take that knowledge and plug it into new policies and make those policies better based on the feedback that we get. And then there are even new policies that come--can come out of that. So you can Google one thing that's called Hooray bloggers that was really cool from the TSA that picked up comments from the bloggersphere, how people were screened and at airports and then a lot of bloggers said, you know, this is really discriminating and so they change the way the [inaudible] use and not it's screening. So we need more of those examples, it's when we see that social media actually has an impact in the way that government works. And I think I will leave it at that and have--you ask me a few questions.

>> Any questions?

>> Question about, number one here 'cause I agree that's one of the biggest points that's lacking is really closing that group and measuring. Do you have any suggestions of things that they might do to measure the impact and the outcomes with that strategy?

>> So I do, we are back to my clip. Yeah. So well, what I've seen is that a lot of people have--so someone actually told me when I have those Excel spreadsheet that I open every morning and then I compare myself that pull and follow our number so they really focus on the quantitative part. And then they compare themselves to the CDC and EPA and say, "Oh, all of our slopes are going up so we're doing a great job, we are fine on social media." I do believe that the quantitative part is important to look at because it shows you interest in your online activities but it's not all. So we really need to do more of the text analysis kind of things. And right now, people are really just using anecdotes, you know, to manually swift through all those comments and try to understand what people are passionate about or not. So we need more sophisticated methods to do that and I know that, Jana Diesner is I think coming in later this week and we are collaborating on a project to understand, to know what are members of Congress posting and so on. So you can do that manually but I think the qualitative part is much more important.

>> I think what you're doing is wonderful. I encourage people here to join this effort and work and help federal agencies because they really need the help. But I have some concern this first part is there are three barriers that government faces that you haven't addressed. And then I just want to talk about what's actually happening. Bev Godwin in the transition team had these ten barriers to why government can't use or has difficulties using social media. So, the first was in terms of service which, you know, require Twitter says you have resolution of disputes by the terms for the state of California and US government agencies can't do that. So, they happen to go--have they not negotiated those?

>> Yeah, yes. Okay. Those were the Denmark agreements that I mentioned earlier.

>> All right. So, you know, there is this top down systematic approach to try and overcome the legal barrier. Secondly, you didn't address the issue of accessibility and usability, you know, handicapped access. If a service does not provide accessibility, then US government can't use that. So, that's another impediment, is that?

>> Yeah. So I only focused on these three stages on how it was adapted and not so much on the challenges. I have another paper on that but yes, I did ask them about that. I actually designed an experiment in my classes where I have the students wear sunglasses and I smear Vaseline on it. And then I asked them to find--to tell me what's on this Facebook page, how they can retweet our messages. And then they said, "Oh, I can't read anything." Well then I said, "Where's the button on Twitter or Facebook or in this government website that helps you then as a visionally impaired person to actually get the information? So their responses to the fight for disability requirements are kind of checked off every time I talk to them because they say, "Yeah, yeah, we're making sure that everything is--we are complying." But what they do is basically trying to publish it in different media. So provide it as a text, to provide the transcript of it by YouTube video and these kinds of things.

>> The third--the third barrier is the financial. It takes people time to do it.

>> Yeah.

>> And in the current situation in Washington, it's just impossible to spend extra time. I think people need to appreciate having worked with government agency. Once you put--open a public site and Library of Congress does, you know, guarantee 24 hour response to e-mail or other attack, you know, you're putting a huge burden on staff that's not funded by Congress.

>> Yeah.

>> And not requested by, you know, the legislative budgeting.

>> Right.

>> So they are real impediments that I think would help to understand some of these things.

>> Right. And that was actually one of my guiding questions. So given all these other really important things that your agency is doing, why do you invest on social media if you can't measure the impact? But they all have a social media director so they haven't made that investment. For them, it's really more about mitigating the risk right now. So, it's no longer the question, should we be doing this or not? It's yes, we are doing this. We need to this.

>> All right. Okay.

>> And we are doing it. We are trying to throw resources at them

>> Just my other point to--

>> But--and oh, I add, yes, tons of resources are needed. This is not a one-man job. If you see how Obama had this whole team, a whole room full of people during his Twitter town hall, this was not President Obama just tweeting by himself, it's not happening.

>> But--and your characterization there isn't decentralize or top-down approach. it goes against some of my experience. I mean Peter Orzag's memo in 2010 about how do government agencies run challenges was directed at all agencies and open the door to doing that, it was very centralized. I'm looking at the HowTo.gov page, there's a whole set of the recommendations that come from the administration that agencies should do it. And I--your characterization is a little different from what my experience.

>> Well, this is not a snapshot of what happened yesterday, right? This is a snapshot over time and as I said, I started with the 2009 memo. I tried to trace what agencies are actually doing. I did my first interviews in 2010 and all these rules and regulations were then retroactively, basically trying to stir behavior in the right direction. So, all those rules came later than when I started on this.

>> So, one more question before we break. I think I should--

>> Go ahead.

>> Okay.

>> What about size of agency? So, for example, if you look at the social media patterns of NARA, some archives, you see that the archive and chief basically has [inaudible] in the social media account. And you still get [inaudible] individual archivists depending on their division, have their sort of plus they have an ongoing regular tool. Think of that, that's something that's affordable to a large structure or a big agency that has multiple venues from creating that director. But if you look at a smaller agency like some of the grant giving agencies like NIH, [inaudible], IMLS, grants like that, I mean, how much slower organic structure. So how does your study take in consideration the size view?

>> Well, we need to distinguish between agencies and departments, right? Departments--and so HSS will be the department and then NIH is part of--it's an agency that is part of HSS. I looked at department level and then I added in a few really highly, you know, innovative, initiatives and talk to CIA for example which were--is part of DOD obviously. So yes, you are right. Size, what I observed is that the larger the organization was, the more accounts were created at the beginning but then, there was this consolidation effort that they said, you know, we can't have just every team and every initiative within an agency and the larger department just pop--have pop up those Twitter accounts. And the similar effort that kind of how it went to that was that there were thousands of websites because there was no real guidance on, you know, who is allowed to setup a website. So now, we have this tendency to shrink websites and I think they want to consolidate it down to 2000 websites. I did work on HowTo.gov on the social media registry with my RA and we coded all the--I think we have 4,000 Facebook pages in government, 11,000 Twitter accounts and so on. So we coded all of that and most of--I think two-thirds of all the accounts are actually in DOD so completely archival at one. And then every department has to decide to what extent, do they want to make this an official account or not and so be--similar to Twitter's blue checkmark, HowTo.gov or GSA has just created the social media registry to help agencies understand what our official sanctioned accounts that you can also code and retweet and so on. So I'm not a quantitative researcher in the sense that I'm trying to understand all of the variables is from me and the study was important to trace how people are making decisions and how were these decisions and consolidated over time. [Inaudible Remark]

>> 11,000 Twitter accounts? That's interesting.

>> I think so [inaudible] I think, you can look up the--it's in one of my IBM reports.

>> That's all?

>> That's all.

>> I mean seriously, you got to warn the government in its asset [inaudible] to a number compared [inaudible].

>> Right.

>> So.

>> Okay, it's great discussion but I think it's--if you like to have your break, I think we need to stop now. So let's thank Ines Mergel.

>> Thank you. [Applause]