



នៅក្នុងគ្រប់ប្រភេទសង្គម គណបក្សនយោបាយគឺជាតួអង្គដ៏សំខាន់នៅក្នុងការអភិវឌ្ឍតាមបែបប្រជាធិបតេយ្យ និងប្រមូលផ្តុំផលប្រយោជន៍ផ្សេងៗនៅក្នុងសង្គម។ ដើម្បីគាំទ្រគណបក្សនយោបាយក្នុងការអភិវឌ្ឍសមត្ថភាពស្ថាប័ន មូលនិធិ ខុនវ៉ាដ អាដិនណេអែប្រចាំប្រទេសកម្ពុជា និងប្រទេសហ្វីលីពីនបានរួមគ្នាបោះពុម្ពផ្សាយកម្រងឯកសារតូច គោលការណ៍ណែនាំមួយ ស្តីពីការអភិវឌ្ឍគណបក្សនយោបាយដោយផ្ដោតលើការរៀបចំរចនាសម្ព័ន្ធគណបក្សនយោបាយនៅថ្នាក់ជាតិ និងថ្នាក់មូលដ្ឋាន។ គោលការណ៍ណែនាំទាំងនេះ បង្កើតឡើងសំដៅប្រើប្រាស់ជាក្បួន ដែលជាធនធាន និងព័ត៌មានសម្រាប់ការរៀបចំប្រសើរជាងមុន ចេរភាព ភាពអាចមើលឃើញ ភាពស័ក្តិសិទ្ធិ និងប្រសិទ្ធភាពនៃការងាររបស់គណបក្សនយោបាយ។

Political parties in every society are important actors in the democratic development of a country. They build the link between citizens and the government and aggregate different interests in a society. To support political parties in developing institutional capacity, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Cambodia and the Philippines jointly publish a series of small papers/guidelines on political party development focusing on the organisation of local and national political party structures. They are intended to be used as a manual, providing resources and information for better organisation, sustainability, visibility, efficiency and effectiveness of the work of political parties.



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**ឯកសារពិគ្រោះយោបល់សម្រាប់  
ការអភិវឌ្ឍគណបក្សនយោបាយ ភាគ៤**

គោលការណ៍ណែនាំអំពីយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រសម្រាប់គណបក្សនយោបាយ  
ក្នុងការប្រើប្រាស់ប្រព័ន្ធផ្សព្វផ្សាយបែបថ្មីប្រកបដោយប្រសិទ្ធភាព  
ក្នុងទំនាក់ទំនងសាធារណៈ និងកម្មវិធីប្រាស្រ័យទាក់ទង

**ADVISORY PAPERS ON POLITICAL  
PARTY DEVELOPMENT, Volume IV**  
**GUIDELINE FOR THE USE OF NEW MEDIA  
BY POLITICAL PARTIES FOR THEIR PUBLIC  
RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION**



Freedom, justice and solidarity are the basic principles underlying the work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). KAS is a political foundation, closely associated with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU). As co-founder of the CDU and the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) united Christian social, conservative and liberal traditions. His name is synonymous with the democratic reconstruction of Germany, the firm alignment of foreign policy with the transatlantic community of values, the vision of the unified Europe and an orientation towards the social market economy. In our European and international cooperation with nearly 80 offices abroad and projects in over 120 countries, we make a unique contribution to the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and a social market economy.

**ADVISORY PAPERS ON POLITICAL  
PARTY DEVELOPMENT**

**Volume IV**

Guidelines for How Political Parties Can  
Effectively Use New Media in Their Public  
Relations and Communications Programs



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The office in Cambodia has been established in 1994. KAS in Cambodia is mainly operating in the following fields: Administrative Reform and Decentralization, Strengthening Political Parties and Parliaments, Legal Reform, Media Development, Political Education and Social Market Economy, as well as Foreign Policy Consultancy.

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## **Foreword**

Without political parties, a modern representative democracy is not conceivable. Only political parties ensure that the citizens are permanently capable to act politically. They articulate and integrate different interests, visions and opinions. They are also the main source for the recruitment of political elites.

Parties compete against each other for the best ways of resolving political problems. They are in competition for influence and power. Without the power to enforce political vision it is not possible to organize society. Internal discussions and conflicts within, as well as between, the parties accompany this contest for ideas and power. They are legitimate and essential.

In today's competitive communication environment the professionalization of communication between political decision-makers, political parties and the public has progressively grown into a power factor. Therefore, political power has been defined as a product of the capacity to influence public opinion and the capability to ensure one's own power position through smart and strategically favorable decisions.

In this context, especially in Cambodia – where young people tend to exclusively communicate through social media - the effective use of social media by political parties becomes a key necessity to attract young voters and to continually inform the public on their work.

This guideline supports political parties in Cambodia to strengthen the cohesiveness of their social media related activities and will contribute to a more coordinated approach to strategic communication by political parties and their key representatives.

Phnom Penh, May 2016

**Denis Schrey**

Former Country Representative  
(September 2011 until January 2016)  
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# ADVISORY PAPERS ON POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT

## Guidelines for How Political Parties Can Effectively Use New Media in Their Public Relations and Communications Programs

### I. Introduction

#### 1. Political Parties in a Democratic System

Political parties play a central role in a democratic political system. Groups of individual citizens with common political objectives and values come together and form political parties. They seek to influence the formation of political opinion and carry political representation of the people by holding public office and elected mandates. This establishes political responsibility and power, which requires legitimacy through ongoing communication of political intentions and the search for public consent.

#### 2. Communication of Political Parties

Because in a democracy public office is held to make decisions on behalf of the electorate, the representatives need to seek legitimation in their constituencies, not only by becoming elected, but also by reporting back to their basis of power. It is therefore an essential basic value for political parties in a democratic system to clearly communicate their objectives and purposes to the citizen at every level: local, regional and national.

##### *Communication of Political Parties in Election Campaigns*

Usually, political parties and their candidates announce policies, aims and future intentions before the elections before the national or local assembly takes place. These present the political parties' general objectives and specific

propositions to contemporary issues. On Election Day voters should then choose between the different positions as to who might represent them in the best way, according the previous public announcements, appearances and the objectives that are presented.

Therefore, it is vital that the voter is well informed in the best possible way through free access to expressed political opinions and views. But it is important to note that communication between the democratic elected representatives and the people is not only important during electoral campaigns. It must be ongoing between the campaigns.

*Political parties need to clearly communicate their objectives and approaches not only during election campaigns, but also regularly through mutual exchanges with the electorate.*

### *Communication of Political Parties Outside of Election Campaigns*

It is important for political parties to maintain close contact with the citizens of a country to guarantee effective representation that meets the people's needs and demands. Political parties also have the chance and obligation of taking part in the development of political ideas and opinions.

Thus, a political party needs to ask frequently what requests and demands from the people it should bring into the political discussion and decision-making process. Political parties should develop opinions and present their views. They might also take part in a political discourse to provide possible solutions and approaches according to their basic values and democratic roots.

#### *Local Basis of Political Parties' Communication*

Another important aspect is the party's ability to communicate at all levels. Representatives in community councils need to maintain contact with the local citizens and those associations that play a central role in the community. The specific local demands and issues can only be individually identified through this process so they can be subsequently resolved.

Parties should therefore host local workshops and invite people to local discussion forums. They should also participate in normal and regular local gatherings of civil society to seek mutual ways to communicate.

#### *Political Parties' National Communication*

Political parties address broader matters and issues at the national level. This means nationwide strategies and objectives need to be communicated in a consistent way. Therefore political parties must develop and maintain official communication channels and designate people who are clearly responsible for them.

To support the improvement or establishment of coherent, qualitative, and steady communication channels at a national level this Guideline concentrates only on national public affairs, leaving aside the considerable regional and local levels.

#### *Traditional Channels for Political Parties to Communicate*

A political party's main traditional communication channels are public appearances, speeches, personal meetings, newspapers, radio, television and website homepages. These media formats are very popular and serve specific purposes for the parties concerned. However, such traditional media cannot replace personal contact between the political party and citizens. It earns strong trust and enables the party to stay close to its roots, thus enabling it to identify issues and help resolve them.

*The basis of political parties are local people. Therefore, every attempt must be made for discussions at local levels to provide approval for the next steps on the regional and national stage.*

### *New Channels for Political Party Communication*

Since the Internet has become more accessible through websites and social media platforms the ability of a political party to communicate to a wider audience quickly, cheaply and effectively compared to traditional media, has increased considerably.

### 3. Benefits of Continuous Communication

When the party continuously addresses citizens with messages of high quality and quantity it can achieve different benefits:

- Firstly, political parties can advertise their basic values and disseminate easily and regularly their approach to issues and their underlying principles.
- Secondly, political parties can earn trust by consistently addressing problems and proposing solutions.
- Thirdly, the party can stay popular through regular appearances in the people's daily lives by becoming an integral part of the media environment.
- Fourthly, these three elements can make the political party more attractive to citizens by regularly engaging with society. A likely outcome for the party could be more people joining it because they are better informed.

*Continuous communication strengthens the people's awareness and confidence in the party and increases its popularity.*

## II. Analyses of New Media

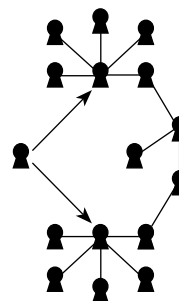
### 1. New Media's Function

Different from traditional media channels, New Media provides new methods and techniques to communicate. It extends existing channels available for continuous communication. It allows for more interaction of content between the provider and consumer and makes possible faster interaction of information. Views and opinions can be expressed and disseminated almost immediately after being expressed, if the occasion demands it, instead of the receiver just passively receiving and consuming the same information.

#### *Reactions in New Media*

New Media provides broad feedback almost immediately after the publication of content. This has a two-sided effect. On the one hand, the immediate reactions can generate support, gain attention and increase popularity. An example is Facebook's use of positive tools such as "likes" and reposts.

On the other hand, it can also create swift and adverse reactions through critical comments and complaints being quickly and widely disseminated, possibly causing outrage and having a negative effect. This New Media phenomenon--



*New Media networks are based on personal relations. By addressing the right people, parties can use their New Media networks to reach a wider audience.*

widespread and vociferous outrage expressed on the Internet - has been called "shit storms". However, they can be avoided by sensitive preparation of the content and an analysis of how New Media platforms function and operate.

### *Fast, Multiple Reactions*

The ability of New Media to create fast and multiple reactions to what is happening in society enables users to build their individual networks of personally chosen contacts, called their *friends* or *followers*. These terms are appropriate as they epitomize a primary function of New Media; that is to drive interpersonal relationships. *Reposts*, or *likes*, of *friends* or *leaders*, reinforce this function by expanding the social connection of New Media users into a wider network. Single users therefore participate as if in a sociological group thereby being bound by the group's internal "swarm" movement. If one social contact on a New Media platform states something relevant, it becomes of interest and relevance to those in the related group of users. For this reason a main point of focus is on narrow target groups. Key people such as celebrities, publishers or experts often have large New Media networks through many *friends*, *followers*, subscribers and readers. If they promote or criticize published content it is highly likely their network followers or contacts will follow those views.

## 2. Media's Structure in Cambodia

The difference between traditional and New Media is not only functional but also structural. Importantly, while the importance and range of New Media increases worldwide in Cambodia it is developing even faster. Among the reasons are the relatively low price of Internet data and the necessary equipment, the general popularity of small and cheap mobile devices and the acknowledged advantages of using New Media that specifically attracts young people.

For example, in the important target group of young people between the age of 18 and 24 every second person in Cambodia is registered on *Facebook*. Overall, there are 2,700,000 Internet users in Cambodia and almost half of them are active on *Facebook*. An average 62 percent of them are male and 38 percent female.

### a. Implications for Cambodia

The development of New Media is generating changes of society and the way it sees and uses media. But while New Media offers many advantages there are also possible disadvantages.

*New Media is a unique platform on which to exchange views and information. In a free environment it can be a valuable tool for progress and development.*

## **GUIDELINES FOR HOW POLITICAL PARTIES CAN EFFECTIVELY USE NEW MEDIA IN THEIR PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS**

### *Positive Aspects*

A generally positive feature is the creation of an interactive exchange of information and a widely based, easily accessed network for posting and receiving such information.

People now have a platform through which to connect more easily between themselves and an outlet to voice ideas and opinions. This free exchange of ideas and opinions is the basis for development in any society and economy. New knowledge and progress can only be achieved in an environment with freedom of expression. Therefore it is important that, under the assumption that truth and reason prevail in an open society, the freedom of expression created by New Media should not be limited or controlled by narrow state restrictions.

Within this New Media created environment, some people may have to be prepared to withstand criticism they are not used to and to even being disliked by a wider range of citizens than before because of the impact of New Media. People in public life need to accept that these negative impacts generated by the growth of New Media are a fact of life and they should be prepared to cope with its effects.

### *Challenging Aspects*

Conversely, another main issue with New Media is the potential loss of reliable quality of information and good behavior. If the average New Media user becomes a publisher with no checks and balances on him/her, none of the usual, traditional standards apply. Everyone is able to publish his or her opinion, remark and comment, but without being subject to the usual processes of checking and editing for accuracy and objectivity normally imposed by an editor or publisher.

Despite the protection afforded citizens by freedom of expression laws New Media means individuals can now, theoretically, express slanderous and even foolish views and opinions without restriction. Anonymous postings, in particular, allow this to happen. Another danger in Cambodia is that a lower level of education could mean less ability amongst New Media users to properly argue and analyze the issues.

One positive move to counter such abuses is the creation of a Netiquette, which is a set of guidelines/ rules of behavior for New Media. It allows for wide freedom of expression but applies qualitative and ethical standards with appropriate sanctions, such as deleting offensive or unacceptable material.

### **b. Specific Opportunities for Political Parties**

New Media is increasing in Cambodia and as a result has already reached a wide range of potential influence. Because its structure is based on interactive communication, political parties which drive political content through New Media, must now take the inherent issues surrounding the use of New Media into account when preparing election or other political campaigns and in the periods between elections. With

*The utility of New Media also depends on the users' ability to analyze New Media's functions and content and to use it in an expedient and appropriate way.*

this in mind, New Media opens up a wide range of valuable opportunities to the political parties:

1. Political parties can establish a New Media network with a wide range of contacts on low budgets. Individuals already connected to the party on different social media channels can spread its content. Multiple addressees can be reached through a relatively small network of party members.
2. Parties can collect feedback and assess people's reactions on certain topics and issues in a fast and direct way. As people can easily reply to published content a dialogue and well moderated democratic discourse is possible to find solutions and establish positions on specific issues. New Media also has a social function: citizens can share their wishes, concerns and problems directly with politicians and are no longer limited by the temporal and local availability of their political representatives. In this sense, New Media works like an *Open Window*.
3. New Media can reach young people in a language and format they understand and are familiar with, resulting in greater political awareness amongst young voters. They are the key to tomorrow. Political parties can prepare a good foundation for the future by reaching out to these young people and interacting with them on key issues through New Media.
4. New Media enables political parties to address people more directly. They can have more direct interaction with voters compared to traditional media, which usually contains filtered, and at times influenced, content. New Media enables the party to decide precisely the format, time and substance of the message.

To benefit from this potential and to meet their objectives parties need to have a structured and prepared New Media strategy. It is important that this strategy has a sound concept and is backed by clear competences within the political party to enable it to provide well-chosen and impactful content on a regular basis.

### 3. Framework and Methodology of the Guidelines

The examples below demonstrate how a political party's strategy for the use of New Media could look like. These *Guidelines* will provide information about internal structures and the organization of competences. The *Guidelines* will also show examples of possible content and shared experiences using different New Media channels, with a focus on *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *YouTube*.

The examples are based on practical applications and proven long-term experience. However, they must be seen in the context of other countries and therefore only provide guidance on a possible approach that could be adapted for use under the Cambodian political structure.

*A good appearance of Political parties in New Media needs a good internal structure and well-chosen content of appropriate quality to gain external attention.*

### *Differentiated Application of the Guideline*

One important difference to remember when applying the Guidelines is which political party they apply to: the Government or the political opposition?

For example, the governing party might publish content that promotes national achievements to show that the country is well managed by the ruling party. Conversely, it is the opposition's mandate to criticize the Government by pointing to weaknesses and mistakes and proposing alternative solutions and policies.

This system of checks and balances between the political participants is necessary for Cambodia to progress in the future as it is the basis of a robust democracy.

## **III. New Media Use by Political Parties**

### **1. General Structure and Use of New Media by the CDU**

The *Christlich Demokratische Union* (CDU) is a German political party formed from different coalitions to create the governing party in Germany since 2005. Its party leader, Angela Merkel, is the German Chancellor.



*Party Leader*

Mrs. Merkel therefore is jointly the CDU leader and also the head of Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

#### *Chancellor's Spokesperson*

The Government and Mrs. Merkel's media spokesperson is Steffen Seibert. He heads the government public relations department, which includes conducting weekly press conferences.



#### *CDU Headquarter*



The CDU is led and organized at a national level through the party headquarter, the *Konrad Adenauer Haus*. Peter Tauber is the secretary-general who manages the headquarter and is the party's executive manager. He is the CDU's main media contact on behalf of the party at the national level.

*Parties must differentiate in their use of New Media between channels for the national party and national party officials. A party's appearance in New Media should have a clearly different focus than channels of the Government.*

### **a. Separation of Party and Government Objectives**

Angela Merkel has two functions: She is the German Chancellor and the Chairwomen of the CDU. According to these distinct offices she appears differently in various New Media channels. First, there is the personal *Facebook* page, second, the national party's *Facebook* page, and third, the Government's *Facebook* page. The first



two appearances are used for party purposes, while the Government’s Facebook page focuses on the work of the Chancellor and her cabinet ministers. It publishes content on behalf of the Government and seeks to deliver information about the current actions and objectives of it. Thus, the Government’s Facebook page has a more objective approach. Its usual “voice” is the Government Spokesperson.

The separation of responsibilities between Mrs. Merkel, as Chancellor, and the CDU in order to fulfill their different objectives is important, although this may not always be recognized. Mrs. Merkel is generally seen in New Media fulfilling her role as Chancellor but the CDU media office must conduct itself in the same way as other organizations. For example, it must purchase pictures of Mrs. Merkel at an official event from the Federal Press Office like any other user. In this way a public separation is made between the role of the party and the use of state resources in a fair and transparent way.

For that reason, the Government’s Facebook page also has a different editorial team, located in the Office of the Federal Chancellor, while the personal Facebook page and the national party’s Facebook page are edited at the national party’s headquarter.

*Example of the Chancellor’s Use of New Media*

*The Government should be neutral and objective, while political parties promote their political agenda with critical but well-modulated statements.*



The post on the left from the Government’s Facebook channel provides a statement from Angela Merkel regarding the Government’s refugee policy and her personal expectations before she joined a special summit of the European Union on this topic. It was given in her role as the representative of Germany and Head of Government. The content is about Government objectives. The formal structure and material content were related

to her role as Chancellor therefore the statement would not be posted on the CDU’s New Media channels in this way.

*Example of the Party Leader’s Use of New Media*

On the right is a post from Angela Merkel’s personal Facebook page. It promotes a speech by her held at a party meeting. Mrs. Merkel used the speech to comment on an incident of international importance and clarified the party’s position regarding issues arising from the incident. Mrs. Merkel participated in the



event as party leader. Even though the content of the speech is related to an issue of international relevance and addresses international relations the speech has a clear party framework and is not appropriate for the Government's *Facebook* page. However, it works well on Angela Merkel's personal *Facebook* page to show her position. The introduction also mentions that the speech was held by the Chancellor to promote the prominent position of the party leader.

### b. Use of Different New Media Channels

The CDU has an interest in spreading party related content on its New Media channels. Angela Merkel's personal appearance in New Media, considering her dual role as Chancellor and CDU party leader, focuses on a smaller number of high quality posts and content related to her personally.

#### *Tasks of the Editorial Team*

The technical support and structure of the CDU's and party leader's New Media channels is undertaken by the editorial team whose editors are also mainly responsible for the content. Their office is located in the party's headquarter to enable fast and efficient communication with the party officials.

Issues of general importance like public and national holidays, birthdays of prominent persons, and party events are only considered by the online editorial team. Specific issues that might be of interest for the New Media channels are discussed by the online editorial team together with the party's press office or the office of the party leader. In their choice of topics the editorial team uses *Social Media Dashboards*, which indicate and track temporary relevant topics trending in New Media<sup>1</sup>.

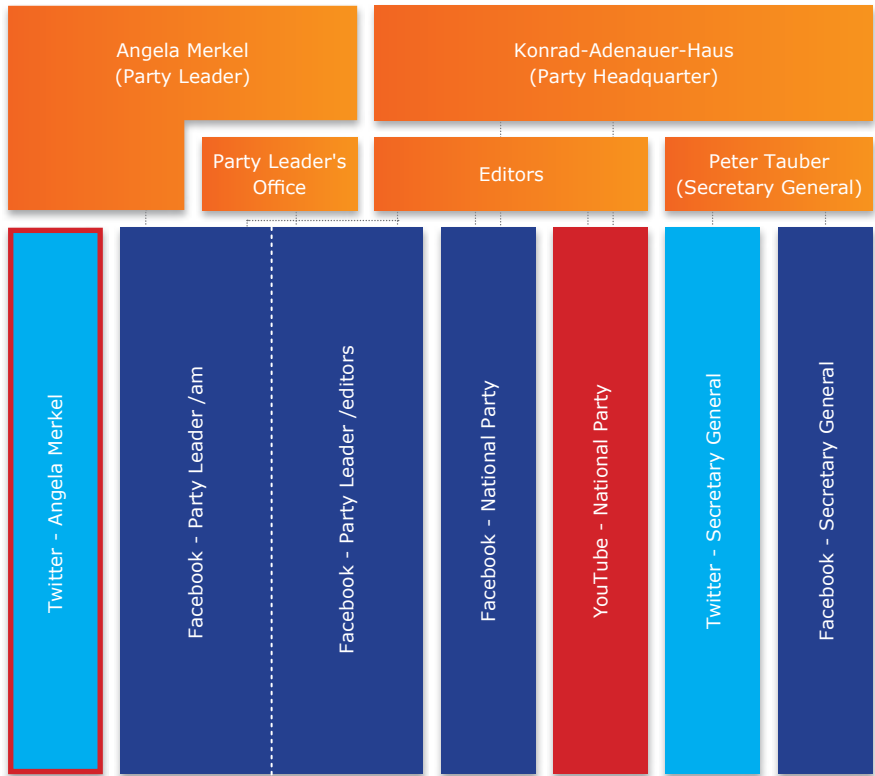
*The application of different New Media channels can be useful depending on the purpose and content of the post.*

The CDU team consists at the moment of two full-time employees who meet daily, and five student assistants. The full-timers are responsible for the posts and their content. In the first two hours of each working day they also check for comments and prepare answers for the media as required. The student assistants then continue to check for comments in older posts and respond or report on inappropriate replies.

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<sup>1</sup> For example [www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com).

The overall New Media structure of the CDU is shown in the graphic below:



(Source: KAS)

**c. CDU's Use of Facebook**



(Facebook banner of the CDU national party's page; Source: Facebook)

## GUIDELINES FOR HOW POLITICAL PARTIES CAN EFFECTIVELY USE NEW MEDIA IN THEIR PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS

The CDU's *Facebook* page is used to disseminate information from the party. For example, material and information about the party's headquarter, links to articles of interest, graphics or videos from the CDU and activities of the party leader. The posted content often addresses topics from the party leader, the secretary general and the headquarter. In his role as executive manager, Peter Tauber appears in a high number of posts to explain party positions or other topics such as new initiatives.

### *Choice of Content*

Possible topics for a national party's *Facebook* post can be identified by looking at the standard posts on the CDU's *Facebook* page:

- current topics and their relevance to the party's program,
- statements from the secretary general on current issues,
- results from meetings of the party's executive committee,
- vacancy advertisements for administrative jobs,
- attention drawn to statements and appearances by the party leader,
- meetings and working groups in the party's headquarter,
- topics at press conferences, and
- party publications such as the party's internal magazine.

*The national party's Facebook appearance should promote the work of the party leader, secretary general and CDU headquarter.*

While the editors propose and prepare content for the CDU's *Facebook* page, the manager of the party's division for communication and media at the headquarter must approve content before it is finally published on the *Facebook* page.

### *Structure of Content*

A major focus is on pictures and videos as visual content invokes the strongest responses and attracts more attention. Pictures tell a story with simple imagery and, where necessary, emotion, compared to text.

The posts always follow the same format: a short summary or description to provide an overview of the post's subject. Quotes work well to raise attention and deliver the topic in a clear way. Short text related to a picture helps raise attention.

The *Facebook* page also includes apps to present guidelines of behavior (*Netiquette*), the possibility of making donations and provides information enabling the user to become a party member.



## *Netiquette*

The *Netiquette* helps to manage the comments and mainly sets three rules:

1. The interaction of comments must be fair, respectful and tolerant of different opinions and lifestyles. Screenshots or pictures from another person's profile are forbidden.
2. No comments should infringe the law. Defamation, slander, racism or political extremism will not be tolerated.
3. Spam or advertisements will not be accepted. Links to other homepages or email addresses and repeating posts will be deleted.



*A Netiquette can help to maintain a certain level of manners and to moderate the comments by keeping them more objective.*

## *Netiquette Etiquette Includes the Following List of Rules:<sup>2</sup>*

1. Refrain from personal abuse. You may express robust disagreement with another person but cannot call them names or threaten them with personal violence.
2. Don't spam. That is, don't repeatedly post the same advertisement for products or services. Most sites have strict and specific rules about who is allowed to post ads and what kind of ads they are.
3. Write clearly and succinctly. On a site that has many non-native English speakers avoid using slang they may not understand.
4. Remember that your posts are public. They can be read by your partner, your children, your parents or your employer.
5. Stay on-topic, especially when you're new. Don't post about football in a hair-care forum or about hair care in a gardening forum!
6. Don't expect other people to do your homework for you. If you're looking for technical help, for example, don't ask questions you could easily answer yourself by reading the manual or online help provided with the product. When you do ask for help, include details of what attempts you've made to solve the problem. It will save time and also show people that you are making an effort to help yourself.
7. Do not post copyrighted material to which you do not own the rights. Sites vary in how strict they are about this, but as well as facing the possibility of legal action by the rights holder, you may also get the site sued.
8. The site's owner, perhaps assisted by one or more moderators, has the final say in enforcing the rules.

*A Netiquette should ban hate speech, crude insults and spam.*

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<sup>2</sup> "The Basis Rules" from the BBC Homepage.

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Aside from the *Netiquette* an internal *Facebook* algorithm helps to manage comments. The comments will be higher ranked and show up earlier, depending on the author, in a way similar to properly approved sites. The more relevant comments related to the topic occur first and inappropriate comments are less likely to appear at all.

### d. CDU Party Leader's Use of Facebook



*(Facebook banner of Angela Merkel; Source: Facebook)*

The party leader's *Facebook* page provides general information about Angela Merkel and includes links to a party register and the party's code of behavior for posting on New Media platforms.

#### *Authorization of Content*



Posts are proposed and prepared by the editorial team, but ultimately not approved by them. For the party leader's *Facebook* page it depends on whether the posts are published in the name of Angela Merkel, or on behalf of her with a note indicating the editorial team's responsibility. Posts in the name of the party leader are indicated by the initials */am* and personally approved by the party leader. Posts from the editorial team are indicated by the identifier */editorial* and approved by the party leader's office.

*It can be very useful when editors prepare content for the party officials' New Media appearance. The content should be prepared in collaboration and authorized by the party officials or their office.*

#### *Choice of Content*

The content of the posts usually focuses on personal messages like seasonal greetings, Mrs. Merkel's attendance at events; speeches and personal statements

by her. The scope is basically defined by the intention of Mrs. Merkel to build her personal Internet presence and communication channels that differ in appearance and focus from the Government's own channels.



#### e. CDU's Use of Twitter

The short messaging service *Twitter* limits its posts to 140 characters. Thus, it is mostly used to advertise content on other channels like the CDU's homepage, *Facebook* or *YouTube* channel. Links with a short description of the content can flag attention toward the original post on the main channel.

*Twitter* can also contribute to current debates and discussions. The use of *Hashtags* allows it to easily recognize current and relevant topics. By re-tweeting comments that are useful for the party's interests and posting its own short statements the CDU can make its voice heard in the "*Twittersphere*". This instantaneous communication can leverage an advantage to the party in any ongoing discussions or debates. Because the frequency of re-tweets and comments are much higher and faster, it is important to be prepared from the outset of any discussion to have the appropriate comments - and reactions - ready.

However, *Twitter* has only limited use in ongoing distribution of information or in involving citizens in political activity.

#### f. CDU's Use of YouTube

*YouTube* is a valuable platform for videos. It can be programmed to enable YouTube subscribers to be informed of new videos available. While professional equipment can, and still is, used to produce videos, mobile phone cameras recording in high definition can also be used, complemented by additional sound equipment. *YouTube* videos have a high ranking in *Google*-searches. However, *Facebook* and *Twitter* question *Google*'s leading role in distributing online videos and prefer to use their own systems where videos are directly uploaded onto their platforms. These directly posted videos have a wider distribution range on *Facebook* and *Twitter*.

For the purpose of the party it is most useful to regularly upload videos on current topics and long-term objectives to feed the channel with new videos, which makes it more interesting for the audience. The format of the videos can be different: from short briefings to in-depth reporting about events and issues or even election advertisements. Especially creative videos that are produced in a new and unusual way have the potential to gain many views by being reposted on other New Media channels.

*YouTube videos can be short statements, or in depth reports about party issues.*

*Twitter is especially useful to advertise the content of other New Media channels, or to react immediately to a specific current issue.*

## 2. Examples from Opposition Parties

The CDU, as an established national party with many members and a comprehensive structure, has the resources and capacity to employ a team of editors and authors. In the next section two less well-resourced opposition parties are profiled as examples of other possible approaches to the use of New Media.

### a. Use of New Media by Die Grünen

The *Facebook* page of Die Grünen (The Greens) contains a smaller number of self-produced videos and pictures than the CDU, for example. In posts on the *Facebook* page, the reader's attention is drawn to current issues of interest by reposting and linking to newspaper articles and other externally sourced content. The external posts are chosen for their contextual support toward the Greens' political platform but have the advantage of not requiring much resourcing.



The Greens posts and reposts usually include a direct demand for a specific action. For example, any posts questioning Government action aim to create as many reposts as possible to highlight any problematic behavior.

The party leaders then repost on their own *Facebook* pages content from the official Greens *Facebook* page and add new content depending on their personal opinion.

The Greens model is less structured than the CDU. The party leaders have flexibility to evolve clear personal viewpoints and political profiles on certain topics. However, the leaders still adhere to the underlying messages contained in the official Greens *Facebook* page to reinforce their own personal views on a topic.

Therefore the Greens' political agenda is delivered nation-wide through their *Facebook* page incorporating considerable high quality, self-produced material that dovetails with the party's political objectives. The party leaders and officials have simultaneous access to shared posts to support their own agendas and to add information of relevance to the topic being examined or debated.

*The opposition should use New Media to meet its objectives of being a critic of the Government and fostering debate on issues of national importance.*

### b. Use of New Media by Piraten Partei

The two most popular parties, the CDU and the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD), the Social Democrats, have a long history of political involvement going back to their roots in the 19th century. Consequently, both parties have strong mandates for their policies at all political levels; an established organizational internal structure; sufficient financial resources and a high membership base. In 2012 both parties had around 470,000 party members. In elections, they usually share between 25 and 50 percent of the votes.




The smaller German parties with around 5 to 15 percent of the votes in general elections advocate their own specific policy agendas. One of them is the oppositional



*Piraten Partei* (Pirate Party) whose policies focus on the Internet, privacy and communications.

Comparing the number of party members and the political size of the CDU and SPD with the Pirate Party shows that the ability to reach existing and new voters through New Media is not directly linked to the party’s size and influence in other fields. With around 34,000 party members the Pirate Party collected 86,000 likes on *Facebook* and 126,000 followers on *Twitter*, giving it a huge audience for its political voice compared to its size. In a closer examination of the *Pirate Party’s* New Media channels it can be seen that it is more active in comparison than the two main parties.

*Even small parties can have a huge impact through New Media.*

	<b>CDU</b>	<b>SPD</b>	<b>Piraten</b>
Party Members	476,347*	477,037*	34,322*
	89,779	81,860	85,975
	60,300	95,600	126,000
	-	5,255	5,222

*(Party members and range on New Media platforms; Source: KAS, bpp; \*in 2012.)*

The Pirate Party has four times more users on *Twitter* than the CDU. It proves that effective and intense networking on New Media can achieve dramatic results. The Pirate Party was the first party to address new Internet related issues for which it received considerable support because of its ability to react quickly on important issues.

Compared to the CDU and SPD the Pirate Party has a narrow focus on Internet and communication related topics. Its supporters are generally more adept at using New Media. It proves that the possibility to reach out to a larger number of people is a powerful tool and shows that, independent of traditional financial and structural resources, a focused and skilled use of particular channels can lead to beneficial outcomes through New Media.

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