Status Report on PolComm Section Online Activities

Dear members of the Political Communication Section,

With the annual APSA meeting around the corner, Kevin Barnhurst (PolComm social media editor) and I (PolComm website and editor of our newsletter, the Political Communication Report) want to submit a brief report on the our section's online activities during the past year. Please find it below.

We want to take this opportunity to encourage our members to attend to and partake in the online activities offered by our section. Make sure you follow the various PolComm accounts at Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. to receive current information of interest to the political communication community (calls for papers, job postings, publication notices, links to polcomm-related media content, and much more).

If you have ideas and/or would like to contribute to the newsletter, please feel free to contact Eike at rinke@uni-mannheim.de.

Sincerely,
Kevin G. Barnhurst (University of Leeds) & Eike Mark Rinke (University of Mannheim)

Status Report on PolComm Section Online Activities

Political Communication Report (http://www.politicalcommunication.org/newsletter.html)
Status quo:
- Issue 1, 2014 was published in March; the issue featured previews of events organized by ICA/APSA PolComm members
- Issue 2, 2014 is due for publication in September
    o See the recent Call for Submissions for a "Books Published by our Members" feature sent via the APSA Connect!
- Current use of the site (online traffic report):
    o Traffic monitoring in place since March 2014
    o March to July 2014: about 750 visits per month, but low retention (average of only 2 pages opened per session)
    o By far the most users are located in the US (31%), followed the UK (5%), India, Indonesia, and Germany (each 4%)
    o → Our aim is to substantially increase traffic as we overhaul the site and work towards greater integration of the site with our social media channels
Perspectives:
- Major overhaul of our web design is underway, targeting both functions and look of the site
- We are partnering with a Frankfurt-based web design agency to make this happen

- The September issue should be the last to appear in our "vintage" design, and the new site should go live later this year

Social Media Channels
Activity Updates:
- Since October 2013: 1,018 new followers acquired
- There are now in total 8,673 individuals who receive updates from the following five social media accounts (with some overlap, some follow all or a few accounts)

- Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=338664022814):
    o Membership almost tripled from 268 in May 2013 to 765 in August 2014
    o 50 to 75 new members join monthly
    o Participants are actively 'liking' and 'commenting' on posted content
- LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=2787353):
    o Exponential growth: now have 3894 members
    o About 100 new members a month requesting to join
    o Individuals posting relevant academic articles
- Twitter (http://twitter.com/poli_com):
    o Steadily increasing followers, now have 487 followers
    o Experimenting with types of content posted
    o Following new accounts, influencers and academics in communications field
- Academic Room (http://www.academicroom.com/group/political-communication):
    o Joined last year, minimal activity, but presence is still good
    o Directs viewers to our other social media channels
- Academia.edu (http://independent.academia.edu/PoliCom):
    o Acts as a resource for participants, with 185 current followers
    o 692 profile views, 15 visits to the page a month from all over the world
    o Content can host conference papers and other relevant materials
- Flickr.com (https://flickr.com/policom/):
    o Newly established in Aug 2014
    o Will act as repository for photos from division/section events