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## LOCAL NEWS

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### Political Social Media Increasing

If you're on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, chances are you've seen a political candidate's message. A new study shows the number of statewide candidates in Illinois who have an Internet presence is increasing, although the most popular method is to have a campaign Web site or blog. Statewide candidates have the following social media presence, broken down by social medium:

- Website/Blog 85 percent
- Twitter 50 percent
- Facebook 61 percent
- YouTube/Video 33 percent

Institute of Government and Public Affairs senior fellow Michael Cheney, a communications professor at the University of Illinois at Springfield, found that while participation in social media is going up, some candidates have no presence whatsoever. He also found that activity and responses on social media does not mirror position in the polls. As an example, Cheney says Republican U.S. Senate candidate Dan Lowery, who had less than 5 percent support in a couple of recent polls, led interactions in his social media, with more than nine messages from supporters for each of the candidate's messages.

Cheney stresses that while social media presence played in role in Barack Obama's win for president, and in Republican Scott Brown's win for U.S. Senate in Massachusetts, he thinks Illinois' field of candidates is too muddy to see a direct link between social media presence and a victory.

(Illinois Radio Network)

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