

Proposal presented at the ANU SSGM Pacific Research Colloquium 2014.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND E-DEMOCRACY IN FIJI, SOLOMON ISLANDS AND VANUATU

Research Proposal

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Wikis have become important political tools for citizens in countries with limitations and restrictions on media and freedom of speech (Khondker 2011). In the Pacific, the citizens of the Melanesian countries of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu employ social media sites to voice their opinions, criticize policies, engage with their governments and even expose corrupt practices (Cave 2012; Logan 2012). In these countries, social media is increasingly playing an important role in how citizens become aware of information, how citizens engage in the political process and even to some extent how governments feel accountable to the public. This is especially so as the Pacific is undergoing an ICT revolution with a number of major ICT development. The most notable development is Tonga-Fiji Submarine Cable that became available in August, 2013 (Madigibuli 2013). The underwater fiber optic cable will significantly improve the quality, accessibility and cost of internet services. Other countries such as Vanuatu, Samoa and the Solomon Islands also have the opportunity to connect to this cable. The increased availability of internet and mobile access is spurring the use of social media in the Pacific. Cave (2012) finds that five Pacific Island Countries (PICs) ranked in Facebook's top twenty growth markets, as a percentage of population during April to September 2012.

While the Pacific region has lagged behind most of the world in terms of ICT, these current developments will reduce the digital divide. The growing digital society in the Pacific has the potential to have significant social, economic and political implications. Cave (2012) finds that ICT, specifically social media is being used to enhance accountability and transparency by exposing negligence, poor service delivery and corruption. Cave (2012) suggests that ICT has significant potential to assist PICs achieve development objectives especially democracy and governance. Logan (2012) outlines the potential impact of ICT in PNG politics. She finds that ICT is increasing transparency and changing citizen's political participation. Given that social media is a relatively recent phenomenon in the Pacific, there is a dearth of literature on the impact of social media and e-democracy. Cave (2012) and Logan (2012) are the few papers that touch on these issues and have provided an excellent foundation for more related studies to be conducted.

This study seeks to build on these studies and will contribute to extant literature by examining the use of social media and its impact on e-democracy in three Melanesian countries: Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. To achieve the study's research objective, the study proposes to conduct a mixed methods approach. This approach will involve semi-structured interviews, content analysis, surveys and focus group sessions. The findings of the study are envisaged to improve our understanding the impact of social media in Melanesian politics.

The remainder of this proposal is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a literature review of social media and e-democracy; Section 3 presents the study's research objectives; Section 4 outlines the study's theoretical framework; Section 5 discusses the study's proposed

methodology and Section 6 concludes the proposal with a discussion of what is envisaged to be completed by the time of presentation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan et al. 2010,p.61).” Social media tools include social networking sites such as Facebook, micro blogging sites like Twitter, wikis and video sharing sites like YouTube. Social media studies are a relatively young but growing field (Kaplan et al. 2010). Social media studies that interface with politics and democracy have largely been conducted in developed countries (Kushin et al. 2010). These studies have examined issues such as social media as campaign tool by political candidates (Stieglitz et al. 2012) and the offline political effect of online political discussions (Bimber et al. 2013; Conroy et al. 2012).

Social media provides an easy, low-cost means for citizens to engage in dialogues and express their opinions (Cave, 2012). Social media is especially important in countries where there are restrictions on freedom of speech, censorship of media, lack of civil society actors and absence of formal mechanisms for individuals to exercise their democratic rights. This is because in these countries, traditional media are controlled by governments. The information that is expressed in traditional media is censored and some issues are not published. Citizens are also unable to express opinions and views. As social media sites are not controlled by governments, social media has allowed individuals to express things that traditional media does not allow users to do. Social media is also an important source of public information that traditional media is unable to publish. In most of these countries, social media is the sole means by which citizens can truly express their views.

The Arab spring in the middle-east is an example of the impact of social media in politics. Social media played an important role in the Arab Spring. Social media allowed political activists in these countries to air their grievances, organize and coordinate protests and also to share their plight with the world (Khondker, 2010). Thus social media is playing an important role in the facilitation of e-democracy. E-democracy (electronic democracy) is defined as “e-democracy is concerned with the use of information and communication technologies to engage citizens, support the democratic decision making processes and strengthen representative democracy (Macintosh 2003)”. Two important dimensions of e-democracy are citizen’s e-participation and electronic voting. In order for an effective e-democratic system to exist there needs to be a high level of citizen participation, government engagement and unrestricted flow of information exchange (Watson et al. 2001).

While most studies have focused on the use of social media in countries with media censorship, and repressive governments, these issues are not as relevant in the Pacific context. However, the

Pacific, especially Melanesian countries have significant governance problems. Issues such as corruption, lack of transparency and nepotism affect most Melanesian countries. Social media as a political instrument in Melanesia has been largely used to address these governance problems. Social media seems to be changing the traditional Melanesian model of governance where chiefs and big men could not be questioned and where accountability was non-existent.

Some studies have examined the potential for social media to facilitate democracy. The findings of these studies have been mixed. Some authors argue that social media has significantly changed how democracy is achieved (Shirky 2011). A few studies have cited the example of how social media was able to implement democratic change in the Middle East (Howard et al. 2011). Social media has provided a mechanism for public dissent to be communicated. This is especially the case in countries absent of free media, civil society actors and formal mechanisms for citizens to engage in the political process (Kaplan et al. 2010). In these countries information that is published by the media is usually censored and comprises of government propaganda. Social media allows citizens to discuss, share and communicate issues that are censored from traditional media. Social media also allows citizens to criticize government policies and hold government officials to account. Social media has also been used to expose corruption and engender greater transparency (Cave 2012; Logan 2012).

Given the diversity in the nature of social media use around the world it is important to examine social media and its impact on democracy in different contexts. Studies suggest that social media usage is context dependent (Kaplan et al. 2010; Shirky 2011). Furthermore, rapid ICT developments suggest that the Pacific will be a region with increasing use of social media (Cave 2012). Social media could thus play a significant role in the political, social and economic development of Pacific countries.

A few studies have examined the impact of new digital technologies in the Pacific. These technologies include internet and mobile phones which complement but are different from social media. These studies are motivated by the significant increase in internet penetration and mobile subscription in the Pacific. Cave (2012) suggest these developments have the potential to assist countries in the Pacific achieve development outcomes including democracy. Prasad et al. (2013) interviewing 25 individuals with significant experience in Pacific ICT issues find that current ICT developments have the potential to facilitate regional integration.

A number of studies have also examined social media and its impact on media, politics and democracy. Walsh (2010) provides an analysis of Fiji's political blogosphere. A political blogger himself, Walsh identified 72 political blogs in Fiji. A number of blogs were run by expatriate journalists like him while with most blogs the administrators were anonymous. Walsh (2010) suggests that the proliferation of political blogs in Fiji has created a cybernet democracy. Walsh (2010) believes that these blogs have the potential to lead to greater democracy. However, this potential has yet to be realized as the blogs "are little more than agents of uncritical dissent (Walsh, 2010, p. 174)". The Fiji Government in response "have fought online fire with online

fire (Ley 2013)". The Fiji Government have setup their own social media pages which include Government Facebook Pages and twitter accounts. It is reported that the Fiji Government paid Qorvis communications \$US40,000 a month to among other things, manage social media accounts (Welch 2012).

The Solomon Islands and Vanuatu do not share in the diversity and volume of social media sites as Fiji. Few studies have referred to social media use in the Solomon Islands. Walsh (2010) reports that the main political site in Solomon Islands is the Forum of Solomon Islands International (FSII), a Non-Governmental Organization that advocates national issues and exposing corruption in Solomon Islands. An interesting case that illustrates the impact of FSII was Gordon Darcy Lilo's (Prime Minister) trip to Indonesia with a delegation of staff. Information was leaked that the trip would cost the Solomon Islands Government SBD\$1 million (Solomon Star, 2013a). The Prime Minister assured the public that the costs were borne by Indonesia but evidence revealed by a civil society group actually found that 99% of the trip was funded by taxpayers of Solomon Islands. Civil society actors stated that the trip was a waste of taxpayers' money and called for the Prime Minister's resignation. The Prime Minister responded in the local daily by stating that those criticizing him are the ones with "stains on their hands and challenged media and social media to be fair (Palmer 2013)." The leader of the Malaita Ma'asina Forum, another civil society group, described the response as childish but then goes on to say "I will see to it and ensure your whole body is dirty (Solomon Star, 2013b)." Such is the politics in Solomon Islands that politicians focus on personal attacks than on the issues at hand (Bennett 2004). The Indonesian government has reportedly refunded \$1.2 million (Solomon Star, 2013c); however a journalist – Alfred Sasako – reported that the refund might not have come from Indonesia and that the money has yet to be transferred to the treasury (Sasako 2013).

Vanuatu's most popular political Facebook page Yumi TokTok Stret (Cave 2012) is a powerful tool for citizens to air their grievances. Even government officials are actively responding to citizen posts and actively engaging citizens on this platform. Vanuatu newspapers frequently publish stories posted on this Facebook page. A recent example of students from the University of the South Pacific complaining about delayed allowances on the Facebook page. A picture of three loaves of bread with the captions: "Breakfast", "Lunch" and "Dinner" posted on the Facebook page highlighted the plight these students were facing. The post subsequently made front page on the Vanuatu national newspaper. The government later released the allowances; however, it is uncertain whether the Facebook was the reason for this. Ley (2013) discussing media engagement in the Pacific, suggests that social media has taken the role of traditional media. Social media has led to the rise of civil journalists most of whom are professional journalists but are unable to freely publish their views. Using the case of Vanuatu, Ley (2013) discusses how the Facebook page Yumi TokTok Stret is changing political engagement. The page was created to provide a forum to discuss political, social and economic issues affecting Ni-Vanuatu. The page is primarily used by citizens but government officials as well also use this forum to defend themselves and sometimes proactively to promote themselves.

Recently in PNG, Belden Namah, PNG's opposition leader has shunned traditional media, claiming that PNG's traditional media are biased towards the government (Somare-Brash 2014). He has stated that he will hold the government to account via social networking sites in which he has made various allegations against the government and the Prime Minister (ibid). Mr. Namah's comments were fuelled when PNG's local daily ran a front page story titled "Namah behind the sale of land (Hill 2013)." Namah is suing the local daily for running the story. Namah is also under investigation by the PNG fraud squad and is also being sued by PNG's prime minister: Peter O'Neil for defamation (Callick 2013).

Governments in Melanesia are also making various attempts to regulate and suppress online expression. PNG ministers raised concerns in parliament over social media, claiming that it was being abused by faceless people to bully and defame others (PACNEWS 2013). These PNG members of parliament are calling for laws and regulation to control social media sites. Fiji is one of the few countries in the Pacific that have cybercrime laws. Fiji's cybercrime law is coupled with censorship that targets online dissent against Fiji's military government (Willet 2013). In Solomon Islands, civil society groups are the most active Facebook dissenters of the Solomon Islands Government. The Government attempted to deregister certain civil society groups, claiming that their activities had become too political in nature (RNZI 2014). This was after the members of the civil society group had called for the Prime Minister to resign amidst allegations of corruption and abuse of power. Even in Vanuatu, a journalist named Gratien Tiona was arrested for making a comment on Yumi Toktok Stret praying for a plane carrying the Vanuatu Prime Minister and his cabinet to crash into the sea (Ligo 2013). The Vanuatu Prime Minister: Moana Carcasses is also a member of Yumi TokTok Stret responded on the page by accusing Mr. Tiona of instigating terrorism. Mr. Tiona later apologised on the Facebook page but was still arrested and charged with terrorist activity, seditious publication and making threats (Radio Australia 2013). The charges were later dropped and Mr. Tiona released. Melanesian governments thus perceive social media activities as a threat to their power. These governments are trying to create laws or even apply laws to control, regulate or punish individuals and groups that criticize or express dissent against the government.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The cases described above illustrate the use of social media as a political tool by citizens and the response by governments in these Melanesian countries. The cases also demonstrate social media's potential to foster improved democratic governance in these countries. By obtaining a deeper understanding of citizens' use of social media, policy recommendations can be facilitated in order for the potential of social media to be realized to achieve improved levels of governance.

The study's research objectives are as follows:

- To explore the nature of political social media sites in these three countries.

- To understand the factors that has led to the development and evolution of social media as a political tool in these countries.
- To elicit citizen perceptions of the role of social media as an instrument for political change.
- To measure, if any, the level of government responsiveness to discussions on social media sites.

The next section presents the study's theoretical framework.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employs the Technology Affordances and Constraints Theory (TACT). The framework has been used to study how individuals and organizations use Information Systems and how Information Systems affect people and organizations (Majchrzak et al. 2013). The central tenet of TACT is that “uses and outcomes of information systems and technology are best understood in terms of relationships between individuals or organizations and technology features (ibid).” Technology Affordance refers to “an action potential, that is, to what an individual or organization with a particular purpose can do with a technology or information system (ibid).” Technology Constraint refers “to ways in which an individual or organization can be held back from accomplishing a particular goal when using a technology or system (ibid).”

In this case social media affords citizens the potential to become aware of political issues, discuss political issues, expose corruption and organize political groups. This is because social media or more broadly the internet provide richer information and facilitate communication with citizens (Bimber et al. 2013). The internet also affords citizens the ability to compare their government performance with other governments, “which alters the expectations and criteria that citizens use to evaluate their own government—shaping satisfaction accordingly (ibid).”

Social media more specifically affords citizens the ability to form groups with similar interests and discuss and debate political issues on an online forum. For some political pages in Melanesia such as FSII and Yumi TokTok Stret, government officials have even engaged in political discussions to defend themselves such as in the case of the PM's Indonesia trip where some of the government officials that accompanied the PM to Indonesia attempted to defend the trip and their per diems to a post criticizing the trip. For Yumi TokTok Stret, Ralph Regenvanu, current Minister for Lands and Natural Resources for the Vanuatu Government, proactively posts government policy decisions on the Facebook page. Mr. Regenvanu also engages with citizens in discussions and debates on policy issues. However, in Fiji, something of this nature occurring is unheard of.

This highlights the constraints of social media as a political tool. These constraints include lack of access to internet or devices that can access the internet by citizens, fear of punishment for

posting anti-political comments, source and information credibility. These limitations can hinder the action potential of social media in enabling citizens to freely discuss political issues.

This theory will be used to explain the differences and similarities in the impact, the use and perceptions of social media as a political tool by citizens of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study will utilize a mixed methods approach to investigate the impact of social media on political governance in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The study will conduct interviews with policy makers, government officials and citizens; content analysis of popular political social media pages of these three countries; surveys with students from USP; and focus group sessions to further explore survey responses. The use of these multiple methods will provide a richer understanding of social media and its impact on politics in these three countries. The following sections elaborate on the methodology of these various research methods.

5.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a form of interview where the researcher has a formal set of questions but has the flexibility to ask questions based on interviewee responses (Gubrium et al. 2002). Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with policy makers, political actors, active social media users and citizens. The purpose of conducting interviews is to explore how these different individuals perceive the role of social media as a political tool. An interview schedule for the various groups of interviewees will be developed. A list of individuals to be interviewed will also be compiled. Individuals that have an active social media presence would be likely candidates to be interviewed. These individuals can be identified from observing political social media sites.

Once the list has been compiled, these individuals will be approached inviting their participation in the study. A copy of the interview schedule will also be attached for their review. If they accept then an interview time and venue will be determined. Interviews are expected to last no longer than 45 minutes. Permission will also be sought from the interviewer if recording is possible. If permission is not received then notes will be taken down during the interview.

The interviews will be transcribed and entered into the qualitative data analysis package: NVivo. I will then go through the transcriptions and perform thematic analysis from the interviews. Thematic analysis is an iterative process that requires researchers to continuously review the transcriptions and themes created.

5.2 Content Analysis of Facebook Pages

A content analysis of the three most popular political Facebook pages in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu will also be conducted. The three pages were determined based on the number of

members which is a proxy for the popularity of a Facebook page. From this measure the following pages were determined as the most popular as presented below in Table 1

Table 1. Top Political Facebook Pages (determined on 10/01/14)

Country	Facebook Page	Membership	Population	% of Population
Fiji	Letters to the Editor Uncensored	6,032	874,742	.69%
Solomon Islands	Forum Solomon Islands – International	5,859	549,589	1.06%
Vanuatu	Yumi TokTok Stret	11,394	247,262	4.6%

All these Facebook pages are closed groups. A closed group is controlled by an administrator who reviews and approves membership requests. Only if approved by the administrator can one become a member of the Facebook group page. If one is not a member, then one cannot see or post content on the Facebook page. I am a member of all three pages. All three Facebook pages are moderated by an administrator and there are strict regulations that members need to adhere to when posting or replying to posts on the page. These regulations generally prohibit the use of vulgar language, harassment or any form of discrimination. If a member makes a post that breaks these regulations the member’s post will be removed. Continual breach of regulations by members could lead to members being removed from the group.

The content analysis will follow the procedures specified by Conroy et. al (2012). In that paper, Facebook pages were analyzed based on various dimensions of information quality. We will also analyze the nature of information posted on these Facebook pages, for example pro-government or anti-government. We will also analyze the nature of responses and interaction within these groups.

5.3 Surveys

Surveys will be undertaken to examine the factors that are leading to the use or non-use of social media as an outlet for political expression by citizens. The survey will also elicit users’ views on the potential for social media to bring about change or to lead to government action. The results of the survey will enable a better understanding of the antecedents of social media use as a political tool in Melanesia.

Surveys will be conducted with tertiary students from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The students were selected from the University of the South Pacific (USP). USP has the largest number of Melanesians from these three countries. These students also have access to computers and the internet. Considering the Pacific has one of the lowest rates of internet penetration (Cave, 2012), this is important as most of these students would not have access to internet in their home countries if they were not USP students.

The survey was sent to fellow colleagues in USP for review. This was done to obtain views on the readability and understandability of the survey. Issues identified during this review process were considered and discussed with reviewers. Changes that were deemed appropriate were made. The surveys were also pilot tested with a group of 15 Melanesian USP students. A focus group was then conducted with these students to identify any issues with the survey instrument. Some students believed that survey was too long. Some questions were identified as being too ambiguous or complex. The survey instrument was subsequently revised by incorporating this feedback. A copy of the survey is attached in the appendix.

Student emails for all students from these countries were obtained from USP's student database system. Table 2 below provides a summary of the number of students from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu enrolled in USP during Semester 2, 2013.

Table 2. No. Students enrolled in USP

	Solomon Islands	Fiji	Vanuatu	TOTAL
No. of Students	4,042	11,250	2,563	17,855

Surveys will be administered using both online and paper-based modes. Paper-based surveys will be used if there are insufficient responses from online surveys. Online surveys will be designed and administered using the popular survey website: survey monkey. Online surveys were sent out on November 18th, 2013. A follow up survey was sent two weeks later and a third and final survey request was sent two weeks after.

The survey contains 10 questions, 4 of these questions contained multiple statements in which students were asked to indicate their level of agreement. Section 1 of the survey provides statements to students relating to the accessibility of internet in their home and host country. Section 2 provides statements relating to the level of reliance students place on traditional media relative to social media. Section 3 provides statements to students relating to how they use social media to discuss political issues. Section 4 then elicits students' perceptions of the role and potential of social media to bring about effective change in current political and government systems. Section 5 elicits demographic information such as gender, age, ethnicity, social media sites affiliation.

I have completed the survey administration and am in the process of compiling the results. Table 3 below presents statistics of response rates by country:

Table 3. Online Survey Response Rates

Country	Number of responses	Total Set	Response Rate
Fiji	241	11,250	2.14%
Solomon Islands	122	4,042	3.01%
Vanuatu	50	2,563	1.95%

One of the main limitations of online surveys is the low response rate (Groves et al. 2009) as can be observed from Table 3 above. As such paper-based surveys will also be conducted to increase or at least even out the number of responses from the students from the three countries.

5.4 Focus Group Sessions

Due to the limitations of survey methodology, focus group sessions with students who answered the survey will also be conducted to explore further their responses and to draw out deeper and richer insight into their views, perceptions and beliefs with regards to social media as a political tool in Melanesia.

Students will be contacted via email inviting them to participate in the focus group sessions. Once sufficient students have confirmed, these students will be randomly allocated to groups. These students will then be notified regarding the time and venue of their focus group session. I will facilitate the focus group and will begin the session with an ice breaker to make the students feel comfortable in responding.

A schedule of questions will be drafted. These questions are based largely on the responses from the surveys. However, the structure of the discussions will not be fixed. The questions are merely meant to begin the discussion, but the nature of the discussion and the direction in which the discussion moves should be largely influenced by the group. I will only intervene to ask a question, when discussion around a certain theme seems to have ended or when the discussion appears to have veered astray from the main topic. Focus group sessions will also be recorded. These recordings will be transcribed and analyzed. Coding and thematic analysis will also be conducted, similar to the process in the semi-structured interviews. Key themes will be identified and further elaborated upon in the final paper.

6. CONCLUSION

The advent of technology and the rise of social media are changing the political landscape in Melanesia. Social media is empowering citizens to voice their opinions, participate in the political process and allowing some Melanesian Governments to engage with citizens in a more responsive and interactive manner. The role and power of social media in Melanesia is just beginning but social media has the potential to transform Melanesian political processes, to foster greater engagement with Governments, to develop new forms of enhanced transparency, democracy and accountability and usher in an era of political change in Melanesia. The study seeks to examine the impact of social media on e-democracy in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The study proposes to employ a mixed method approach to achieve the research objectives. The data should provide interesting findings on how citizens use social media for expression and how citizens perceive the role of social media in enhancing governance in Melanesia. I envisage to have collected some preliminary data for presentation and discussion by the time of the colloquium.

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APPENDIX



Social Media & e-Democracy in Melanesia Survey

My name is Glen Finau and I am a staff of the University of the South Pacific (USP). I am conducting a survey on the impact of social media on e-democracy in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. I invite you to participate in this survey which should take you only 5-7 minutes to complete.

The survey is in 5 sections. Section 1 contains questions relating to your access to internet. Section 2 contains questions on your views of the reliability of traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio, etc.) vs. social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.). Section 3 contains questions relating to your level of participation in political processes. Section 4 contains questions on your perception of the role and potential of social media in facilitating e-democracy in your respective country. The last section collects demographic data from the respondents.

Any information you provide will be treated in strict confidence. Data will be analysed in aggregate form, held solely by myself and will not be used for any other purpose. Participation in this survey is voluntary and if you do not wish to participate you may simply not return the questionnaire.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please complete the attached questionnaire. Your time and co-operation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

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Section 1 Access to Internet

These questions relate to access to internet and devices that can access the internet. For Solomon Island and Ni-Vanuatu students, your host country is Fiji and your home country is your country of birth. For Fijian students, please ignore home and host country as they are the same thing.

Q1. Please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:

Mark your answer with one 'X'

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A. In my home country, I have access to a device that can access internet (PC, mobile, tablet, etc.)					
B. In my home country, I access internet on a regular basis					
C. In my home country, internet costs are affordable					
D. I access internet more in my home country than my host country					
E. In my host country (Fiji), internet and PCs are more accessible.					
F. I feel more comfortable making political comments when I am in my host country than in my home country.					

Section 2 Traditional Media vs. Social Media

Q2. Please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:

Mark your answer with one 'X'

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A. I believe information published on social media sites are reliable					
B. I believe information published in our local newspapers, TV and radio are reliable					
C. I believe information published in our local newspapers, TV and radio are complete					
D. I believe information published on social media sites are reliable are complete					
E. I use newspapers, TV news and radio as a source of political information					
F. I use social media as a source of political information					

Section 3 Participation in political process

Q3. Please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:

Mark your answer with one 'X'

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A. I support the current government of my country					
B. I identify with the current government of my country					
C. I am interested in politics of my country					
D. I participate in whatever way I can in the political process					
E. I make comments on political social media sites frequently					
F. I use my real name when I make these comments					
G. I am not afraid to make comments against my government					

Section 4 Perceptions of social media

Q4. Please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:

Mark your answer with one 'X'

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A. I believe social media is making my government feel accountable					
B. I believe comments and criticisms on social media are taken into account by my government					
C. I believe social media is influencing government decisions in my country					
D. I believe social media is having no effect on government decisions					
E. I believe social media is having an impact on how society views the government					

Section 5 Some background information

Please answer the following questions about your background. This information will be kept confidential. Please indicate your answer with a (✓)

5. Please indicate your gender

- 1 Male
2 Female

6. How old are you?

- 1 18-20
2 21-25
3 26-30
4 31-35
5 36-40
6 41-45
7 46-50
8 51-55
9 56-60
10 61-65
11 65+

7. Are you:

- 1 Fijian (iTaukei)
2 Solomon Islander
3 Ni-Vanuatu
4 Other (please state) _____

8. Please indicate if you have an active account with any of the following social network sites (More than one may apply).

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Facebook |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Google circles |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | YouTube |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Twitter |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Blog sites (any) |
| 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Flickr |
| 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tumblr |
| 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> | MySpace |
| 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hi5 |
| 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ |

9. How often do you visit your social network sites?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Daily |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Weekly |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fortnightly |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Monthly |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | More than a month |

10. Which of the following do you believe is a function(s) that social media plays in your country? (More than one may apply)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Exposing government corruption |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reporting news that does not get reported in traditional media |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Providing a means for citizens to express their opinions |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Providing a forum for citizens to discuss sensitive political issues |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Making government officials feel accountable for their actions |
| 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Communicating to the world unreported information |
| 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ |

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.