George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management and Zignal Labs Release Second PEORIA Project Report

Donald Trump dominates 2016 election chatter on social and traditional media crowding out traditional storylines and other presidential announcements

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WASHINGTON – George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management (GSPM) and Zignal Labs released the second Public Echoes Of Rhetoric In America (PEORIA) Project report "The Talk About Trump" Tuesday. The report, which uses Zignal Labs' realtime, cross media story tracking platform, found that Election 2016 has been divided into two eras: Before Trump and After Trump.

The boisterous businessman has accumulated over 7 million traditional and social media mentions from May 16 to July 19, most nearly all of which occurred between June 16 (his announcement date) and July 19. He also has more people talking about the election in general. The mentions for all candidates in the race has gone from about 212,000 per day to approximately 473,000 per day.

"It's tempting to write off the Trump phenomenon as a summer craze," said GSPM Associate Professor Michael Cornfield. "But the conversation data and the wide open structure of the race suggest that he could be a factor right into the voting process."

Trump has consistently driven the conversation since June 16, garnering 32.5 percent of the total share of voice for all candidates and nearly half (46.6 percent) of the share of voice among Republicans. Trump also played a part in muting former Florida Governor Jeb Bush's post announcement echo. Bush went from owning over 80 percent of the share of voice on June 15 when he announced his candidacy to just 15 percent in the three days after. The Donald, who announced the next day, managed to retain more than 70 percent of the share of voice in the three days following his entry into the race.

The quotable executive also played a part in diminishing the conversation around a traditional campaign story: the candidate's financial reports or the so-called "invisible primary." Financial filings were due at the end of June and numbers were reported out during the subsequent two weeks, but the mentions of money only increased about 4,000 per day (a 35 percent jump). In contrast, the issue of immigration and Trump's incendiary comments on the topic more than doubled in mentions per day to approximately 443,000 after he entered the race.

"Trump has not only pumped up the conversation, but changed the agenda," said GSPM Associate Professor Lara Brown. "Process stories like campaign finance reports are out. Policy stories like immigration are in."

Unfortunately for Trump, campaigning for president is about more than just dominating the conversation; it is ultimately about turning talk to action. On this score, The Donald fares worse. His announcement tweet was retweeted about 11,000 times. That lagged Texas Senator Ted Cruz's announcement, which was retweeted over 13,000 times. On the other side, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's most shared tweet about climate change during this period was retweeted more than 57,000 times. Furthermore, when one calculates the retweets of the

campaign's top tweet over the total mentions, Trump lags nearly all of the Republican field in effectively spreading his message through the social medium.

Other key findings:
• Kentucky Senator Rand Paul is doing well on Twitter. His top tweets relay his issue positions rather than reacting to events or to the comments of a competitor. He also has solid retweet numbers relative to his total number of mentions.

• Sen. Cruz is still the most retweeted candidate (over 160,000 to date) on the Republican side, but Trump is rapidly gaining on him

• Despite being stepped on by Trump, Jeb Bush managed to score a respectable 6 on the GSPM Echo Rating, which measures how the campaign leverages the conversations about their candidate.

• Sen. Cruz and Secretary Clinton again scored the highest on the GSPM Echo Rating when considering the entire 123-day period. Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders had the hardest task and yet his campaign has continued to be surprisingly successful. In fact, his GSPM Echo Rating sits one notch above Trump at an 8.

For additional information, including analysis from Professors Brown and Cornfield, please visit our PEORIA Project page.

About Graduate School of Political Management:
Founded in 1987 and located in the heart of Washington, DC, GW's Graduate School of Political Management is the first and foremost school of applied politics and advocacy offering master's degrees in the following disciplines: Advocacy in the Global Environment, Legislative Affairs, Political Management, Strategic Public Relations, and Communicación Política y Gobernanza. We provide a hands-on education, not a theoretical exploration. Our students know what they want to do to change the world; we teach them how to use the strategies and tactics needed to do it. Our faculty are recognized industry leaders and bring the best practices of the field into the classroom.

About Zignal Labs:
Zignal Labs is a realtime, cross media story-tracking platform. We enable clients to quickly spot trends, see relevant stories unfold, and take action.

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