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INTRODUCTION

Ghana is one of the first countries in sub-Saharan Africa to have Internet access. Today, the country has nearly 27 million mobile phone subscribers, 8 million internet users and approximately 3.5 million Ghanaians on social media platform, Facebook alone, while data penetration stands at about 40% of the total population. These factors remain the key drivers of social media which has become very ubiquitous in all spheres of the contemporary Ghanaian society and continue to change information consumption behaviour by providing citizens access to immediate online information without the constraints of space and time.

In the 2012 election in the US, 30% of online users reported that they were urged to vote via social media. In Ghana, social media has become a normal and central form of communications for all segments of the population, particularly, political parties and their leaders who rely on social medium for political engagement because it provides direct and cheap access to information about their programs. As a result, traditional media as a conduit between the executive and the governed has been tremendously enhanced by social media, particularly, Facebook and Twitter which have assumed a prominent role in political communication and engagement.

Currently, there are more than 1 billion active Facebook users globally, making this social media platform a cultural, economic and social phenomenon that cannot be ignored. In 2009, Facebook's chat surpassed the one billion messages per day milestone which makes the site perhaps, the best for contacts and exchange of information in an unprecedented manner. *Twitter*, a free Social Network platform remains one of the easiest platform for promoting or sharing ideas and expanding once website's audience. Twitter makes room for free advertisements and interaction on Twitter is based on accounts following one another, while people who follow one's account are publicly subscribing to see the updates and one's post.

In order to track the relevance of social media in the governance space, @penplusbytes is pioneering *Governance Social Media Index* (GSMI) and issued on 28th June, 2016, its first edition that provided a baseline information about the adoption and use of social media by political parties, political party leaders and key election management bodies. The second edition of the **GSMI, compiled** on 30th September, 2016, builds on the first edition with a detailed analysis on the use of social media assets by these actors and what has changed. The second GSMI was compiled after the disqualification of 13 presidential candidates from the 2016 General Elections by the Electoral Commission of Ghana. This edition however, includes these candidates because they were part of the first GSMI. The 2nd GSMI reveals that, political actors continue to use the social media to create a sense of connection and engagement with the larger citizenry.

SUMMARY OF THE SECOND GSMI

The 2nd GSMI reveals that as at 30th September, 2016, President John Mahama is leading the pack of presidential candidates with 269,264 followers on twitter and 1,007,595 likes on Facebook. He is followed by the opposition leader, Nana Akufo-Addo with 108,386 followers on twitter and 981,057 likes on Facebook. The highlights of the 2nd GSMI are as follows:

Facebook

As depicted in **Table 1**, all the presidential candidates on Facebook recorded increased number of followers. The gains, from first to the last in percentage terms are as follows: Mr Ivor Kobina Greenstreet, 261%; Dr Edward Mahama, 99%; Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings, 63%; Nana Akufo-Addo, 38%; President John Dramani Mahama, 14%; and Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom, 3%. The gains made by Mr Ivor Kobina Greenstreet is worthy of note. Though he has demonstrated that a disability is not an inability, the CPP candidate has perhaps decided to pay more attention to his social media assets, because of his peculiar situation as the only physically challenged person in the election. The performance of the candidates in terms of real numbers from the first to the last (with further details in **Table 2**) are as follows: John Dramani Mahama, 126, 975; Nana AkufoAddo 265,341; Ivor Kobina Greenstreet 21,732; Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings 11,199; Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom 7, 057; Dr Edward Mahama 3,377; Dr Hassan Ayariga 3,113.

President, John Dramani Mahama, has 1,007,595 likes on his Facebook page, an increase of 125,171 more likes from the 1st Governance Social Media Index report issued in June 2016. The leader of the largest opposition party, Nana Akufo-Addo followed the president with 981,057 followers on his Facebook wall which also indicates an increase of 265,341 more likes. This shows that even though president Mahama has over 1 million Facebook followers, Nana Akufo-Addo had more likes (265,341) as compared to that of president Mahama (125,175) for the past three months. Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings did not have a Twitter account at the time of the 1st Index in June 2016. However, in this 2nd edition, Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings has a Twitter account with 493 followers which surpasses that of Dr Edward Mahama with 328 followers. With regards to the political parties, the NPP is leading the pack with 307,963 followers on their Facebook wall followed by the PPP with 33,193 followers beating the NDC who were second in the 1st Governance Social Media Index report. The NDC is third with 24,743 likes on their Facebook wall.

As shown in **Table 2**, the gains made by political party candidates on Twitter from first to the last in percentage terms is as follows: Dr. Hassan Ayariga, 450%; Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings, 131.46%; Ivor Kobina Greenstreet, 77.18%; John Dramani Mahama, 20.30%; Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom, 15.41%; and Nana Akufo-Addo, 15.26%. The gains or performance from first to last in real terms is as follows: President John Dramani Mahama 45,430; Nana Akufo-Addo 14,352; Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom 6,721; Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings 280; Ivor Kobina Greenstreet, 254; Dr. Edward Mahama 115; Dr. Hassan Ayariga, 36. However, Nana Akufo-Addo has engaged more with the public or his followers on Twitter with, 4,637 tweets while the President Mahama has only tweeted 842.

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE BY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

As depicted on Table..., there are 275 members of parliament. Out of this number, only 93 are on both Facebook and Twitter, with 49 and 43 for NPP and NDC respectively. Out of the 93, only 18 have Twitter accounts with 9 for the NPP and 9 for the NDC. Surprisingly only one independent candidate is on Facebook.

THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY IMPORTANT ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES

The EC, the only institution entrusted with the responsibility of conducting elections in the country has both Facebook and Twitter accounts with 114,028 and 1,619 followers respectively. The Ghana Police Service

has both Facebook and twitter accounts with 20,942 and 3,676 followers respectively. The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) has Facebook and twitter accounts with 13,383 and 1,218 followers respectively. However, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the National Peace Council (NPC) and the Judicial Council of Ghana are not present on social media.



Picture 1: A screenshot of the banner handle of Prez Mahama showing the number of followers on Twitter



Picture 2: A screenshot of the banner handle of Nana Akufo-Addo showing the number of followers on Twitter



Picture 3: A screenshot of the banner handle of Ivor K. Greenstreet showing the number of followers on

Table 1: Ranking of Presidential candidates according to their following on Facebook

Presidential Candidates	June 2016	September 2016	Gain	%change	Status of verification	Level of engagement
John Dramani Mahama	880,620	1,007,595	126, 975	14.42%	Verified	High engagement
Nana AkufoAddo	715,716	981,057	265,341	38%	Verified	High engagement
Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom	263,450	270,507	7, 057	3%	Not verified	Low engagement
Ivor Kobina Greenstreet	8,316	30,048	21,732	261.33%	Not verified	Low engagement
Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings	17,907	29,106	11,199	63%	Not verified	Low engagement
Dr Edward Mahama	3,402	6,779	3,377	99.27%	Not verified	Low engagement
Dr Hassan Ayariga		3,113	3,113		Not verified	Low engagement

Figure 3: Number of Followers on Facebook for June & September 2016

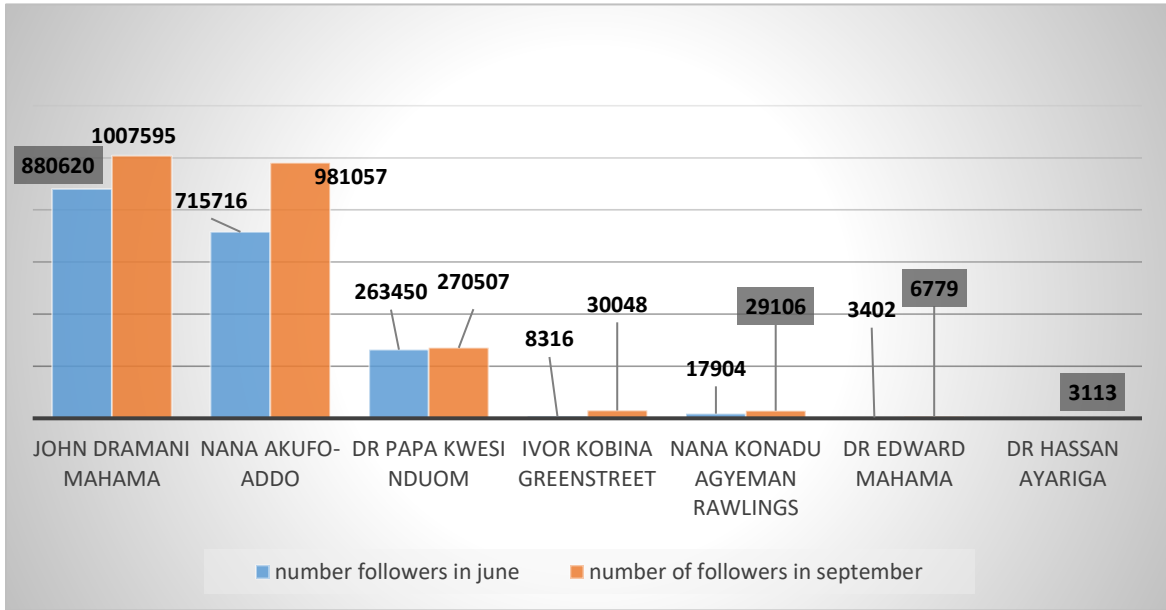


Figure 4: Increase in number of Facebook followers for Presidential Candidates for June to September 2016

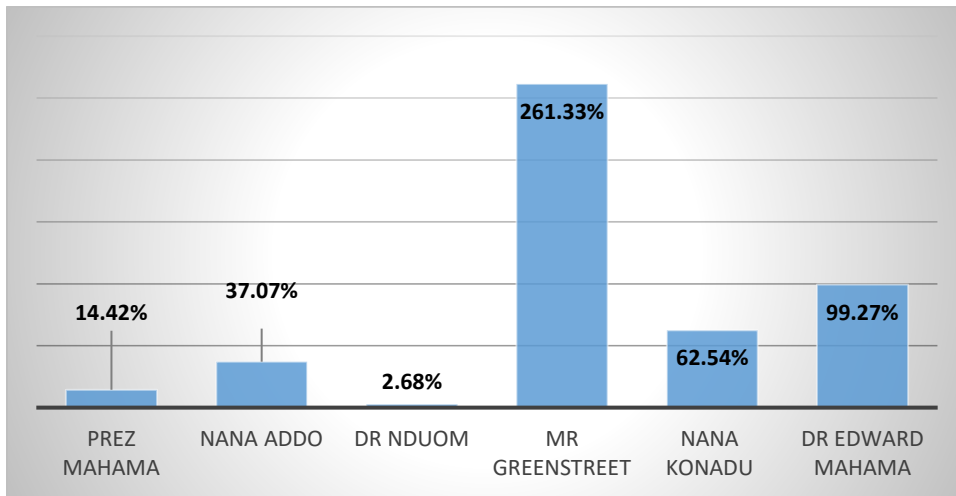


Figure 5: % Increase of Followers for Presidential Candidates 2016 from June September 2016

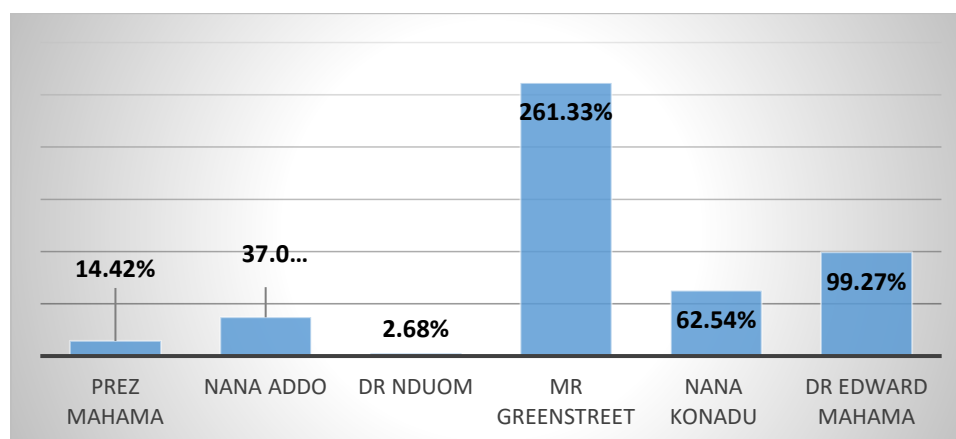


Table 2: Ranking of presidential candidates according to their following on twitter

Prez Candidate	June 2016	September 2016	Gain	% Change	No. of Tweets	Status of verification	Level of engagement
John Dramani Mahama	223,834	269,264	45,430	20.30%	842	Verified	High engagement
Nana Akufo-Addo	94,034	108,386	14,352	15.26%	4,637	Verified	High engagement
Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom	44,791	51,692	6,721	15.41%	458	Not verified	Low engagement
Ivor Kobina Greenstreet	355	609	254	77.18%	283	Not verified	Low engagement
Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings	213	493	280	131.46%	323	Not verified	Low engagement
Dr. Edward Mahama	213	328	115	53.99%	167	Not verified	Low engagement
Dr. Hassan Ayariga	8	44	36	450%	38	Not verified	Low engagement

Table 6: Number of followers on twitter

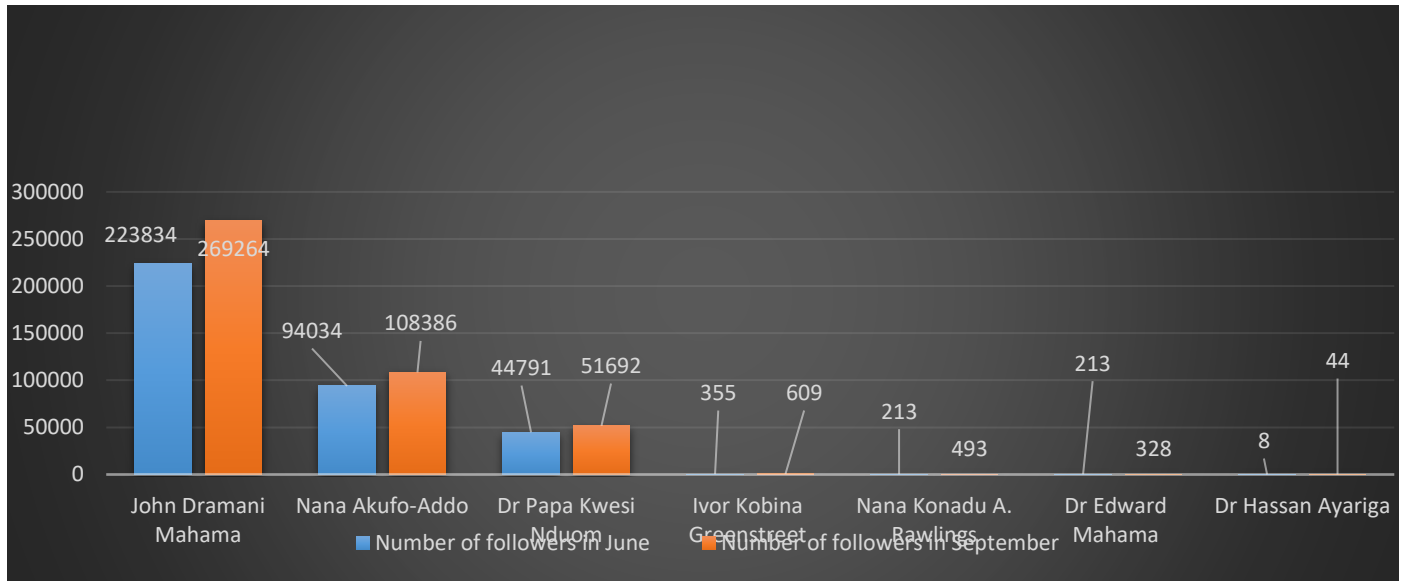
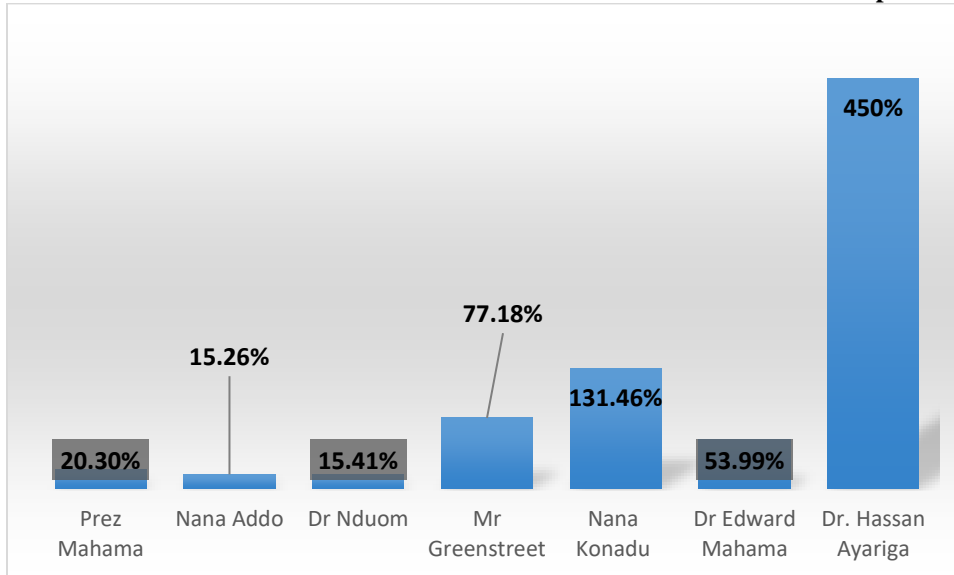


Figure 7: % Twitter Follower Increase for Presidential Candidates from June - September 2016



POLITICAL PARTIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Political parties are indispensable for the effective functioning of democratic governance, and therefore, the essence of democracy. Political parties do not only educate, formulate and shape public opinion, but also help in developing the political consciousness of citizens, who otherwise do not have the capacity to

understand critical political issues. The ability of political parties to reach out to citizens with timely, accurate and important information is therefore imperative for the effective functioning of every democratic state. According to the Electoral Commission of Ghana, there are 25 registered political parties. Out of these, only eleven (11) are on Facebook and four (4) on twitter. The four political parties with a twitter handle are the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the Convention People's Party (CPP) and All People's Congress (APC). The other 14 registered political parties do not have both Facebook and twitter accounts.

Table 3: Ranking of political parties on Facebook according to their following

No	Political Parties	June, 2016	September, 2016 Number of followers on Facebook	Percentage Change	Status of verification	Level of engagement	Address
1	NPP	258,340	307,963	19.21%	Verified	High engagement	https://www.facebook.com/newpatrioticparty.org/
2	PPP	26157	33,193	26.90%	Not verified	Low engagement	https://www.facebook.com/PPPGhana/
3	NDC	24360	24,743	1.57%	Verified	Low engagement	https://www.facebook.com/OfficialNDCGhana
4	NDP	8968	8977	0.10%	Not verified	Low engagement	https://www.facebook.com/The.Official.NDP/
5	CPP	6607	6662	0.83%	Not verified	Low engagement	https://www.facebook.com/ConventionPeoplesParty/
6	GCPP	1107	1194	7.86%	Not verified	Low engagement	https://www.facebook.com/GreatConsolidatedPopularPartygcpp/?fref=ts
7	IPP	292	297	1.71%	Not verified	Low engagement	https://www.facebook.com/Independent-Peoples-Party-IPP-163898856986240/?ref=hl
8	URP	55	55	0	Not verified	Low engagement	https://www.facebook.com/URP-United-Renaissance-Party-159278014158780/
9	APC	19	19	0	Not verified	No engagement	https://www.facebook.com/apcgghana2016
10	GNP	9	9	0	Not verified	Low engagement	https://www.facebook.com/Ghana-National-Party-GNP-119496774787260/

Figure 8: Political parties and their followers on Facebook

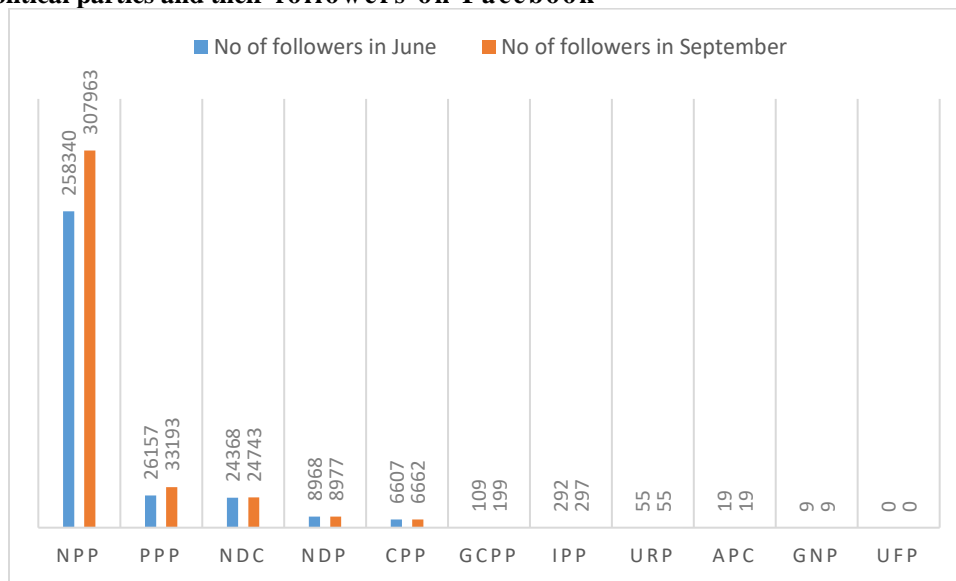
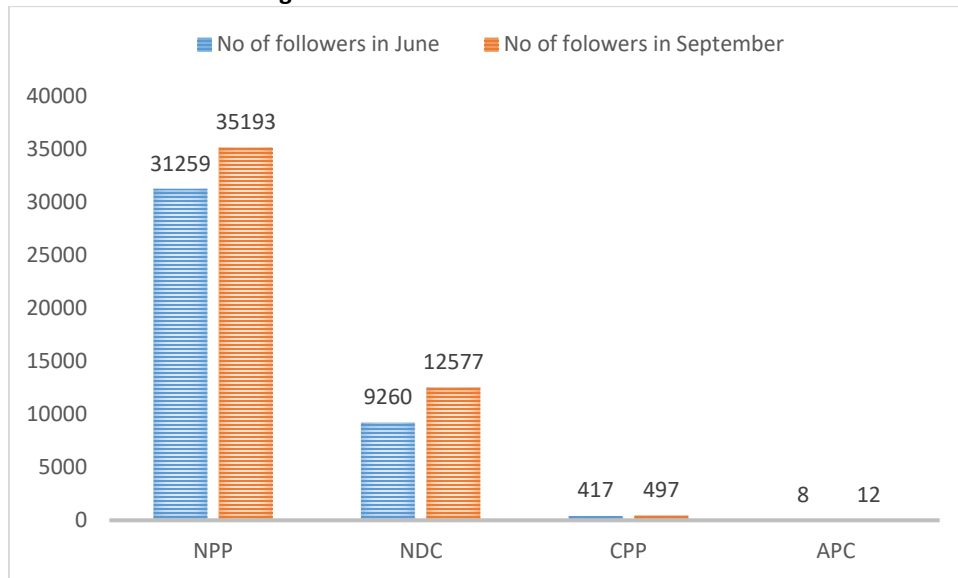


Table 4: Ranking of political parties on twitter according to their following

No	Political party	June 2016	September 2016 No of followers	Status verification	Level of engagement	Address
1	NPP	31, 259	35,193	Not verified	Low engagement	https://twitter.com/GhanaNPP
2	NDC	9, 260	12,577	Not verified	Low engagement	https://twitter.com/OfficialNDCGh
3	CPP	417	497	Not verified	No engagement	https://twitter.com/CPGhanaOnline
4	APC	8	12	Not verified	No engagement	https://twitter.com/apcghana2016

Figure 9: Number of Followers on Twitter



CONCLUSION

Since Barack Obama broke the world record in the history of social media use for political purpose during the 2008 US presidential elections, many nations and politicians across the globe have continued to embrace the platform to mobilize their citizens and candidates towards active participation in the political process. The tactics employed during that campaign has changed the rules of political communication and since then electoral campaigns have been more about social networking using the existing and emerging social media platforms than the conventional approach which emphasizes more of a one-way communication with limited chances to generate feedback. This **index** has shown that Ghanaian political parties and some election management bodies have increased their reliance on social media to engage their electorates, particularly ahead of the 2016 General Elections. However, social media is driven largely by fast internet connectivity. There is therefore the need to improve internet services across the country for the effective use of social media for political communication among Ghanaians.