



UNIVERSIDAD DE
COSTA RICA

INTERNET POLITICS

Towards a social networking typology —Costa Rican municipal elections analysis

PROSIC

Programa Institucional
Sociedad de la Información
y el Conocimiento



- **Context**
 - Electoral Politics
 - Municipal Election
- **Analyzing Internet Politics**
 - Case Study
 - Facebook Analysis
- **Towards a Typology**



CONTEXT

- Geographic Information
- Municipal Legislation
- Political Context



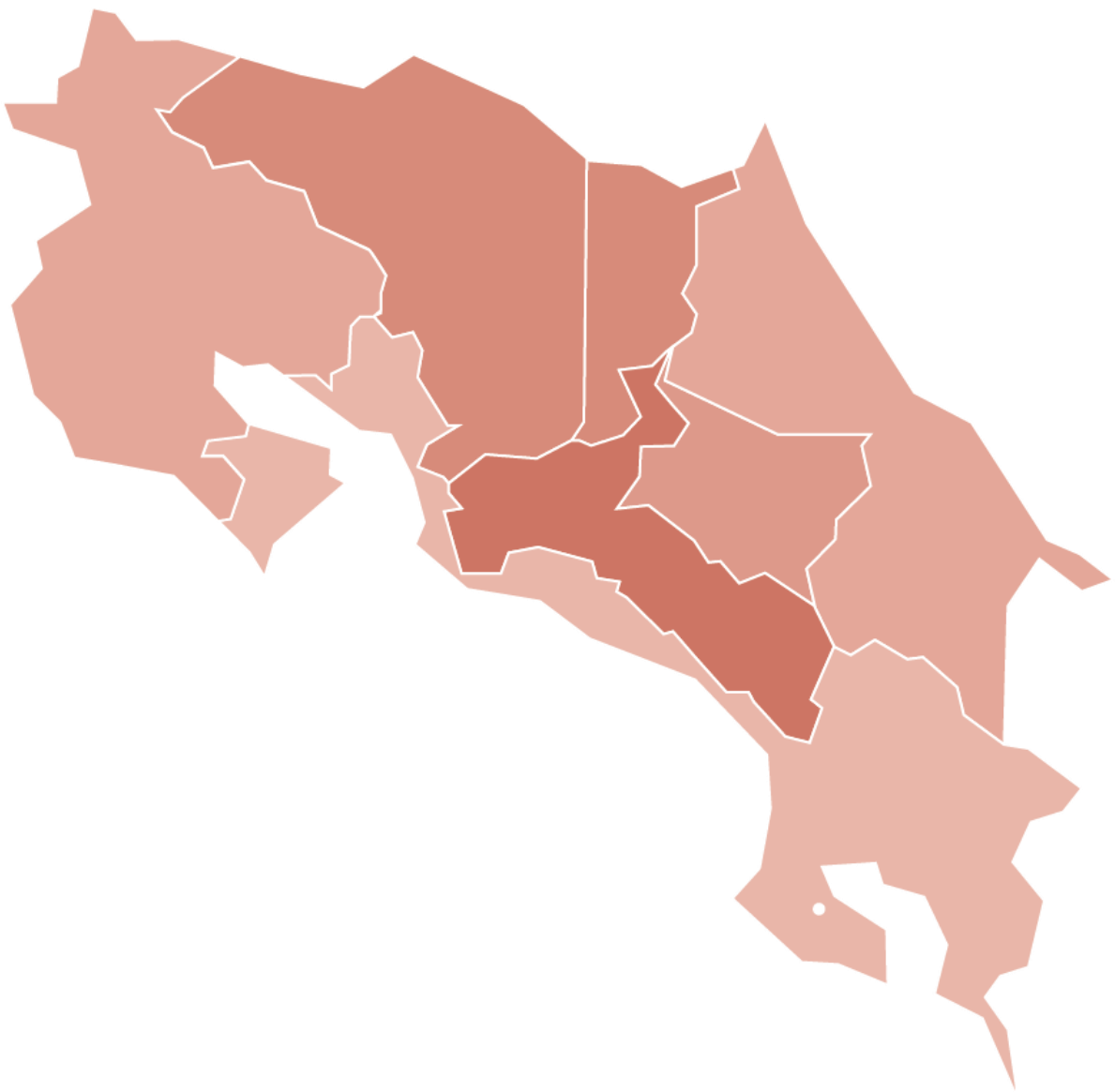
Context

- 7 provinces, 81 municipalities and 474 districts
- Each municipality is run by a Municipal Council
 - The Council takes decisions on a simple majority basis, so it's formed by 5, 7 or 9 members
- Each Council position is popularly elected to 4-year periods
 - The Municipal elections were reformed in 2009, but such reforms took effect till 2016, causing the previous period to last six years
 - Elections are now held as mid-period, regarding the presidential term
- Elected mayors are now democratically accountable and revocable
- Despite high levels of autonomy, municipalities have limited power



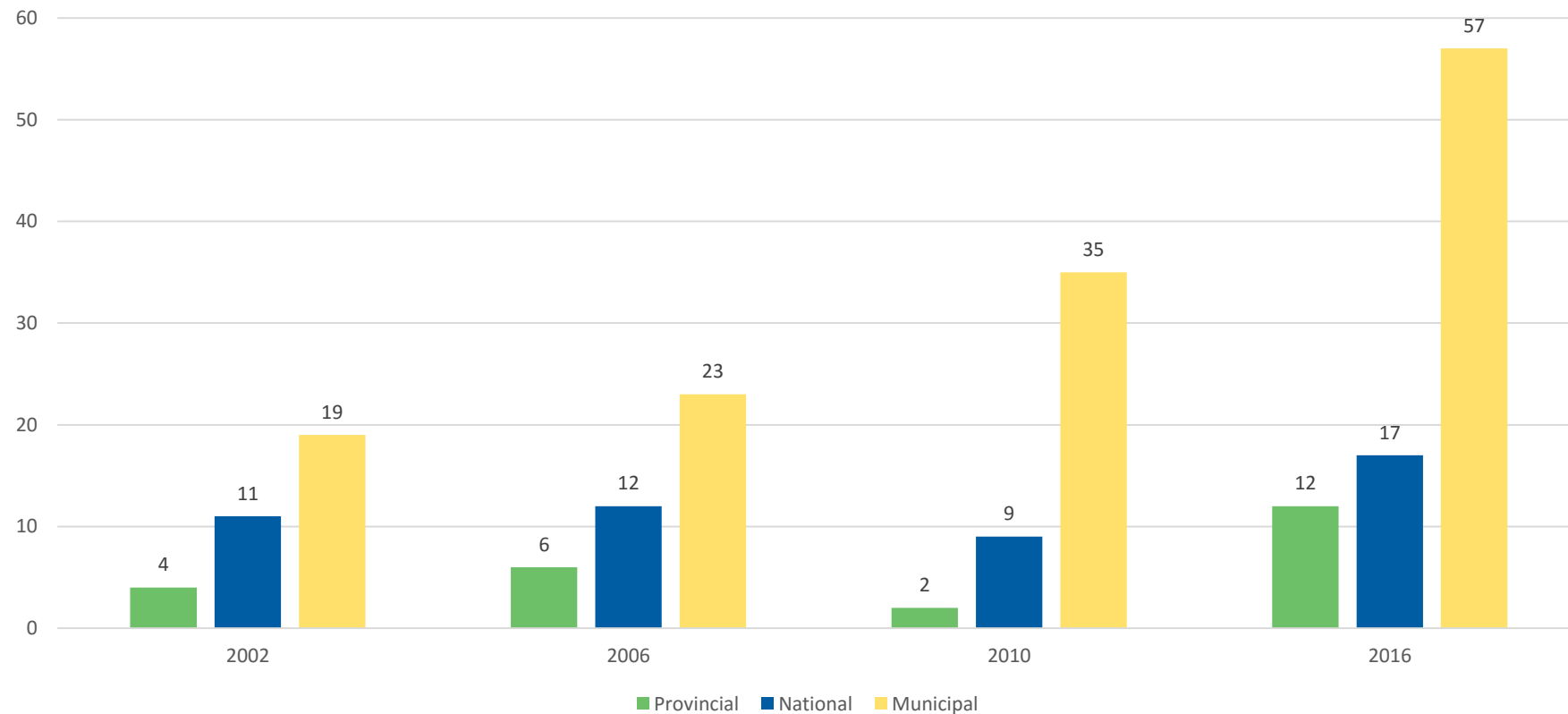
Context

- 2016 municipal election was «the most complex and expensive democratic process in the country's history» (TSE, 2016)
- *Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones*, Costa Rica's electoral authority
 - 3 178 364 voters
 - 1 584 178 men- 1 594 186 female
 - 40% under the age 34
 - 6 069 positions
 - Mayors and Council member
 - 35 000 candidates
 - 9,7 ballots printed and distributed



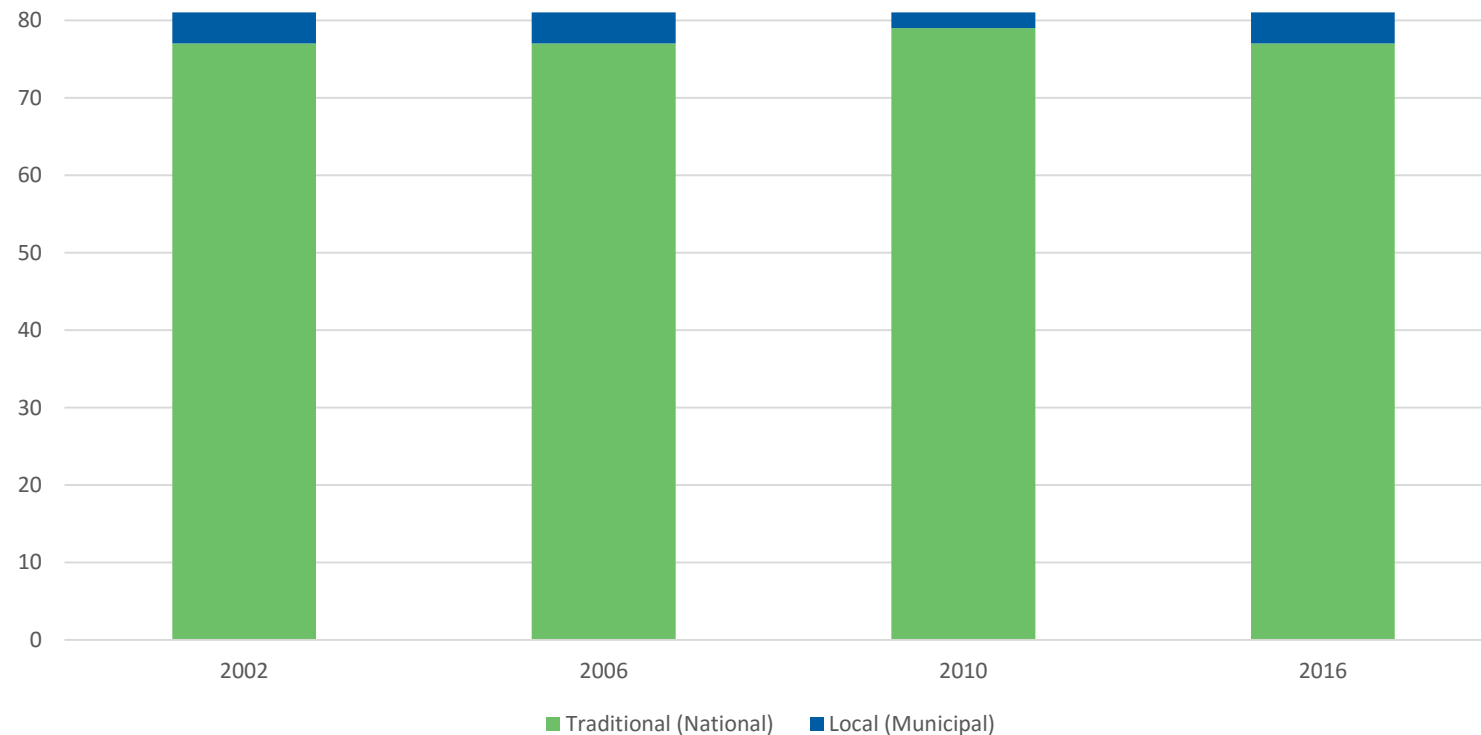
Political behavior

- Despite the larger number of local-level parties in the running



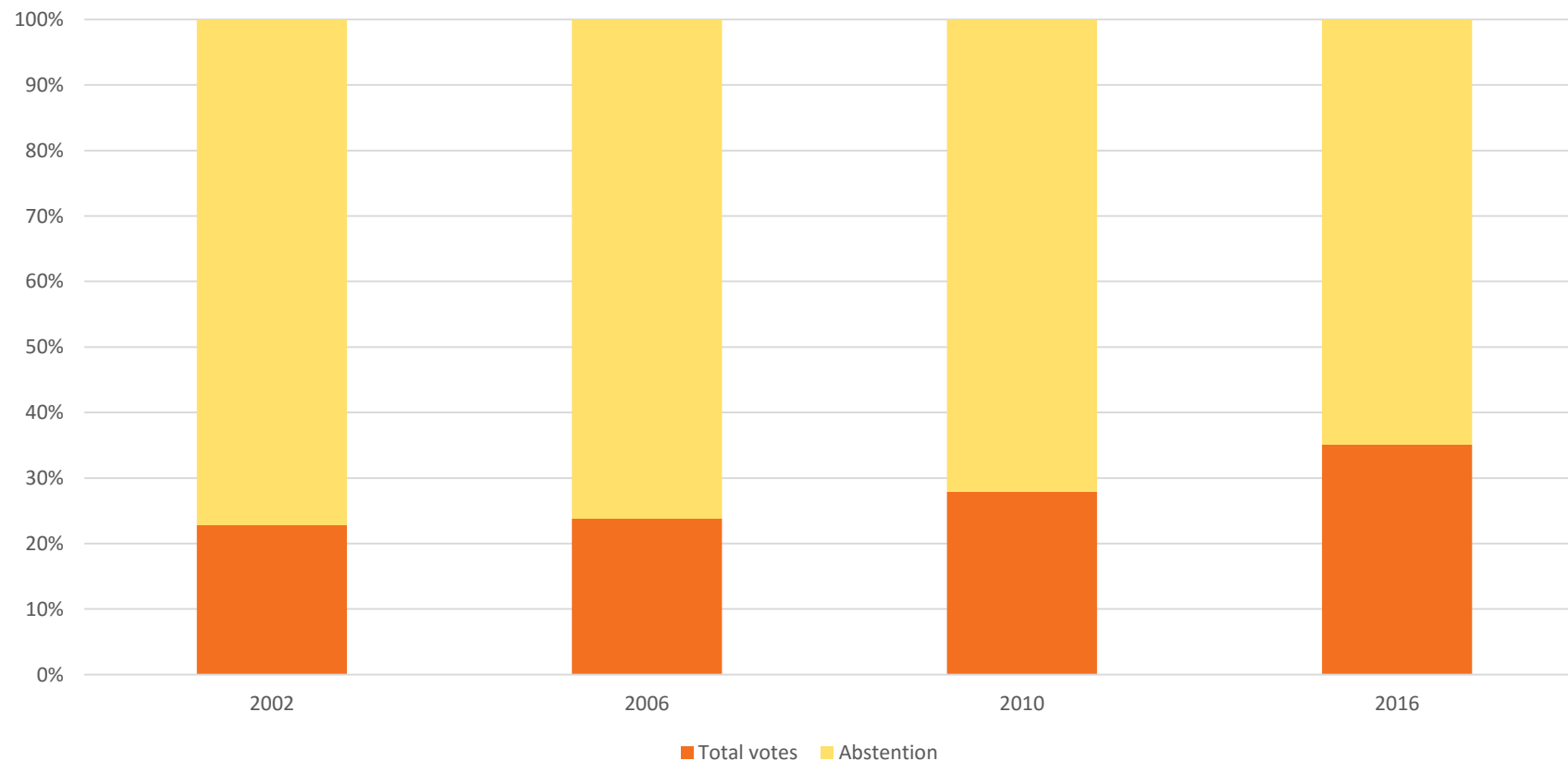
Political behavior

- Historical predominance of traditional (national-level) parties



Political behavior

- As well as facing a historical disinterest for local politics





ANALYZING INTERNET POLITICS

- Case Studies
- Facebook Analysis
- Results



Case Studies

- Methodological Criteria
 - Participation in the previous municipal election (2010)
 - Election Result (2010)
 - Facebook presence
 - 2016 results
- After refining the list of cases, 24 parties were selected
 - This included parties competing in 6/7 provinces, and predominantly urban areas



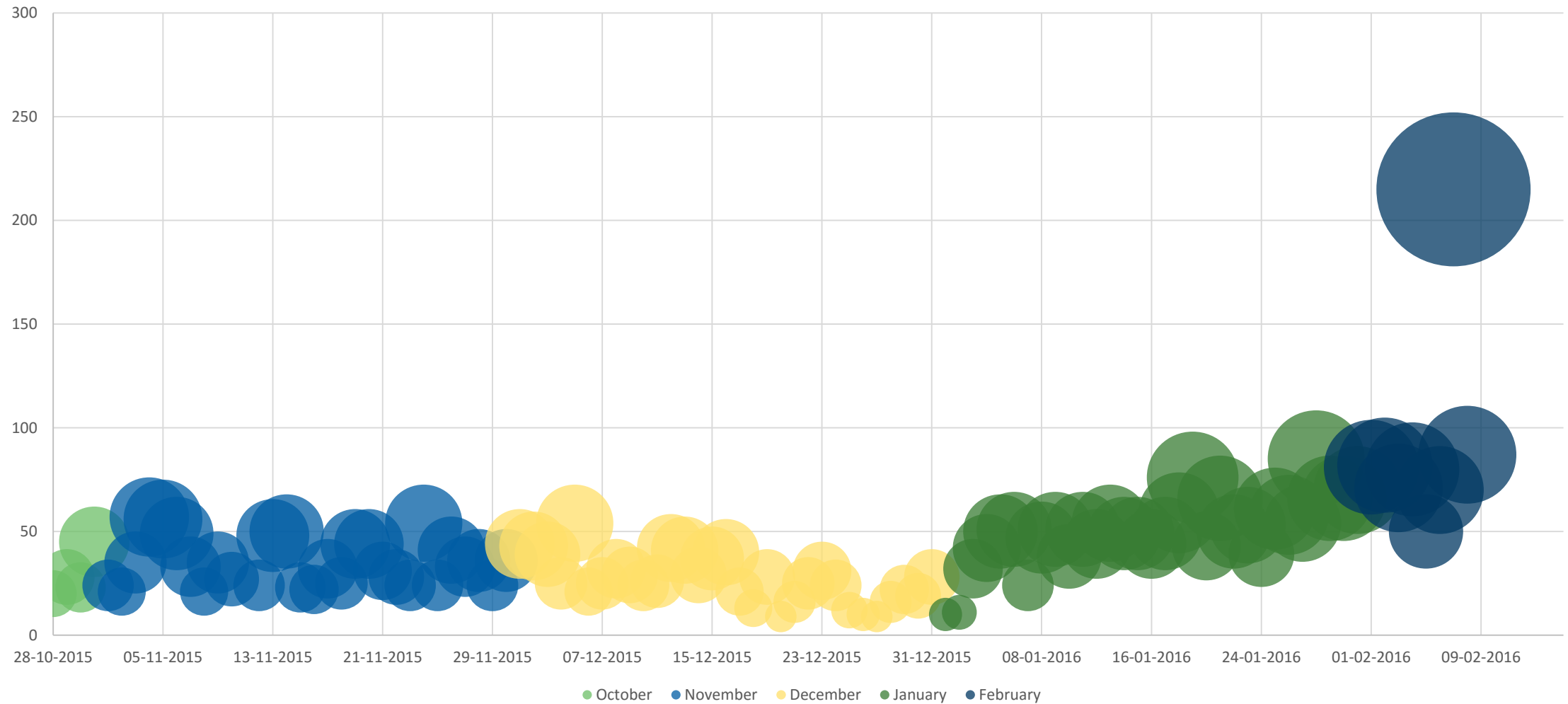


Facebook Analysis

- Exploratory study of parties' Facebook pages
 - Followers, Likes, Comments and Shares; time stamps and textual content
- Open sourced tool *Netvizz*
 - Facebook *app* programmed to extract ("mine") pages
 - <https://tools.digitalmethods.net/>
- Longitudinal-comparative analysis
 - Descriptive method

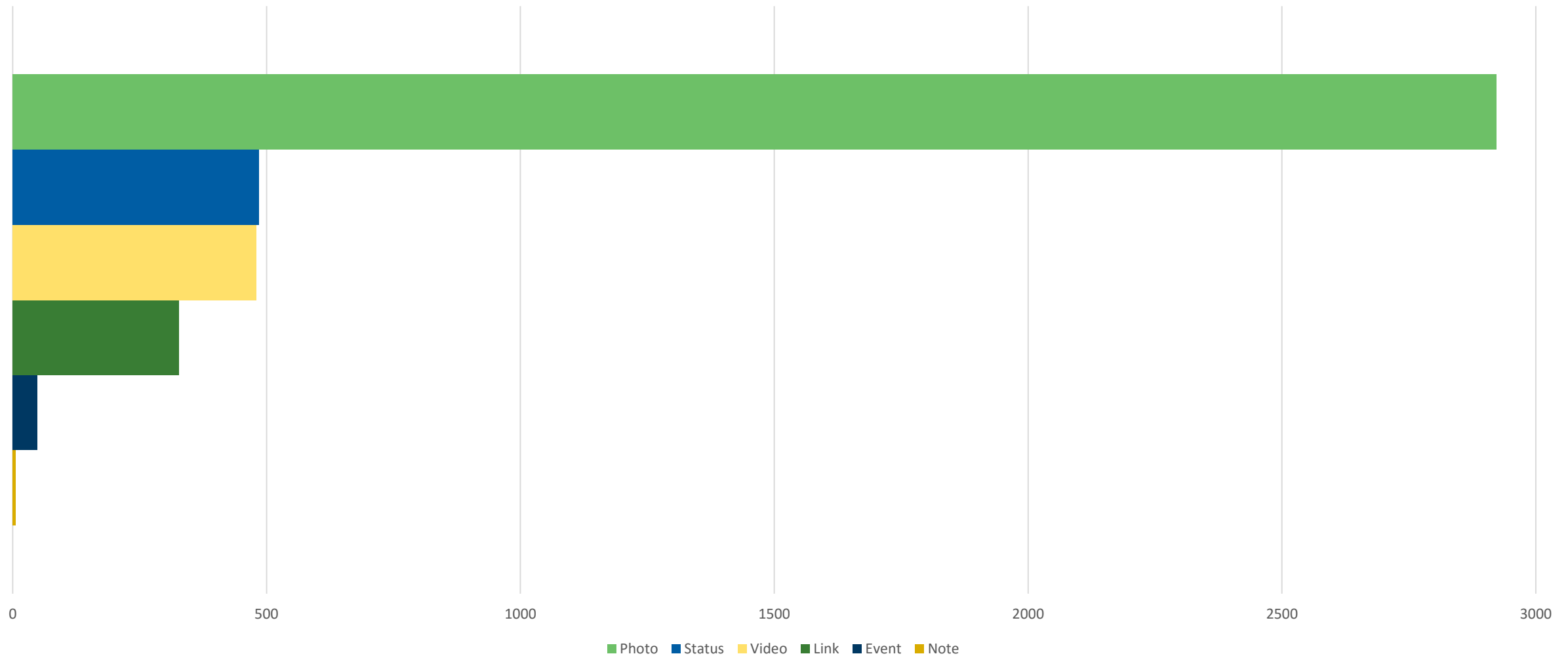


Facebook Analysis



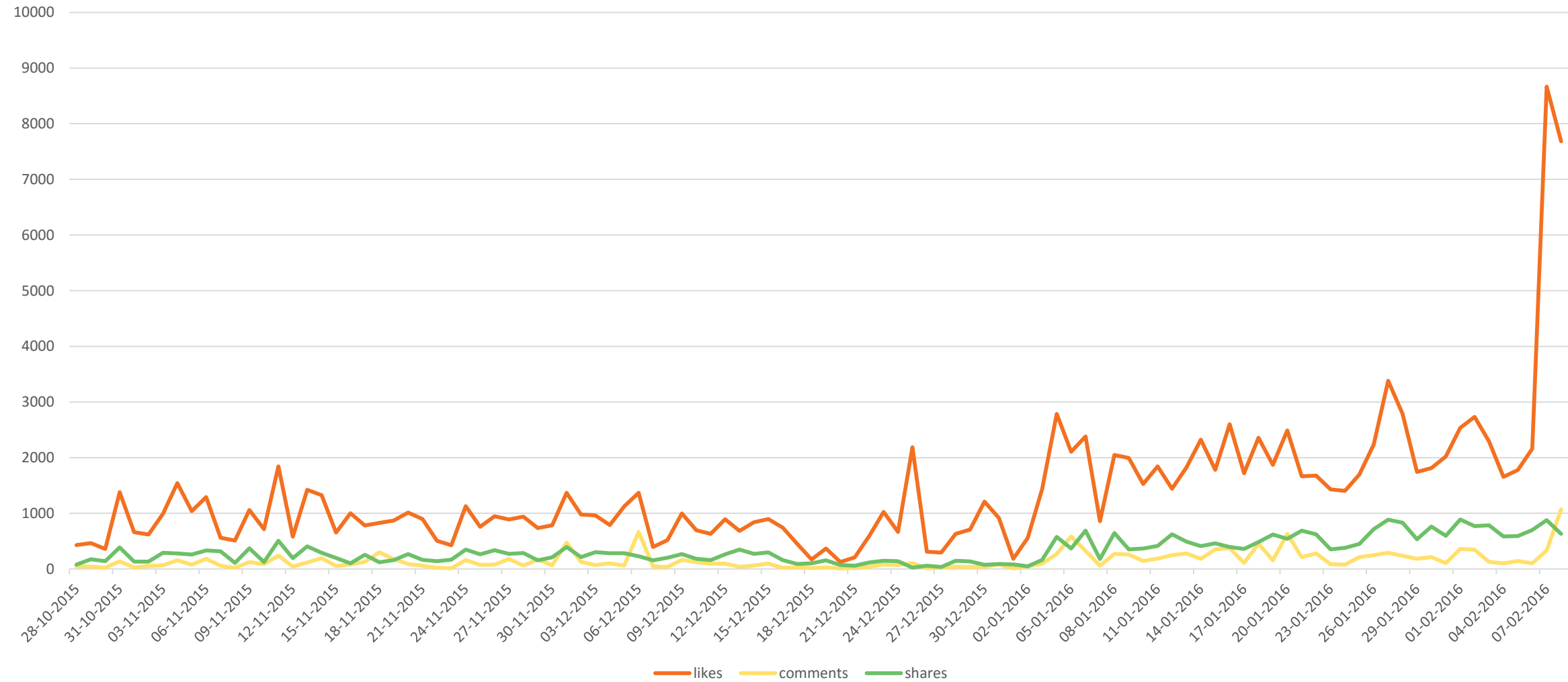


Facebook Analysis



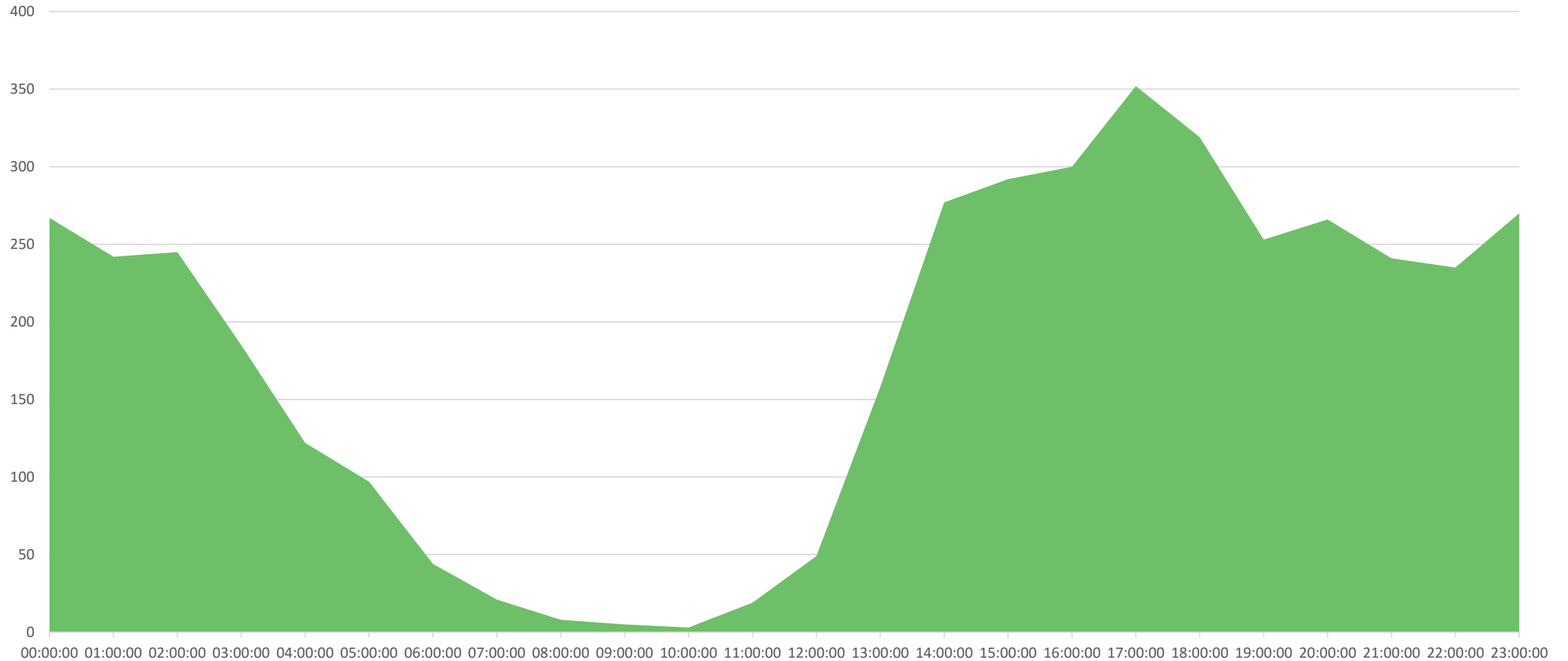


Facebook Analysis





Facebook Analysis



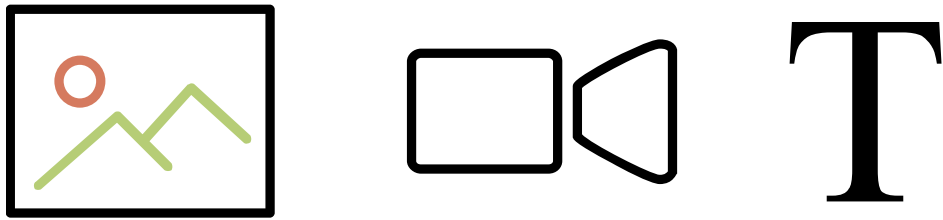


TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY

- This classification is based on the relation between the type of posts each party published and the response obtained
- Additionally, there's a ponderation regarding the predominance of specific types of posts (*photos, videos, links, etc.*)
- Thus, the post type and the response it gets defines the «party profile» to classify

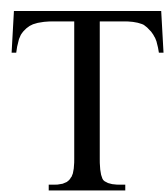
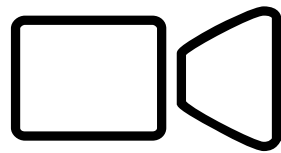
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TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY

- This typology is based on the works by Cho & Moya (2014), Fiebert (2013), and Wallace, Buil, Chernatony & Hogan (2014)
 - User interaction
- It defines three party profiles that best describe a party's to post a specific content type, as well as the ensuing consequences in the way content is consumed by its followers
 1. Informative
 2. Auto-promotional
 3. Interactive



Informative

	Content					
	Photo	<u>Text</u>	Video	Link	Event	Note
Yunta Progresista Escazuceña	89	68	23	4	6	1
Progreso Comunal Desamparados	112	31	3	1		
Barva Unida	88	30	8	12	3	
Desamparados Unido	61	24	3	3	3	
Renovemos Alajuela	98	22	13	7		
Auténtico Limonense	71	15	8	8	1	
Unidos por Guatuso	4	5				
Verde Ecologista	3	2	3	13		
Unión Guarqueña	27	1	8	2		5
Todo por Flores	59	1	2	14		



Auto-Promotional

	Content					
	Photo	Text	<u>Video</u>	Link	Event	Note
Movimiento Avance Santo Domingo	96	27	41	10	1	
Renovación Cartago	107	8	36	12		
Ecológico Comunal Costarricense	230	25	32	43		
Alianza por San José	139	24	30	9		
Pueblo Garabito	50	3	26	2		
Viva Puntarenas	51	1	23	3	2	
Liga Ramonense	39	17	23	19		
Del Sol	62	4	22	4	3	
Somos Tibás	135	17	19	16		
Auténtico Labrador de Coronado	140	12	18	6		
Parrita Independiente	44	4	2	6		



Interactive

	Content					
	Photo	Text	Video	Link	<u>Event</u>	Note
Auténtico Siquirreño	25		3	4	25	
Gente Montes de Oca	170	49	50	44	17	
Autónomo Oromontano	11	5		1	11	
Alianza por Belén	111	3	8	3	6	
Curridabat Siglo XXI	112	3	6	9	5	



DISCUSSION

- The majority of local parties don't have the resources necessary to develop a proper digital campaign
- Albeit its recognition, digital communication models are still under estimated
- Virtual campaigning is carried about naively and unprofessionally
- There are still major inequalities between big -traditional parties, and small -local ones
- Political structure and organizational cohesion validate electoral success
- Political parties still refuse to adopt 2.0 practices in their structures



DISCUSSION

- The majority of parties prefer the Informative style of communication (static) and the auto-promotional one. Interactive style (agile and often ubiquitous) is the least used
- Despite this, there is no clear indication that a particular profile is more effective than the others
 - Money and personalization are still very important in this type of election



FINAL THOUGHTS

- Web 2.0 practices have not been fully (nor partially) instituted by the parties (national and local)
- Traditional parties still dominate the political landscape
 - Local parties have more online presence in spite of not being electorally successful
- Abstention dropped but it's still the highest result
 - There's indication of a new political configuration (more parties + more voters + political use of the Internet)
- e-Democracy still faces challenges (digital divide, clientelism and ICTs appropriation)



Thanks!

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