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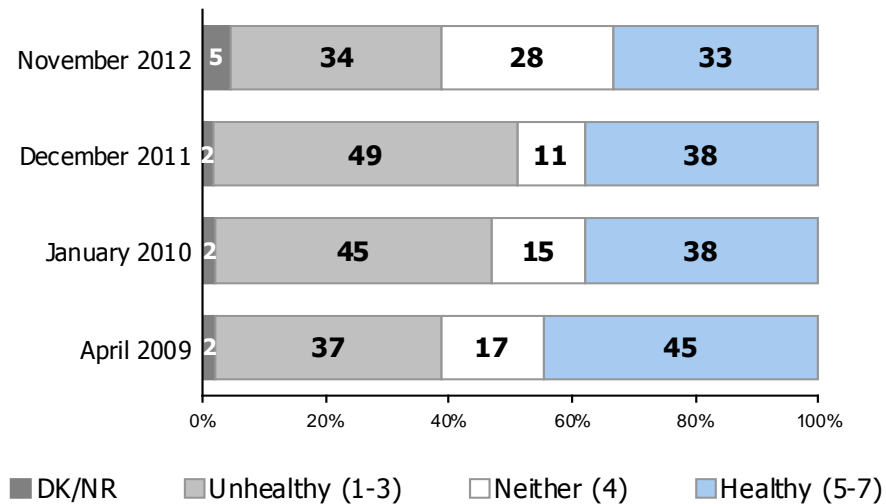
## SOCIAL MEDIA, SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, AND DEMOCRATIC HEALTH

ADDENDUM TO LOOKING BACKWARD, LOOKING FORWARD: PART 3

[Ottawa – January 4, 2013] In yesterday’s release on social media, we discussed its linkage to democratic health and to socioeconomic status (SES) – i.e., income and educational attainment. We provide two additional pieces of background evidence. The first doesn’t directly link social media and democratic health but it does show the recent trend lines in how Canadians rate the health of democracy. The trend line is not auspicious and shows that a much longer decline in trust in government, which is pervasive to the advanced western world and began in the eighties, is not improving. This decline in trust is actually linked to some of the broader values shifts we will be discussing in our release later today (less deference, less respect for authority and traditional values). The tracking over the past few years is presented in Figure 3-2.

### Figure 3-2: Perceived health of democracy

*Q. How would you rate the overall health of democracy at the federal level in Canada?*



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BASE: Canadians; most recent data point November 20 – December 3, 2012 (n=5,433)

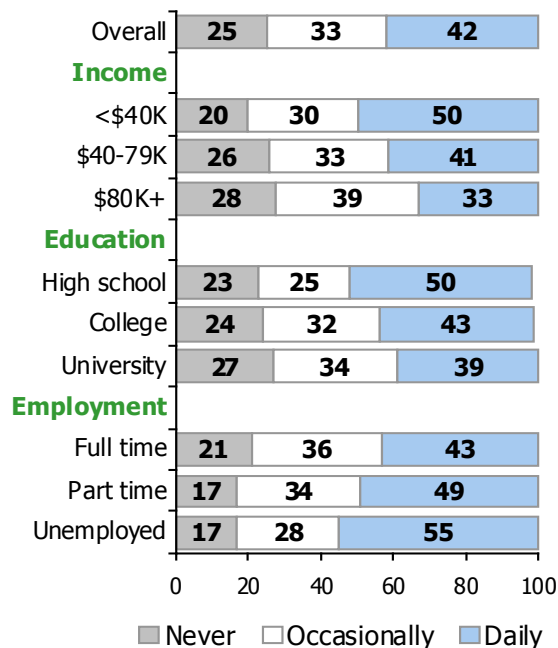
We have gone from a modest plurality rating the health of federal democracy positively in the spring of 2009 to a mere one-third minority today. These highly polarized views are dramatically split across whether one supports the government of the day or not (in a predictable manner).

Less predictably, positive trust is restricted largely to senior Canada<sup>1</sup> and is pretty low in all other age groups. University graduates are much less trusting, as are residents of provinces other than Alberta.

The second addendum looks a little more closely at the linkage between social media consumption and socioeconomic status (income and educational attainment) and how well one is faring it the labour market. We have to be cautious in not mixing up the effects of age where social media consumption is most focused in younger Canada who are also more prone to labour market problems these days. While some of these effects are accounted for by age, there is an important additional effect which is associated with social media consumption.

### Figure 3-3: Social media use

Q. How often do you use the following: Social networking website, such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn?



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BASE: Canadians; January 27 – February 8, 2012 (n=1,091)

Historically, there has been a strong positive correlation between Internet consumption and SES. The more affluent and educated were far more likely to be frequent Internet users. In the case of social media, this relationship is no longer the case and there may even be a negative correlation between heavy consumption of social media and SES. It is also the case that the most avid daily users of social media are faring more poorly in the labour market. They are less likely to be employed at all and, if they are, they may be in poorer jobs which, for example, are less likely to pay overtime. These relationships are modest but interesting as they seem to be reversing the

<sup>1</sup> Nevitte, Neil, "The Decline of Deference: Canadian Value Change in Comparative Perspective 1981-1990", Toronto: Broadview Press, 1996. Print.

direction of the 'digital divide' of a decade ago which saw a positive linkage between Internet consumption, SES, and labour force outcomes.

So as in the case of both the economy and democracy, we may want to curb our enthusiasm on the uncritical view that social media are purely positive forces. To adapt a famous skeptical note from Robert Solow (referring to computers), you can see social media everywhere, except in the productivity statistics.



## Detailed Tables

<b>Use of Social Media</b>								
<i>Q. How often do you use the following?</i>								
<i>Social networking website, such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn</i>								
	Never	Once or twice a month	About once a week	Several days a week	Daily or almost daily	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2891</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>REGION</b>								
British Columbia	28%	14%	9%	12%	37%	0%	348	5.3
Alberta	26%	16%	10%	11%	36%	0%	670	3.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	39%	11%	10%	12%	27%	1%	176	7.4
Ontario	24%	12%	11%	9%	43%	0%	1080	3.0
Quebec	24%	10%	10%	12%	43%	1%	477	4.5
Atlantic Canada	21%	8%	4%	11%	57%	0%	140	8.3
<b>GENDER</b>								
Male	30%	14%	11%	10%	35%	1%	1596	2.5
Female	21%	11%	8%	11%	48%	0%	1295	2.7
<b>AGE</b>								
<35	7%	6%	6%	12%	69%	0%	471	4.5
35-54	20%	14%	11%	12%	42%	0%	1182	2.9
55-64	39%	15%	11%	11%	24%	0%	629	3.9
65+	54%	16%	10%	7%	12%	0%	511	4.3
<b>INCOME</b>								
<\$40K	20%	10%	8%	12%	50%	0%	685	3.7
\$40-79K	26%	13%	10%	10%	41%	0%	959	3.2
\$80K+	28%	15%	12%	12%	33%	0%	810	3.4
<b>EDUCATION</b>								
High school or less	23%	10%	8%	7%	50%	0%	263	6.0
College or CEGEP	24%	11%	10%	11%	43%	0%	1126	2.9
University or higher	27%	13%	10%	11%	39%	0%	1481	2.6
<b>LABOUR FORCE STATUS</b>								
Self-employed	27%	14%	12%	10%	36%	1%	402	4.9
Employed full-time	21%	13%	11%	12%	43%	0%	1174	2.9
Employed part-time	17%	12%	13%	9%	49%	0%	157	7.8
Unemployed	17%	11%	6%	11%	55%	1%	104	9.6

### **Perceived Health of Democracy**

*Q. How would you rate the overall health of democracy at the federal level in Canada?*

	Unhealthy (1-3)	Neither (4)	Health (5-7)	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5433</b>	<b>1.3</b>
<b>REGION</b>						
British Columbia	40%	27%	30%	3%	570	4.1
Alberta	28%	23%	39%	10%	469	4.5
Saskatchewan	27%	27%	33%	14%	254	6.2
Manitoba	28%	31%	30%	11%	222	6.6
Ontario	33%	26%	38%	3%	1694	2.4
Quebec	37%	33%	27%	3%	1883	2.3
Atlantic Canada	35%	32%	28%	4%	328	5.4
<b>GENDER</b>						
Male	38%	23%	38%	2%	2530	2.0
Female	32%	35%	30%	3%	2743	1.9
<b>AGE</b>						
<25	35%	24%	38%	3%	260	6.1
25-44	37%	26%	35%	3%	1439	2.6
45-64	36%	30%	32%	2%	2166	2.1
65+	28%	35%	35%	2%	1402	2.6
<b>EDUCATION</b>						
High school or less	29%	37%	31%	3%	1723	2.4
College or CEGEP	33%	31%	34%	3%	1695	2.4
University or higher	42%	20%	37%	2%	1837	2.3
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>						
Conservative Party	14%	22%	62%	2%	1384	2.6
NDP	48%	29%	20%	2%	1128	2.9
Liberal Party	40%	28%	30%	2%	1169	2.9
Green Party	49%	27%	23%	2%	325	5.4
Bloc Quebecois	45%	34%	20%	2%	431	4.7
Other	42%	31%	26%	1%	111	9.3

## Methodology

This series draws on data collected from **five separate surveys**. Two of these surveys used Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual landline/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys. This methodology is not to be confused with the increasing proliferation of non-probability opt-in online panels which have recently been incorrectly reported in major national media with inappropriate margin of error estimates.

The field dates for the **first survey** are February 21-28, 2012. In total, a random sample of 3,699 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-1.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The field dates for the **second survey** are November 20 – December 3, 2012. In total, a random sample of 5,433 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 4,548 decided and leaning voters). The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-1.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The three remaining surveys were conducted exclusively online using EKOS' unique, hybrid online/telephone research panel, *Prob*it**. Our panel offers exhaustive coverage of the Canadian population (i.e., Internet, phone, cell phone), random recruitment (in other words, participants are recruited randomly, they do not opt themselves into our panel), and equal probability sampling. All respondents to our panel are recruited by telephone using random digit dialling and are confirmed by live interviewers. Unlike opt-in online panels, *Prob*it** supports margin of error estimates. We believe this to be the only probability-based online panel in Canada.

The field dates for the **third survey** are December 14-21, 2011. In total, 2,005 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The field dates for the **fourth survey** are January 27 – February 8, 2012. In total, 2,891 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-1.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The field dates for the **fifth survey** are November 20-29, 2012. In total, 1,181 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.