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# The European Electoral Heritage and social media in elections

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A large, light blue thought bubble shape is centered on the page. Inside the bubble, there is a collection of various social media and communication icons, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others, all rendered in a faded, light blue color.

# **How to promote social media in elections while ensuring their compliance with electoral standards?**

## Background



Existing binding or non-binding texts in the electoral field



Increasing use / demand of social media in electoral processes



Numerical fracture among voters and among candidates



## International instruments



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) → Article 25 b



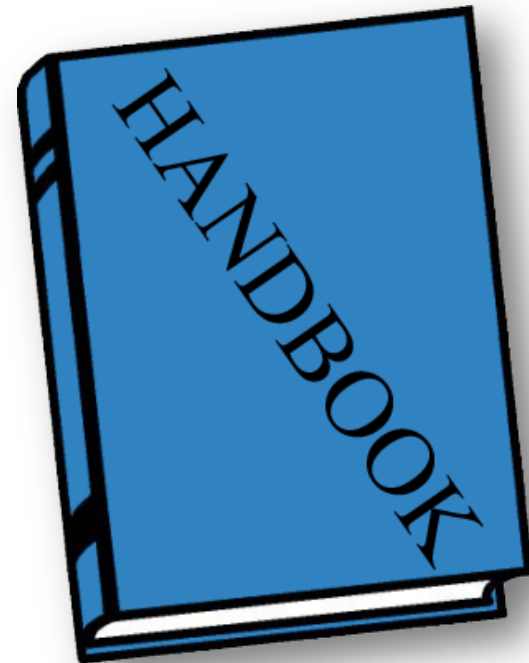
European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms  
→ Article 3 Protocol 1 + case-law of the Court



Copenhagen Document 1990, I 5.1

## Good practices

- ✓ *Inter alia* The Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters
- ✓ Handbooks....



# The European Electoral Heritage



Five principles: universal, equal, free, secret, direct



Principles which are not questionable regarding use of social media – universal and free suffrage



What about the secrecy of the vote and the equal suffrage?

## Use of social media in Denmark



Increasing use of social media among the population – the example of Denmark



3M up to 5.6M Danes are on Facebook



Most of the journalists



## Use of social media in Australia 1/3



Around 23M inhabitants



As of May 2013:

Facebook – 11,534,540 users/accounts

Twitter – 2,167,849 active users



Last General Elections,  
7 September

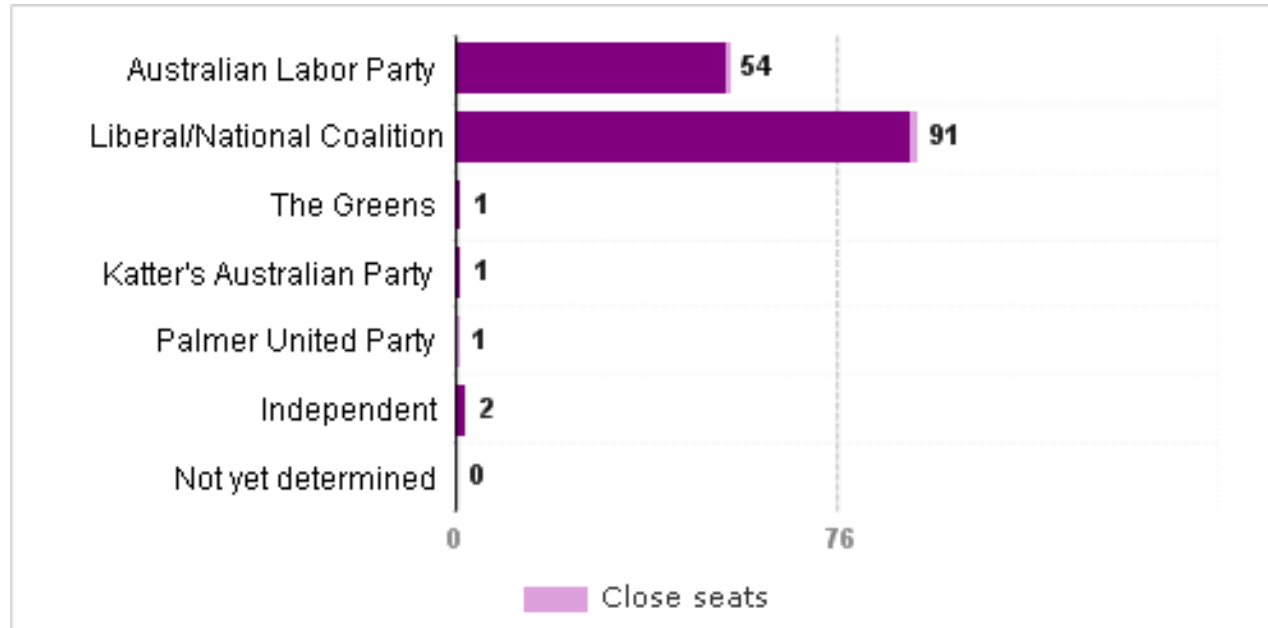




## Use of social media in Australia 2/3



### Results of the 7 September general elections

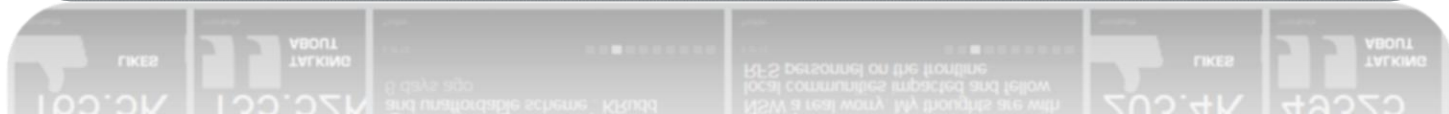
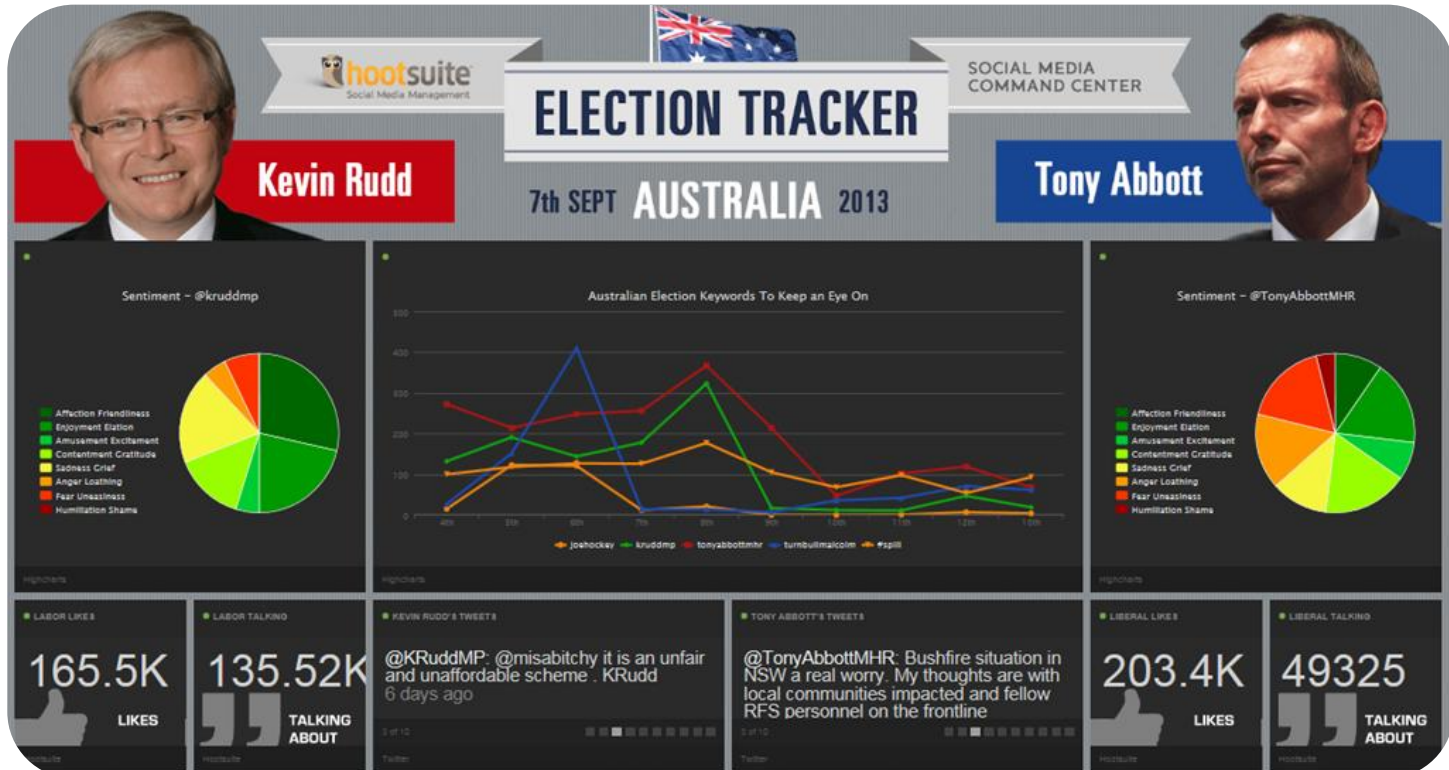


Source: Australian Election Commission, <http://vtr.aec.gov.au/>

# Use of social media in Australia 3/3



## The Election Tracker



# Possible impacts of social media in elections

- ✘ Unequal coverage of political information
- ✘ Abusive use of social media, media silence period
- ✘ Risk of giving credit to prediction of elections



## The principle of secrecy

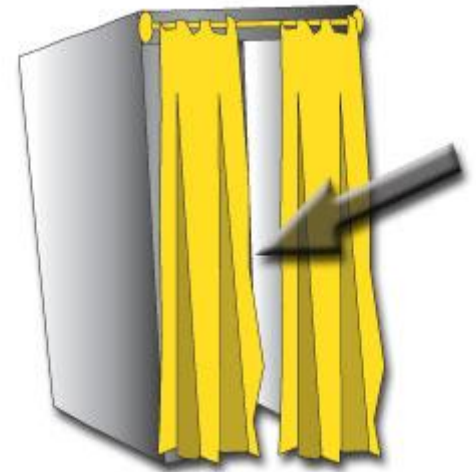


### **Secrecy** of the vote

A right and a duty – Individual vote

Political opinions expressed on social media

Prediction of elections



# The principle of equality



**Equality** of the vote

Equality of opportunity – Neutral attitude  
of authorities

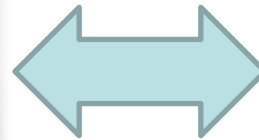
Media silence period in social media

Coverage of political information

## Our shared goal



**Promoting use of social media in elections in accordance with electoral standards**



## How to achieve it?



By adapting rules and standards to new electronic communication means



By a positive obligation of authorities to inform the public



By promoting political platforms through social media

# Thank you!



At your disposal for questions!



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