Pew: Democrats Are Much More Active on Twitter Than Republicans

Despite what often seems like a one-man crusade by Republican President Donald Trump to tilt the balance, a new study from Pew Research Center found that Twitter is dominated by the Democrats.

Pew analyzed the Twitter activity of 3,518 U.S. adults with public accounts whose Twitter activity could be matched to their survey responses, including to their stated party affiliation, between Nov. 11, 2019, and Sept. 14, 2020, finding notable differences in how Democrats and Republicans used the social network.

The think tank found that 92% of all tweets during the study period came from the most active 10% of users, and 69% of those highly active users identified as Democrats or Democrat-leaning independents.

Pew Research Center

The top 10% Democrats in terms of Twitter activity posted nearly double the number of tweets per month as the top 10% of Republicans, 157 compared with 79.

Pew also examined trends in following the Twitter accounts of the current president and his predecessor, Democrat Barack Obama, which happen to be the two accounts followed by the largest share of U.S. adults.

Obama was followed by 42% of Democrats and just 12% of Republicans, while Trump was followed by 35% of Republicans and just 13% of Democrats.

Other findings by Pew included:

- Democrats on Twitter were more likely than those who do not use the social network to identify as liberal, at 60%, compared with 43%. For Republicans, there was little difference among Twitter users and non-users when it came to identifying as conservative, at 60% and 62%, respectively.
- The median Democrat on Twitter tweets once per month, has 32 followers and follows 126 accounts, while the median Republican does not tweet, has 21 followers and follows 71 accounts.
- Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) is followed by 16% of Democrats and 2% of Republicans, while Fox News personalities Tucker Carlson and Sean Hannity were each followed by 12% of Republicans and 2% of Democrats.
- Mentions of Trump and his opponent in the 2020 election, former Vice President Joe Biden, were not skewed by party, as Trump was mentioned by 13% of Democrats and 12% of Republicans, while those numbers were 7% and 6%, respectively, for Biden.
- Roughly 4% of Democrats on Twitter used the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, versus just 1% of Republicans.

Pew wrote in the introduction to its report, “Entering the peak of the 2020 election season, social media platforms are firmly entrenched as a venue for Americans to process campaign news and engage in various types of social activism. But not all Americans use these platforms in similar ways.”

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