

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Santorum leads GOP Twitter race despite Romney poll wins

Social media analytics firm Brandwatch has been tracking Republican candidates on Twitter since the start of the GOP race. The attached analysis looks at each candidate's share of voice on Twitter and the possibility of using it to gauge the stance of the nation ahead of each Republican Primary election as Super Tuesday approaches.

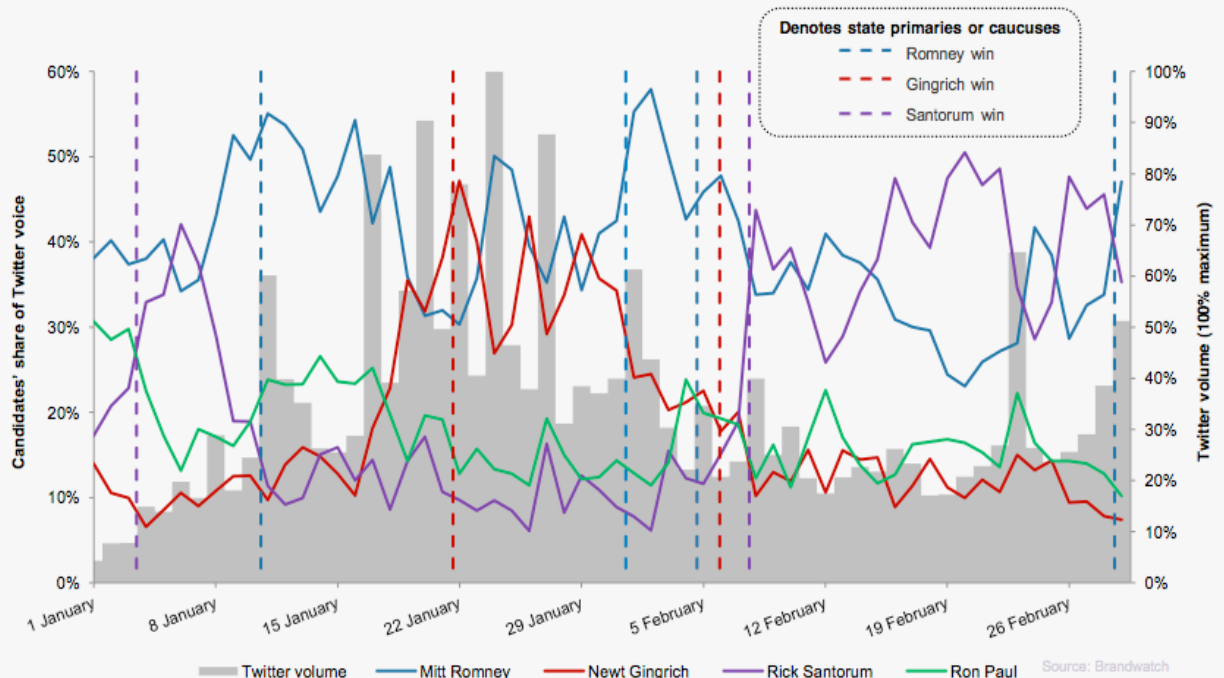
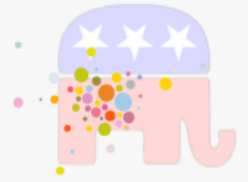
Brandwatch analysis shows that Rick Santorum was consistently the most visible candidate on Twitter throughout February, despite winning fewer states overall. The data also indicates that the national mood and volume of chat towards candidates on Twitter at the beginning of the race, in January, more accurately reflected the way voting would go for each election.

As addressed in the charts below, we also looked at the social media reaction to surprise state wins by Santorum and Gingrich as well as tracking the national and local press throughout the race.

Key points:

- Rick Santorum was consistently more visible on Twitter nationally throughout February after victories in Colorado and Minnesota.
- Mitt Romney's relatively underwhelming national Twitter performance in build-up to Arizona and Michigan ultimate proved insignificant in these states.
- Media coverage quickly pushed Santorum back to relevance on Twitter in the hours following Romney's wins on February 28.
- Media presence of Santorum and on Ron Paul trended immediately on February 29, grabbing share of voice from victorious Romney.
- Both national press and Twitter surged in volume after shock Santorum and Gingrich state wins. Conversely, Romney-won states experienced wider coverage in local state newspapers rather than nationally.
- Is interest in the GOP race waning on national, regional and social media or merely reflecting the polling break in mid-February? Maybe coverage of Super Tuesday has the answer.

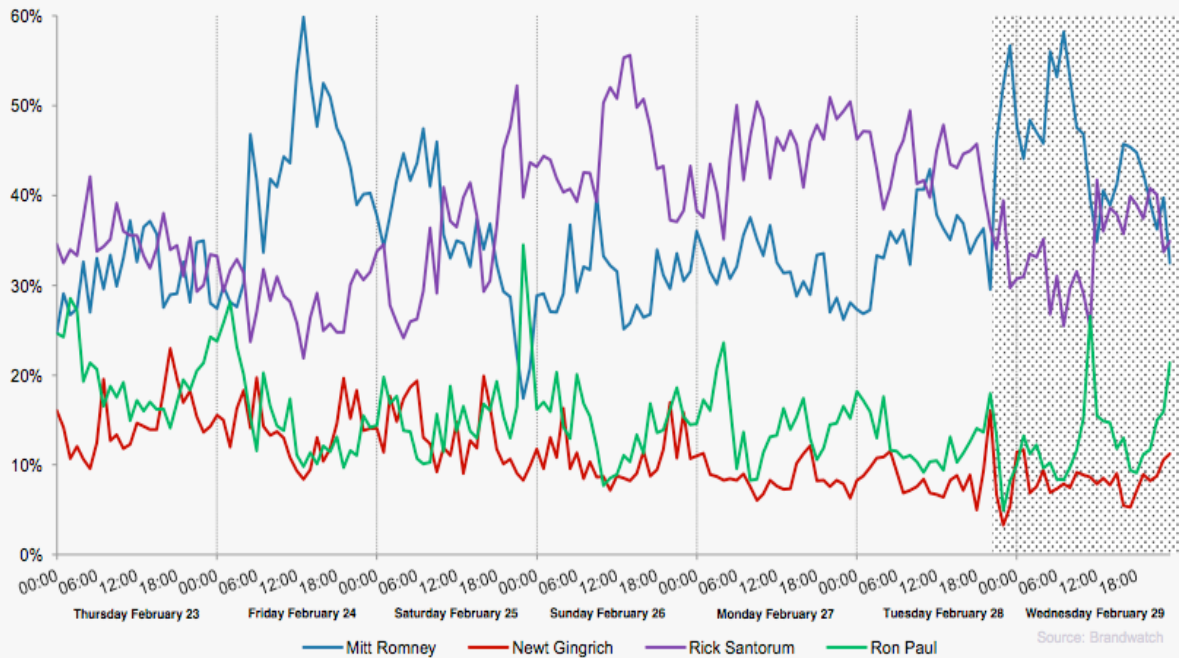
Santorum's Twitter lead not reflected in AZ and MI polls



Despite dominating discussion of the GOP candidacy race across the US on Twitter in the two-weeks leading to the recent primaries in Arizona and Michigan, Rick Santorum was unable to pull-off shock victories in the states. The findings suggest that Santorum remains a factor across the US as a whole, at least in terms of online visibility, and given the geographical spread of states polling on Super Tuesday will press the Romney campaign up to, and beyond, March 6.

Also of interest are the points of lulls in volume. With news and results data hegemonic on Twitter in the days surrounding a state poll, greater indication of trends could be derived from periods of time bereft of news. With the visibility of Santorum consistently more significant during the time of quiet after his victory on February 7, is the former Pennsylvania Senator's online campaign stronger, or simply benefiting from a break in the state-to-state polling?

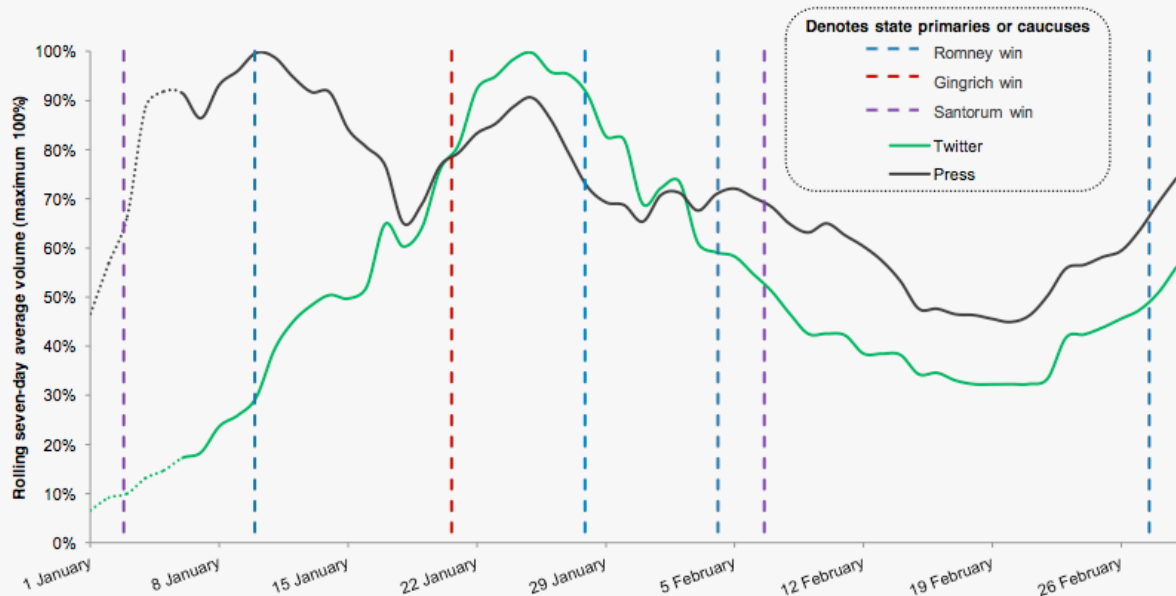
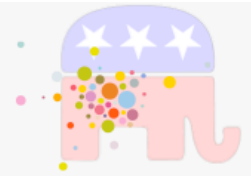
Romney captured Arizona and Michigan despite Santo's Twitter dominance



Similarly here, Santorum was consistently between five and 10 points higher than Mitt Romney on an hourly basis in the four days prior to polling on February 28. Perhaps more relevant is the speed with which Santorum's prominence on Twitter returned after around 16-hours of primarily Romney victory-based conversation; by noon on Wednesday February 29, Santorum was back fighting in the Twitter battle.

The surges of Ron Paul and Santorum at 11:00 and 12:00 respectively on Wednesday February 29 also highlight the importance of media activity. Paul's Twitter presence doubled after telling Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke that he 'killed' the dollar. Accordingly, Rick Santorum's discussion with reporters at this time was frequently quoted on Twitter, making the candidate increasingly visible less than 24-hours after twin defeats on February 28.

Is the press and Twitter losing interest in the candidacy race?



NB: "Press" represents data drawn from the 25 leading newspapers in the US by daily circulation, according to [Burrell's Luce data](#)

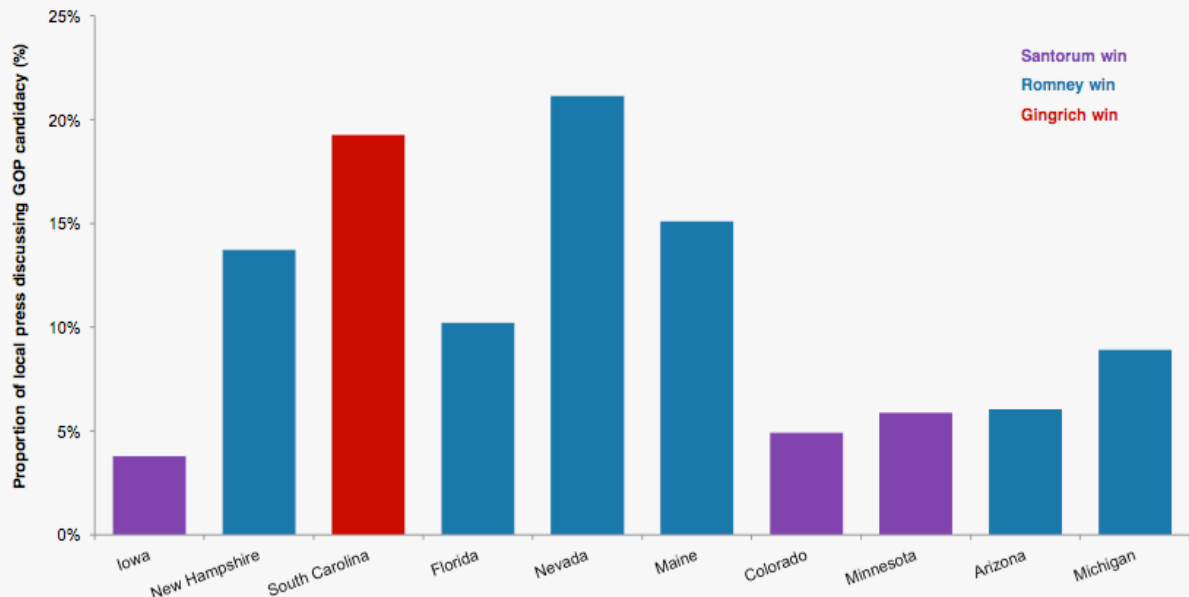
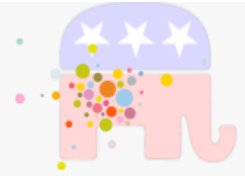
Source: Brandwatch

With the recent break in polling in the middle of February, both Twitter and national press interest in the proceedings understandably declined during the period. Despite a substantial rally in anticipation of this week's activity in Arizona and Michigan, neither online newspapers nor tweets reached the points of earlier in the campaign. Will the build-up to Super Tuesday raise press and Twitter attention to levels seen in January?

Interesting is the relative consistency of the volume of articles on the race published by the 25 most circulated daily newspapers in the US when compared to Twitter. Only during the February lull has press activity related to the candidacy battle fallen below 50% of its peak, whereas Twitter visibility has been considerably more erratic.

The difference between shock results and predictability is also, understandably, reflected in relative buzz levels. Both Twitter and national press surged after Santorum's showing in Iowa and Newt Gingrich romping home in South Carolina. Conversely, wins by Romney fail to stoke interest of the same magnitude on either media platform.

South Carolina and Nevada local press show keenest interest in race



Source: Brandwatch

NB: "Local press" denotes data drawn from online versions of newspapers printed locally in the seven days prior to polling in each respective state, where available, according to usnpl.com.

With national press and Twitter troughs perhaps expected across February, a better way to gauge continued popularity of the race could be to analyse the content of local press outlets in the respective individual states. Here, the findings profoundly disagree with those drawn from Twitter (shown on figure 3), with states won by Romney showing a much more significant level of press interest than those grabbed by Santorum in the seven days prior to polling. Given the apparent variation in the demographics behind those posting Twitter updates and those engaging with local press, could Romney be more relevant with those reading local media than nationally posting on Twitter? Does Santorum's visibility online merely reflect his status as the underdog, a widely more productive social media campaign or a greater national interest than at state level?

Also, with the proportion of local state press discussing the race falling dramatically after Romney's victories in Nevada and Maine (echoing the findings of figure 3), is this slump reflecting polling inactivity in February, indicative of feeling in the individual states themselves or is the campaign buzz simply slowing down?

About Brandwatch

Brandwatch is one of the world's leading social media monitoring tools, with offices in the UK, US, Germany and Brazil.

www.brandwatch.com