

Sally Goodstudent
Professor Hoffman
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MLA
Heading

Remediation and New Technologies — title

Intro

When we view our current political climate, it is easy to see why many people feel like we are a divided nation. However, history shows us that American politics have always been a debate between different ideologies. Democracy allows us to have a healthy argument to determine the best course for our country's future. No example is greater than the famous

original
text

Lincoln-Douglas debates. I chose this as my original text because it is an important part of our political history and I as a political science major, I am very interested in the democratic process.

I remediated this text using the technology tools Twitter and political cartoons because those tools are both used to communicate political messages.

1st remediation

2nd remediation

— thesis

In the fall of the 1858 elections, a series of debates took place between sitting Illinois

Senator Stephen A. Douglas and his challenger, Abraham Lincoln. They agreed on seven debates to take place in various cities in most of the nine districts throughout Illinois. Douglas was the Democratic incumbent and Lincoln was the Republican candidate. The debates followed a very specific format. As the incumbent, Douglas spoke first for one hour. Then Lincoln was allowed to respond for an hour and a half. Finally, Douglas had a chance for a 30 minute rebuttal ("Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858"). Most of the debates discussed the issue of slavery and abolishment. They were so popular they attracted as many as 15,000 people at each debate.

in-text citation
for paraphrase

history on original text

Although Lincoln lost the election, these debates launched him into national prominence, which eventually led to his election as President of the United States.

Why chosen

I chose the debates as my original texts because I am fascinated with politics. I can't help

but compare our current political debates with those between Douglas and Lincoln. They were discussing an extremely important issue that was going to be affecting the future of our country – the issue of slavery. Douglas believed that and new territories settled should be allowed to have slavery. Lincoln accused Douglas of being part of a conspiracy to nationalize slavery. Recently we have had a lot of major decisions by the Supreme Court that have drastically changed our laws. This has created a polarizing political atmosphere that has positioned people against each other. People have become more engaged and seem to want to be a part of the political process and have a say in the conversation. One of the best places to do that is on Twitter.

1st technology tool

Twitter is a social network tool created by programmers working at a podcasting

company called Odeo Inc. in San Francisco (Sherman). Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, and Biz Stone created Twitter as a micro-blogging platform. They had no idea that it would soon be the second most used social media tool behind Facebook (Sherman). Dorsey sent the first tweet on March 21, 2006 and it said "just setting up my twtr" (Johnson). A few tweets later a new user wrote "Oh, this is going to be addictive" (Johnson). How true that statement was! But what nobody predicted was how this tool would be used in the political arena. Twitter has added to the speed and scope of campaigns and campaign coverage. It's a medium that allows quick bits of breaking news and analysis to be instantly pushed out to the world. "...Twitter has enabled direct communication between politicians and, well, the rest of the world. It's an immediate – and often unfiltered – mode of communication, which the last seven years have shown can be

message of original text to be conveyed in re mediations

history of 1st technology tool

evidence of secondary source research

dangerous for [politicians] who otherwise live under a shroud of privacy, handlers, and carefully selected talking points” (Sullivan).

I wanted to imagine what the conversation would have looked like between Lincoln and Douglas if they had been sending tweets instead of having their seven debates. I read each debate and wrote at least two tweets for each debate – one from Lincoln and one from Douglas. It was very difficult to narrow down text from three hour debates into tweets that are only 140 characters long. I feel like there was so much substance in the debates. But we live in a superficial world. We are inundated with information, so we want to get the whole story in a short post, meme or video that is quick so we can move on to the next news story. I feel like using the technology tool of Twitter simplified the immense issue of slavery and turned it into an intellectually undemanding soundbite. Even though the audiences were huge for the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Twitter is able to reach millions as opposed to the tens of thousands who attended the debates. So I thought about the diverse and expansive audience I would be reaching with these tweets. I even wondered about which ones people would favorite and which ones would be retweeted. My favorite was the one “sent” by Lincoln that stated “My #1 objective is to save US, not save or destroy slavery. Don't free all slaves? OK. Free all slaves? OK. Which one saves US?” This was a version of real quote where he said he cared more about saving the Union than keeping or abolishing slavery. I believe it shows his patriotism, although the actual quote is more eloquent than the brief tweet.

description of remediation; personal reflection; analysis of tool's ability to convey message

2nd remediation technology tool

The technology tool I used for my second remediation was a political cartoon. Political cartoons date all the way back to the 1400s. Artists such as Leonardo da Vinci were tired of painting portraits of kings, queens, dukes and other royalty. To have a little fun, they began to draw caricatures. These were “grotesque” paintings that exaggerated certain features of the

history of technology tool

subject being painted. They were meant to be lighthearted satire, but later religious figures such as Martin Luther began using political cartoons as protests. The Founding Fathers of America, including Benjamin Franklin, used political cartoons as propaganda to promote their own political ideologies and agendas (Backer).

why

I chose to use a political cartoon because I wanted to exaggerate each candidate's stance on the issue of slavery. There were many political cartoons published during this campaign of

1858. All of them were drawn in simple pen or pencil and published in black and white

newspapers. I wanted to copy that style and give the cartoon a feeling of being from that era. I

used a parchment type paper and used a pencil to sketch each candidate. Photography had

already been invented, so there are a few actual photographs of both Lincoln and Douglas. There

are also many artist renderings of the two. I used all of those images to create exaggerated

characters that looked like them. Lincoln was a tall, skinny man and Douglas was a short, portly

man. I wanted to overemphasize their body difference because I wanted Lincoln to look

superior, since I believe he had the better message in his arguments. I wanted to show them on

stage with a large crowd of people watching them. I drew bubbles so the reader could see what

they were saying. Lincoln is saying "Slavery is a moral wrong," and Douglas is saying "What

was good enough for our Founding Fathers is good enough for us." This refers to the arguments

they made in their debates. Lincoln argued that slavery was a moral wrong. He said "[slavery]

violated the statement in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, and it

ran counter to the intentions of the Founding Fathers" (Lincoln-Douglas Debates). Douglas

argued that Lincoln was wrong about the Founding Fathers because they themselves were

slaveholders. I put this cartoon in a shape of the United States and drew a lightning bolt down

the middle to look like the United States is being torn apart. This is a visual metaphor for the

description of remediation; personal reflection; analysis of tool

debate that was not only between Lincoln and Douglas but was eventually had by the entire country during the Civil War.

Political cartoons are supposed to be entertaining and yet thought-provoking. I thought this would be the perfect tool for remediating the Lincoln-Douglas debates. However, I found that I loved the "Twitter war" more than my political cartoon. I guess this could be because I am a child of the modern era and political cartoons seem old-fashioned to me. Twitter is a tool that I use on a daily basis, so I feel like I understand it better and relate to it better. I feel like I know how to communicate with it and I feel like I understand what others tweet to me. Perhaps memes and gifs are our modern-day version of political cartoons. Also, the original debates were very wordy, and a political cartoon is more of a visual. As hard as it was to condense all of the debates into short tweets, it was even harder to capture the themes in one picture. I don't know if I was able to show the anger between the two candidates the way I was in the tweets. I feel like the message was kind of lost in the political cartoon. Overall, I feel like my Twitter conversation was a better remediation of my original text than was the political cartoon.

It's interesting to think about all of the different tools we use to communicate. Even though I heavily use Twitter to engage in political conversations, I have to be aware that this is not a place to get into a deep, philosophical discussion. We are limited by the tools we use. As the remainder of the campaign continues, I will continue to communicate via Twitter, but I will also make sure I watch the actual debates, so I can hear more than just quick soundbites from the candidates. If we learn more about the tools we are using to communicate, we can be better informed and better understood.

- conclusion - no new ideas or information

Keep
It
Short +
Sweet
it goodbye

analysis + comparison of both tools

ABC order
MLA format

Works Cited

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