

The California Governor's Race: the Social Media Perspective

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June 16, 2011

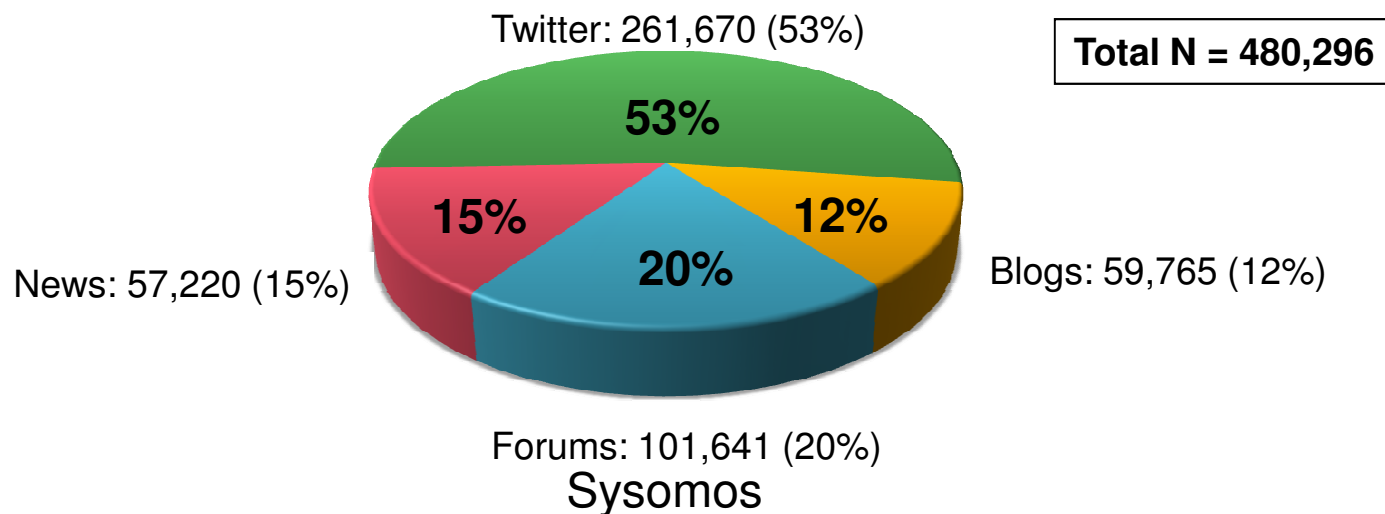
Research Methodology

This research project was a joint effort by:

- Bryan Merica – President – IDM Communications
- Ben Tulchin – President and Founder – Tulchin Research
- Paul Wittenberg – President – PWSMC Social Media Consulting

We conducted a comprehensive analysis of social media on the California governor's race:

- Social Media includes Blogs, Forums and Traditional Media;
- The primary tool used was the Sysomos MAP application;
- Election conversations were tracked from 1/1/10 to 11/2/10;
- For polling data, publically available information was used.



Executive Summary

We analyzed the impact of social media on the California Governor's Race;

Specifically, we looked at:

- The overall “volume” – how often the race was mentioned in social media;
- Compared the favorability ratings of Brown and Whitman in social media and polling.
- Looked at the favorability ratings of Jerry Brown and Meg Whitman in social media;

Executive Summary (cont'd)

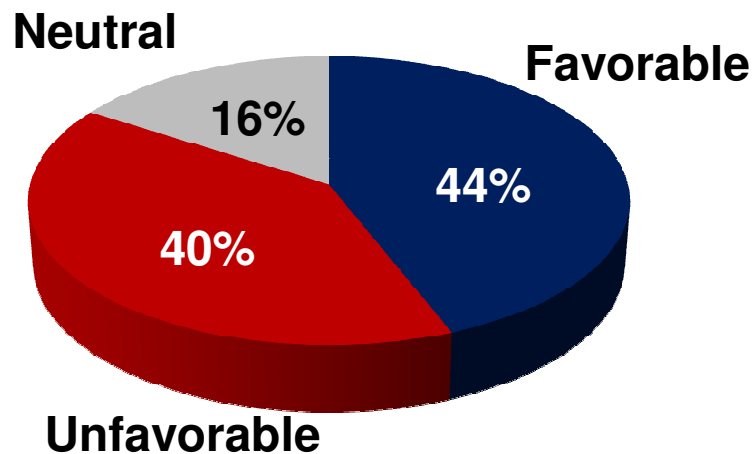
We then focused on one major event – “Nanny-gate,” when Whitman’s former housekeeper came forward and attacked Whitman for firing her;

- We measured the volume of comments of this event as well as its share of the overall gubernatorial conversation;
- We measured the impact this event had on the campaign, particularly on Meg Whitman;
- We compared the impact on Meg Whitman in social media with polling.

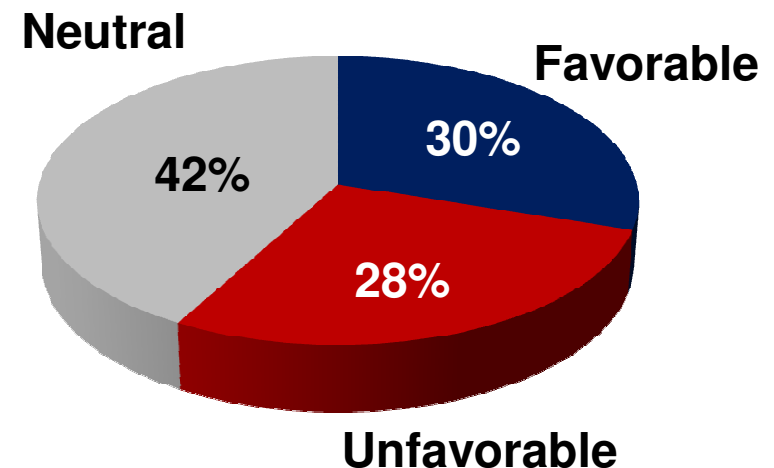
Jerry Brown's Overall Favorability Rating

Is your opinion of Jerry Brown generally favorable or unfavorable?

Polling Data



Social Media

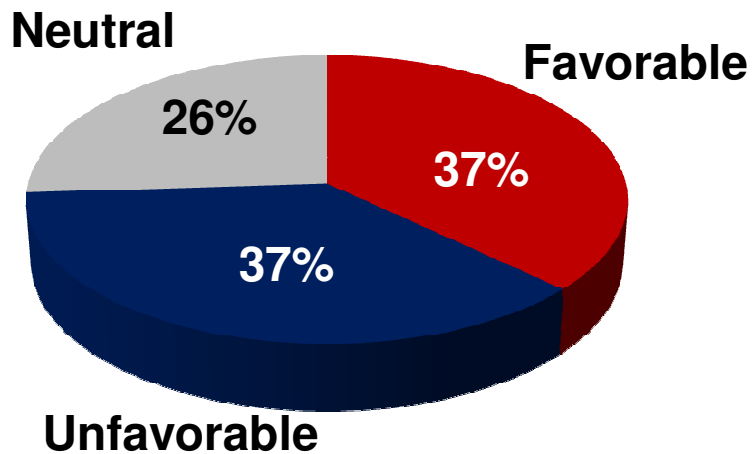


1.0 : 0.9 ← Ratio of Favorable to Unfavorable → 1.0 : 0.9

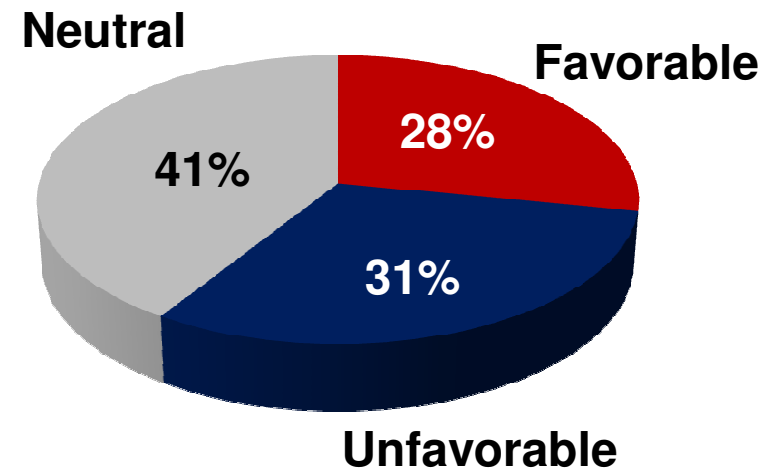
Meg Whitman's Overall Favorability Rating

Is your opinion of Meg Whitman generally favorable or unfavorable?

Polling Data

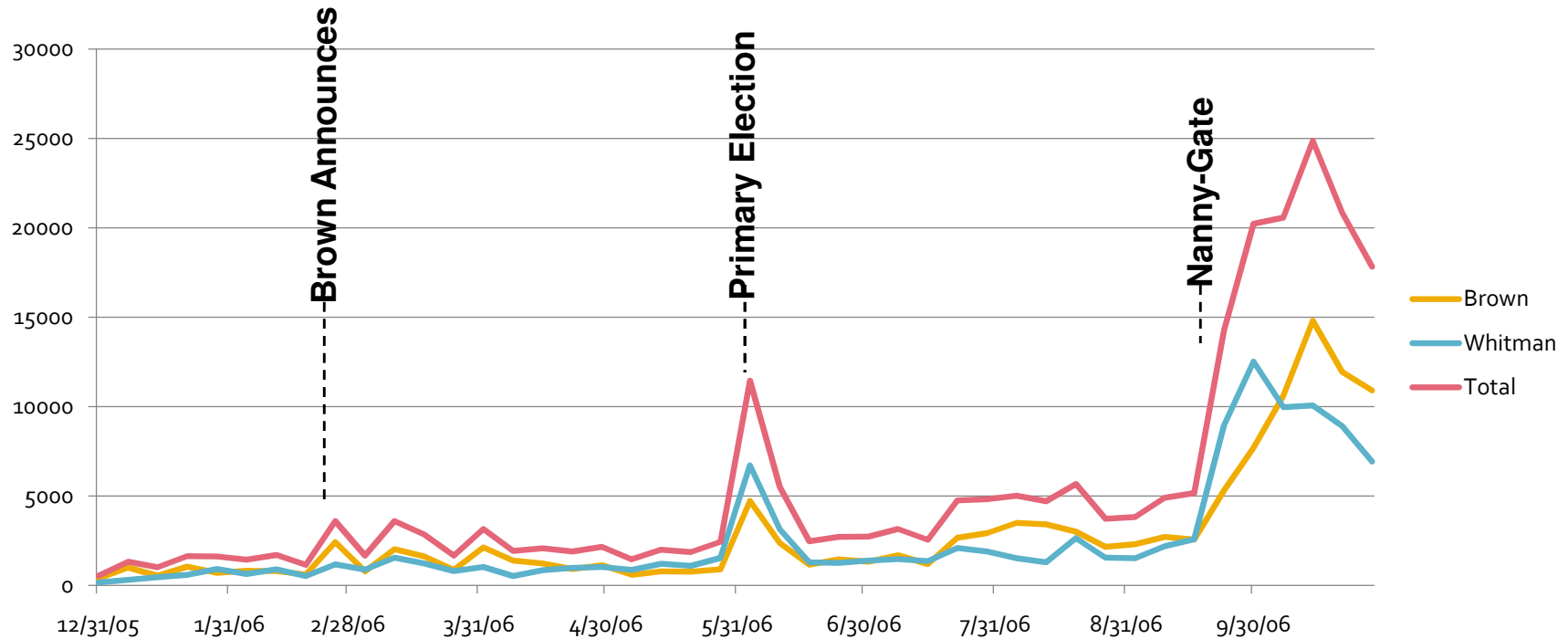


Social Media



1.0 : 1.0 ← *Ratio of Favorable to Unfavorable* → 1.0 : 1.1

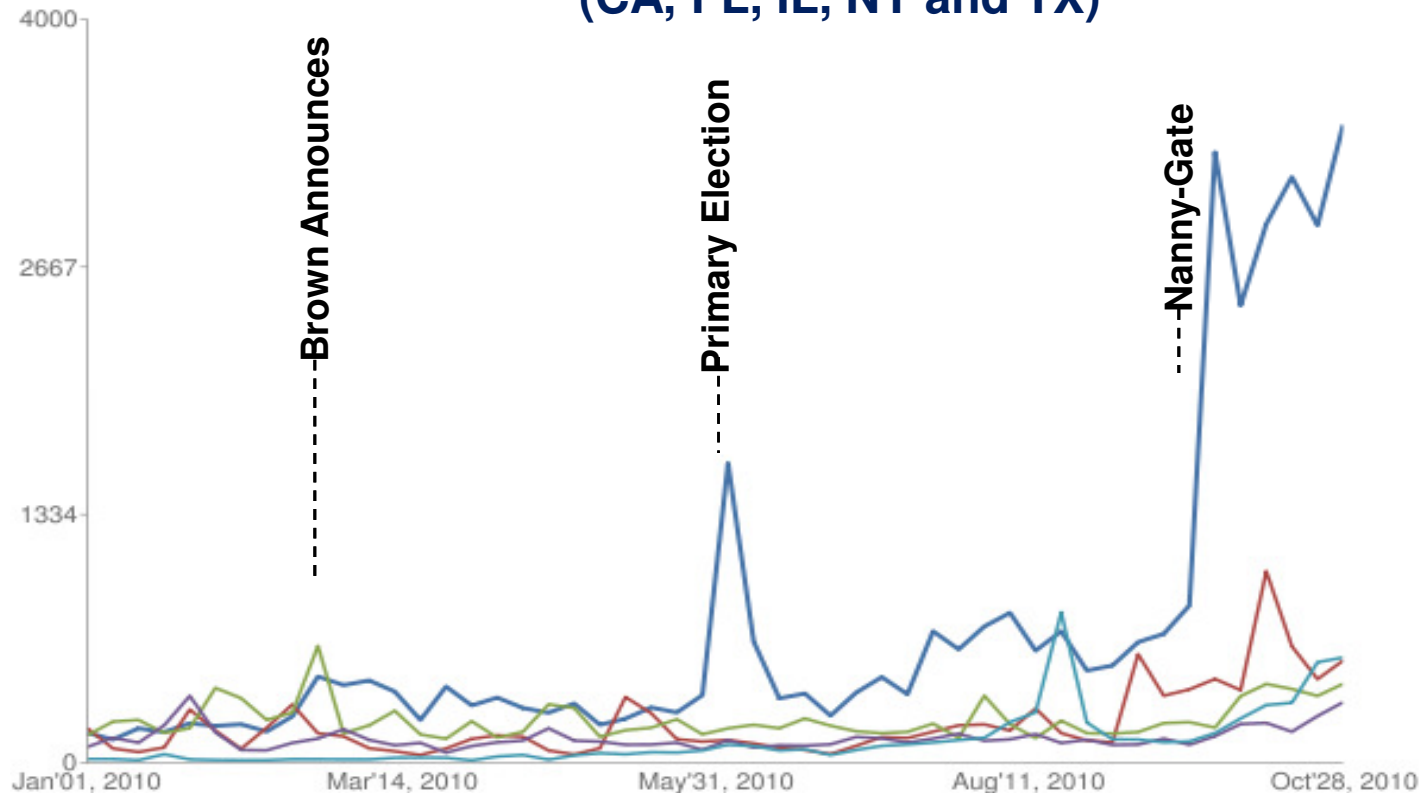
Social Media Volumes for 2010 CA Gov Race



3 major events accounted for the spikes in online conversation:

- Jerry Brown announces his candidacy for Governor on March 2nd, 2010;
- Primary election night, especially the Republican primary battle;
- “Nanny-gate:” Meg Whitman’s housekeeper’s press conference where she described her firing and treatment.

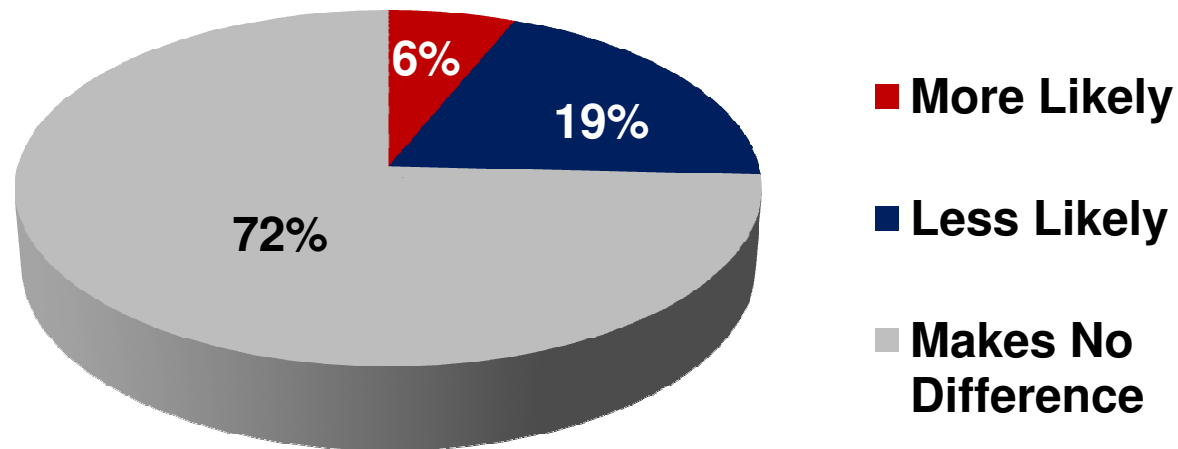
Measuring the Volume of Social Media in Governor Races (CA, FL, IL, NY and TX)



This chart provides a comparison across 5 states of the volume of conversation associated with the governor's races in 2010: "Nanny-gate" helped propel California into the lead when it came to social media commentary.

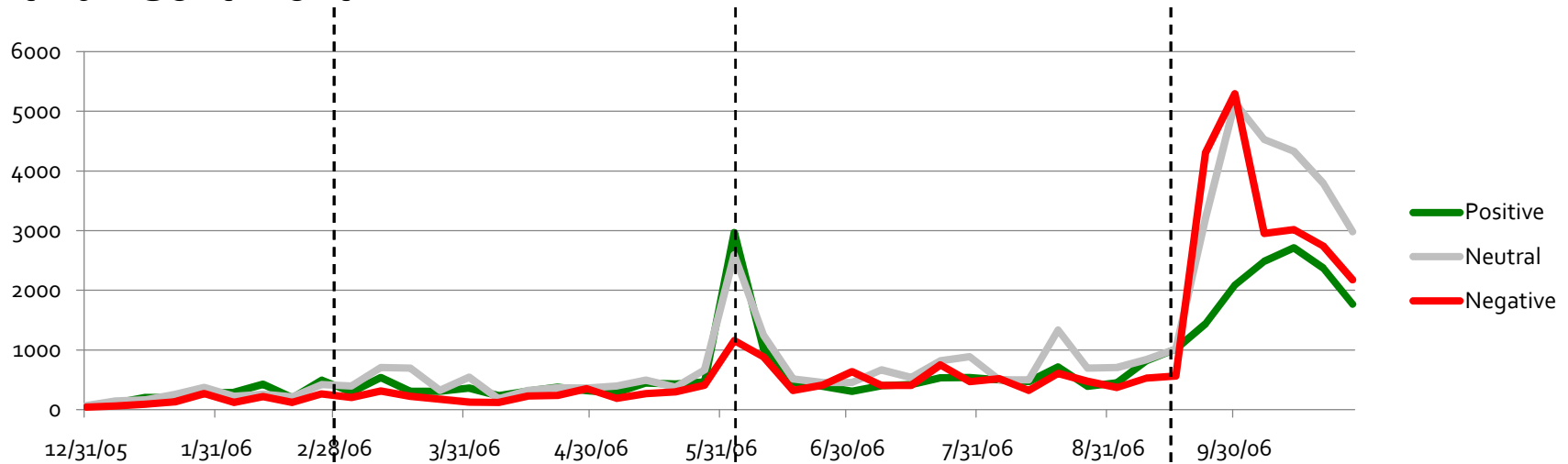
Polling Showed Nanny-gate's Impact Was Minimal

Does hearing that Meg Whitman hired an undocumented worker make you more likely or less likely to vote for her or does it make no difference?

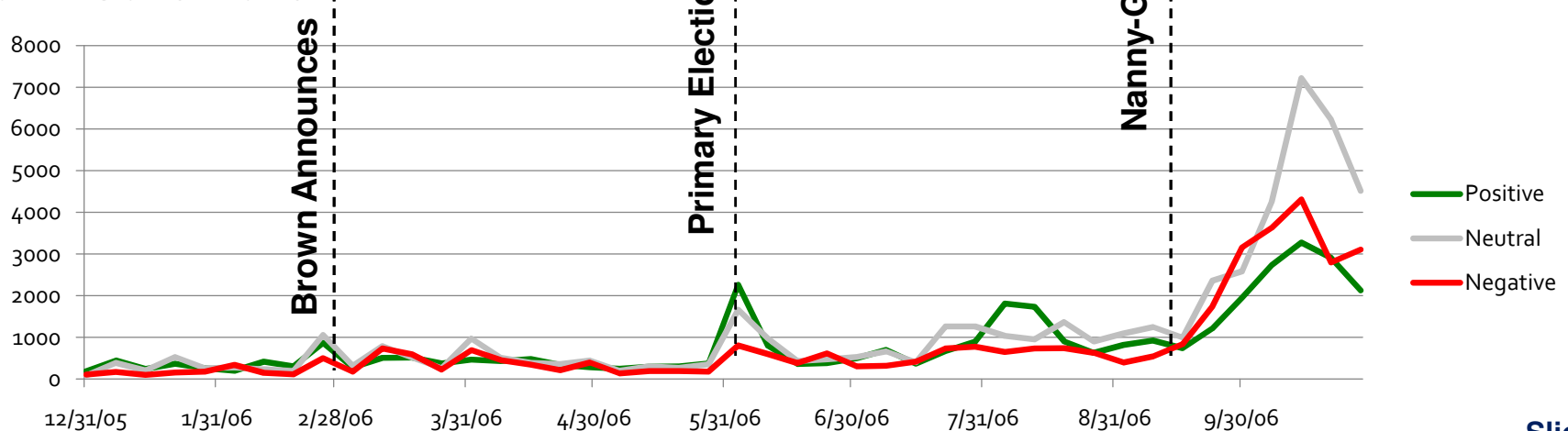


But Social Media Assessment of Candidate Sentiment from Nanny-gate Found Massive Negative Spike for Whitman

Whitman Sentiment



Brown Sentiment



Conclusions

What we learned from our analysis and what this means for campaigns:

- **Social Media can provide a basic measurement of public opinion;**
- **Social Media can serve as an “early warning system” for a campaign, especially in a crisis;**
- **Social Media can measure basic reactions to a major event more quickly than polling – and perhaps provide a more accurate picture of the event’s impact;**

Conclusions (cont'd)

What we learned from our analysis and what this means for campaigns (continued):

- **Campaigns need to invest in a Social Media strategy – have people in Social Media promote and defend their candidate and attack their opponent;**
 - Can't just “flip a switch” and make this happen overnight;
 - These postings matter – they represent public opinion, can shape opinions and influence the debate;
- **Twitter sucks – very hard to decipher meaning from tweets – hopefully, they provide more guidelines to make data more usable;**
- **In Search of The Holy Grail – Facebook is not yet “open”**