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The 2008 election campaign in the U.S. demonstrated to the public that political leaders have started to adopt a broad range of social networking services for communication, civic engagement, and mostly for self-marketing purposes. One type of these services is micro-blogging, which facilitates the real-time dissemination of short pieces of information to create public conversations. In this study we focus on the usage of micro-blogging by a particular group of people, namely the members of the U.S. Congress. By using a multi-method approach that combines social network analysis of the 144 Members of Congress (MoC) who engage in micro-blogging through the Twitter.com service, qualitative text analysis in a grounded theory fashion, and automated semantic analyses of the disseminated messages, we address the following questions: For what purposes are MoC primarily using micro-blogging? What key topics emerge as central themes among what groups of MoC? Our preliminary findings indicate that from a usage pattern point of view, MoC utilize Twitter as a one-directional channel for announcing meetings, promoting their webpages, and referring to press releases in order to push current issues – all of which function as ways to control individual impression management. Beyond that, our preliminary text analysis results suggest that MoC not only frame sensitive yet controversial topics such as the health insurance reform and the “You Lie” outburst by Representative Joe Wilson, but also started to use micro-blogging as a mechanism to socialize their messages by creating attention networks around issues they are passionate about. Attention networks aim to capture who people are referring to, but also who mentions them in their messages.