

European Union Referendum Analysis - Role of Social Media

[Following on from our previous report](#), we decided to analyse the role social media played in the eventual referendum result and evaluate any apparent correlations. The referendum concluded with 51.9% of voters choosing to leave the European Union whilst 48.1% decided they would prefer to remain.

In the five days running up to the election, including the voting day itself, keywords relating to the leave campaign dominated social media volumes with over 678.5k key hashtags mentioned, compared to over 278.4k mentions of remain related hashtags. This means that in the build up to the election, the leave campaign was 144% more active on social media than the remain camp.

Social media followings, unsurprisingly and overwhelmingly, increased over the period since Social360's previous report. On Twitter, [Stronger In](#) saw the most significant increase, with 140% growth, from 29,500 followers in April to 70,700 on the day of the referendum. [Vote Leave](#) ended the campaign slightly ahead, however, seeing a 101% increase in follower numbers, improving from 36.1k followers in April, to 72.4k followers on voting day. Both accounts saw similar numbers of user interaction, with Vote Leave's pinned [tweet](#) gathering 504+ retweets and 852+ likes and Stronger In's most recent [post](#) picking up 499+ retweets and 1,173+ likes.

[Stronger In's](#) Facebook page finished with over 555k likes, an increase of 57% since, while [Vote Leave's](#) total followers grew by 70% to 553k likes, seeing Stronger In end the campaign just ahead of Vote Leave. Both pages continued to see high level engagement, with a [Vote Leave video](#) garnering over 210k views and 8.5k reactions, whilst a [Stronger In video](#) from the same day saw over 274k views and 10k reactions.

[Vote Leave](#) continued to keep subscriber numbers private on YouTube, while comments were permitted, in contrast to [Stronger In's](#) decision to display subscriber numbers but disable the comment section. Stronger In's subscribers increased from 3,000 to over 7,200 with video views ranging from as few as 378 views for its video '[Alex Salmond On Brexit](#)' to over 460k for '[Clarkson and May say vote remain](#)'. Overall views for Stronger In stood at over 12.4m, whilst Vote Leave ended the campaign with only a fraction of that at just under 2.5m for its video '[Corbyn explains why we should leave the EU](#)'* as one of the better performing videos, seeing over 185.7k views and 317 comments.

Instagram follower numbers also increased for both campaigns, with [Vote Leave](#) ending with the higher number at 10.4k, an increase of 316%. [Stronger In](#) completed its campaign with 6.3k, a 316% growth on its original 1.3k followers.

As alluded to in our earlier report, both camps continued heavily on the social media offensive, with Stronger In ending its campaign with 629.2k followers, whilst Vote Leave concluded its drive with 635.8k followers. Meaning Stronger In had a 49.7% share of total follower numbers, with Vote Leave commanding a 50.3% lead, almost mirroring the referendum results, bearing in mind the privacy on Vote Leave's YouTube subscriber numbers, potentially creating an even larger gap between the two campaigns.

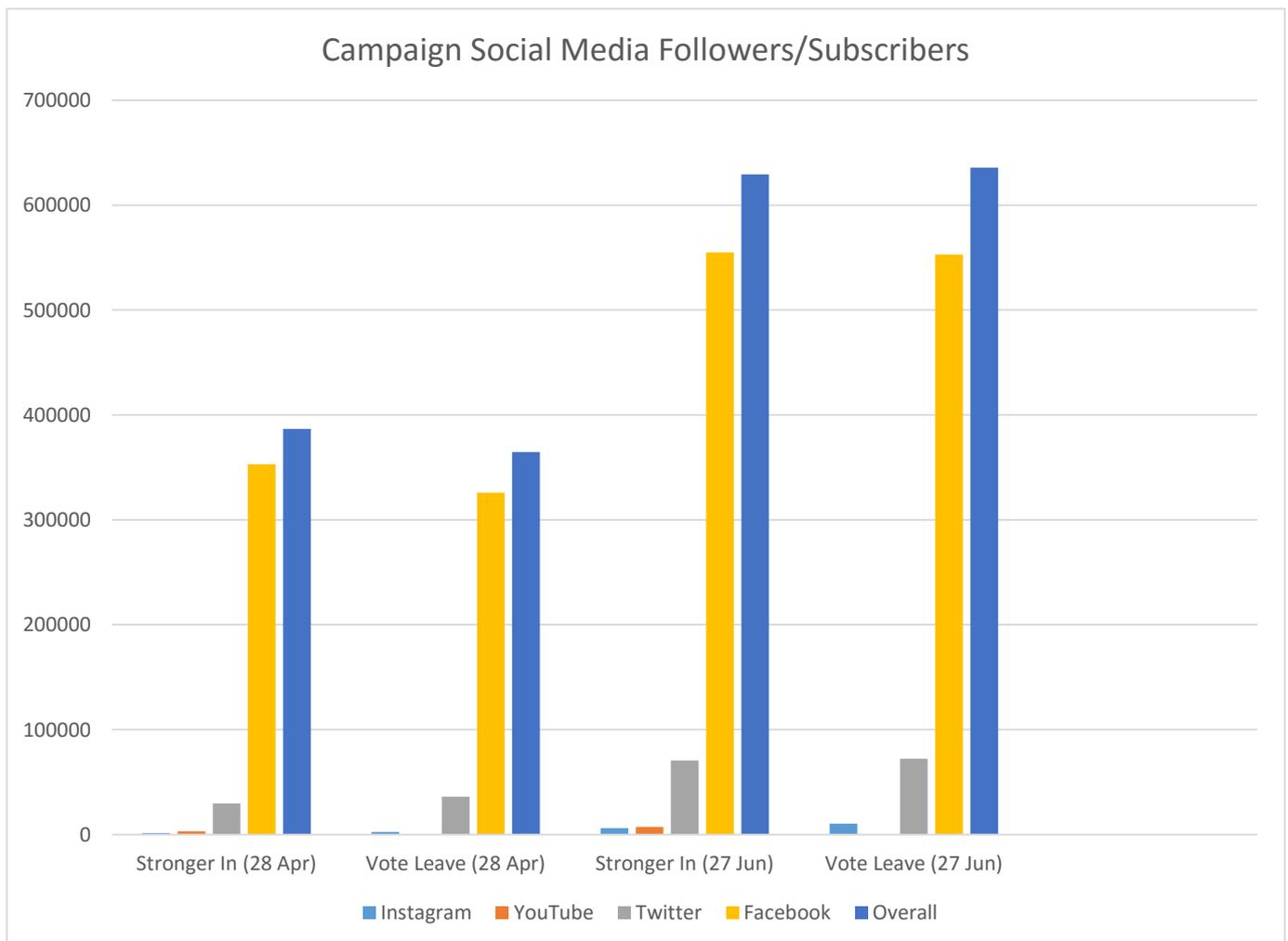
The public fully embraced social media as a tool for both gathering information and portraying their personal standpoints during the build up to the election, as is confirmed in a survey by CloudNine PR reported in [Mobile Marketing magazine](#), which noted that "26 per cent of Brits used social networks such as Facebook and Twitter to share and receive information about the EU referendum".

This social media drive also continued post polling day, with The Drum publishing, '[David Cameron's post-Brexit departure sees Twitter usage double in the UK](#)', which outlines that as Prime Minister David Cameron made his resignation speech users generated "13,300 tweets each minute". Influencers, including [Lord Alan Sugar](#), whose tweet, was shared over 1,263 times and [Derren Brown](#)

whose post received over 2,590 retweets, promoted an official [petition](#) calling on Parliament to trigger a second referendum which, as of 28th June, had seen over 4.02m signatures.

Reaction to the referendum on social media also found its way into traditional and mainstream media, with London Mayor, Sadiq Khan's [Facebook post](#) (517k+ Facebook reactions) addressing the Europeans dwelling in the capital seeing reports from [Huffington Post](#) (560+ shares), [Metro](#) (936+ shares) and [Mirror](#) (270+ shares) as well as coverage on BBC News television.

The EU referendum has provided an interesting insight into how the general public utilises social media to learn, disseminate information and engage in dialogue with one another. This report has also uncovered a seemingly strong correlation between social media usage, public intention and personal sentiment.



	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube	Overall
Stronger In (28 Apr)	29,500	353,000	1,263	3,000	386,763
Stronger In (27 Jun)	70,700	555,000	6,300	7,200	629,200
Increase (%)	139.6	57.2	398.8	140	62.7
Vote Leave (28 Apr)	36,100	326,000	2,496	N/A	364,596
Vote Leave (27 Jun)	72,400	553,000	10,400	N/A	635,800
Increase (%)	100.6	69.6	316.7	N/A	74.4

Table: Stronger In and Vote Leave social media follower/subscriber growth from 28 April 2016 to 27 June 2016.

**Repost of an earlier video in which Jeremy Corbyn displays as seemingly anti-European Union. The opposition leader later [officially announced Labour as supporting remaining a member of the European Union](#).*