



Rider & Associates

*A New Years  
resolution is  
something that  
goes in one year  
and out the other!*

*Happy Valentine's  
Day*



Teresa Rider, President

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## Was 2015 Such a Terrible Year? And What Will 2016 Look Like?

### By many standards, 2015 has been a terrible year

The war in Syria and Iraq worsened as the number of war casualties grew and its consequences spread. First, to Europe's shores, with horrendous attacks on Paris at the beginning and near the end of the year. And then it spread to America with the attack in San Bernardino. The flow of refugees fleeing from the Middle East, Afghanistan and Eritrea became a tidal wave as the number of internally displaced persons and refugees reached an all-time high. Some European governments, like Germany, found their soul when it came to accepting these refugees. Others lost theirs - if they ever had one. Back in the US, some used their presidential campaign as an opportunity to tap the kind of nativist impulse that periodically overwhelms the country when its national security is threatened. Many Republicans supported banning Muslims from entering the United States. Others favored registering those already domiciled. As all this was happening, the world's governments sold more arms than ever. And US-Chinese relations became increasingly tense over the revelation that China was building islands in the South China Sea.

### But there have been some bright spots

We should remember that wasn't all bad news. America's rapprochement with Cuba has potentially eradicated one of the few remaining vestiges of the Cold War. And while the jury is still out, the P5+1 agreement with Iran offers the prospect that the West will avert a damaging conventional war. More importantly, the number of people living in extreme poverty declined again, falling to 14% in 2015, from nearly 50% a generation ago. And the international community reached an environmental agreement in Paris. While critics may rightly contend that it is inadequate, in the words of Lao Tzu, "the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." Finally, if the Nigerian president is to be believed, Boko Haram has been "defeated," at least technically. If true, and that is a big "if," it offers some inspiration

## Why Social Media Could Swing the 2016 Presidential Election

With the 2016 presidential race heating up, tech-savvy political candidates are stepping up, and executing on, their social media strategies. Since the last presidential election in 2012, President Barack Obama joined Twitter and hosted several chats on Reddit. It's fairly standard today for politicians and their campaigns to have Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. However, for the upcoming election, there are more social networks for campaigns to consider for advertising and outreach, including Snapchat and Instagram. These sites are particularly important because voters, especially millennials, have shifted their social media preferences to video, live streaming and "disappearing post" apps, such as Snapchat.

Following the 2014 mid-term elections, 16 percent of registered voters followed candidates for office, political parties or elected officials on social media, up 10 percent since 2010, according to a report from Pew Research Center. Those numbers may seem low, but it's probable that since the report was conducted last year, interest in politicians on social media increased and more millennials and members of generation Z, who are avid users of many social media services, registered to vote.

As campaigning for the 2016 election increases, political strategies targeting newer social media sites will surely play a significant role. However, it remains to be seen how exactly how these efforts will influence voters and affect who becomes the next president of the United States.

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