

# BEST PRACTICES FOR POLITICAL ADVERTISING ONLINE

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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLITICAL MANAGEMENT

THE INSTITUTE FOR POLITICS, DEMOCRACY & THE INTERNET  
THANKS ITS SPONSORS, WITHOUT WHOSE SUPPORT THIS PUBLICATION  
WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.



AND THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE RESEARCH





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IPDI’s mission is to promote the use of the Internet and new communication technologies in politics to enhance republican values, encourage citizen participation and improve governance, at home and abroad; in short, to “democratize democracy.” IPDI conducts research that anticipates and interprets trends, publishes studies and guidelines that show candidates, public officials and activists how to make the best use of the new communication tools and holds seminars and conferences that advocate the best practices, teach new skills and allow for the national and international exchange of ideas on the politically leveling uses of the Internet and other new technologies.

IPDI is located at The George Washington University’s Graduate School of Political Management. F. Christopher Arterton is the dean of the school. For more information about the Graduate School of Political Management, visit [www.gwu.edu/~gspm](http://www.gwu.edu/~gspm).

For more information about the Institute for Politics, Democracy & the Internet, visit [www.ipdi.org](http://www.ipdi.org).

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# Executive Summary

This publication looks at **paid** online advertising, from search engine marketing to display advertising, and is designed to help political organizations understand online advertising and better leverage their resources to reach voters online.

The authors of each chapter used their experience, expertise and analysis to compile resources and a set of best practices for each discipline within online advertising. This includes:

## Using the Changed Media Environment

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While still a nascent industry, online political marketing is maturing, and current research suggests several important best practices to consider as your campaign develops its Internet strategy.

- Plan ahead. Whereas the standard 30-second spot reigns on television, the web is full of dozens of different advertising formats and targeting capabilities. Campaigns should give themselves at least three weeks to plan their first online advertising campaign.
- Budget accordingly. The Internet is an extremely cost-effective medium when compared with its traditional counterparts. This does not mean, however, that the Internet is cheap. Campaigns spending \$1,000,000 in traditional advertising should be willing to invest \$100,000 in online media to maintain the industry-standard online media mix.
- Use ad servers to track performance. By using an advertising server to deliver and track advertising performance, candidates can find out everything from the reach and frequency of their advertising efforts to the number of individuals who interacted with an ad without clicking-through. Ad serving provides unparalleled control over ads once they're live and gives you the power to easily evaluate the effectiveness of online advertising efforts.
- Think beyond the gimmicks. Campaigns have a tendency to use the Internet exclusively to launch humorous and "gimmicky" advertising efforts. In addition to fun online stunts, candidates should use the web to extend the reach and impact of offline advertising efforts through standard banner, blog and search engine marketing.
- Start small. The Internet can be an intimidating medium for online advertising novices. Start small by placing advertisements on search engines and blogs to reach early-deciders, political influentials and information-seekers. Budget allowing, slowly expand to targeted banner advertising as you learn what works and what does not.
- Think outside the vacuum. The web is most effective when used in tandem with traditional media efforts. Advertising campaigns on the Internet should coincide with offline advertising campaigns, large-scale offline events (e.g., debates, announcement speeches, endorsements) or both.
- Conduct media planning and creative development. No matter how easy it is to buy



and create an ad online, there is no substitute for professional online marketing help. Even the simplest search engine marketing and blog advertising campaigns will perform better when created and managed by seasoned pros. Online advertising should be entrusted to individuals with both marketing and technical know-how. If you do, however, decide to design ads on your own, remember that short and simple messages perform best.

- Set realistic goals. The Internet has revolutionized the way in which candidates raise money. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been amassed through simple email appeals to a candidate's most ardent supporters. And millions of supporters have made unsolicited donations. That said, for most, online advertising is – and always will be – a very inefficient and ineffective fundraising medium. As such, online ads should not be judged on pure return-on-investment or email-acquisition standards.
- Revise terms and conditions. Most online publishers do not include immediate cancellation clauses in their standard advertising contracts. Be sure to amend advertising contracts to include such safety measures so that an ad campaign can be ended if the candidate decides to leave the race or change his or her advertising strategy.

## Reaching Voters Online

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As the Internet and new media have become more ubiquitous; voter attitudes, expectations and behaviors are changing. Reaching voters in this new environment requires a change of tactics. Specifically:

- Old rules for communicating with voters do not always apply online. Direct mail pieces flooding the mailbox and robo-calls may be seen as acceptable. However, sending unsolicited email appeals will backfire (the same goes for transmitting any mobile communications that have not been requested by the recipient).
- Voters are looking for authenticity and truthfulness in political leaders. Messages and stories must resonate. The electorate is tired of spin and packaged messages – online and offline.
- People talk. Voters enjoy discussing politics with colleagues, family and friends and find it important to connect with others who share their political beliefs. Accordingly, it should be made easy to share information about candidates and causes.

- Voters engage in a wide variety of activities online and their behavior changes over time. They shop, they exchange online messages, and they check the weather. Figuring out where the voters are going is indispensable to a strategy to get their attention online.

## Search Engine Marketing

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Search engine marketing involves paid advertising and organic (non-paid) search engine optimization (SEO) on sites such as Google, Yahoo!, MSN and Ask.com. Best practices for search engine marketing include:

- Advertise on Google, Yahoo! and MSN. They reach the vast majority of search engine users (who tend to be extremely loyal to their search sites).
- Buy keywords for competitors' names – not because your campaign believes in the power of your political opponent's name or is trying to steal an opponent's traffic, but because multiple campaigns might have a product that meets people's search needs.
- Advertise on keywords for your own candidate's name.
- Advertise on issues as well as on the candidate's name + issues.
- Always use post-click conversion tracking codes to measure true cost per sale or cost per donation – don't just rely on cost per click numbers that don't reflect the effectiveness of search in terms of achieving specified campaign goals.
- Create quality landing pages with compelling reasons to take action.

## Online Display Advertising

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Display advertising includes static, Flash or video banners in varying sizes and formats, the standards for which are governed by the Interactive Advertising Bureau ([www.iab.net](http://www.iab.net)). In order to make the most of an online display advertising campaign, our authors suggest that political organizations:

- Use display advertising in concert with other components of an online plan and the rest of an integrated media mix.
- Learn the metrics of online advertising effectiveness and start testing in small increments.
- Develop compelling and creative online ad-

vertising that inspires prospective donors and voters to respond.

- Work with established and experienced individuals, organizations and publishers who understand the complexity of online advertising and the sensitivity of political communications.

## Lead Generation

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Online lead generation uses online forms to gather information about consumers, or, in this case, supporters. Organizations can purchase information about voters who have stated an interest in a candidate or issue and use this information to generate direct mail, email and phone lists. Political organizations interested in using online lead generation for supporter recruitment should:

- Communicate their marketing objectives to their lead generation vendor.
- Define objective performance criteria that will be used to measure whether their marketing objectives are being met.
- Consult with a lead generation vendor regarding the real time monitoring and measurement of their lead generation campaign performance.
- Provide timely feedback to their lead generation vendor on marketing initiative performance.
- Make modifications to the campaign as needed to enhance performance.
- Leverage expertise and assets of top lead generation vendors to effectively build and manage a successful marketing initiative.
- Have a privacy policy and terms and conditions that adequately disclose to consumers how their data is collected, used and shared.
- Make sure that lead data capture, storage and transfer is done in a secure environment to ensure data integrity, and is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.



# Introduction

BY JULIE BARKO GERMANY

INSTITUTE FOR POLITICS, DEMOCRACY & THE INTERNET

This publication begins with a discussion about money and ends in a chapter-by-chapter conversation about how political campaigns can save more of it.

Politics is in the process of becoming big business, and the business of politics (winning elections) has never been more costly. Some experts predict that more than \$2.7 billion will be spent on political ads during the 2008 election season.<sup>1</sup> This is a conservative estimate. The cost of running a presidential campaign appears to double every four years. In the spring of 2007, several staffers of the Institute for Politics, Democracy & the Internet gathered to speculate precisely how much money would be spent during the general election season on behalf of the candidates, parties and political organizations. At the time, we estimated as much as \$10 billion would be raised and spent on the election.

What if there is another way? A way to supplement to mainstream political marketing – a way to reach voters more efficiently and effectively, allowing presidential campaigns to spend less money, reach people with extraordinarily targeted precision, and measure success and failure in real time.

The authors of this publication argue just that. Within the pages of this report, they present case studies, best practices and lessons to help the political community transition from the broadcast model of the past fifty years to the digital model of the future. This new approach is paid online political advertising.

One of the major expenses campaigns face is the purchase of advertising time through broadcast media. “If you want to reach voters,” the argument for the past several decades has gone, “use television.” While television remains a popular medium, it is no longer the only way to reach voters. According to new research from the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, the Internet is becoming a major source of information for American voters about presidential campaigns. Nearly

a quarter (24 percent) of Americans learns something about the presidential campaigns online, and the Internet has become the leading source of information about presidential campaigns for young people.<sup>2</sup>

## WHERE THE PUBLIC LEARNS ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

REGULARLY LEARN SOMETHING FROM . . .	2008
Local television news	40
Cable news networks	38
Nightly network news	32
Daily newspaper	31
Internet	24
Television news magazines	22
Morning television shows	22
National Public Radio	18
Talk radio	16
Cable political talk	15

As media habits change, and as technology and the ways in which American voters use technology evolve, politics must evolve with it or face fading into irrelevancy. Phil Noble, founder of the PoliticsOnline organization, is considered an early pioneer in online politics. He is fond of saying that when it comes to using the Internet in politics, “we are still in the morning of the first day of the revolution.” The political world’s use of the Internet is still evolving. So, for that matter, is the average American voter’s use of this tool.

The authors of this publication provide an overview and blueprint to assist political and advocacy campaigns

for the next few election cycles. Corporations and big business have already taken the first step, turning to online advertising to reach consumers in a highly targeted, easily measurable manner. Politics, we suspect, is not far behind. Further, as many of the following chapters argue, the benefits – from cost to the ability to carefully target and measure results – have enormous potential.

## **A note about the authors and the funding for this project**

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Many of the authors for this publication work in the fields of online advertising and online political consulting. Almost all of them have clients who pay them to design and execute online strategy or place online ads on Web sites. We asked each of our authors to participate in this project because of the specific knowledge and experience that each possesses.

This publication is designed to explain and illustrate some of the principles and best practices of paid online political advertising. It is intended to inform, not to persuade, and certainly not to sell the services of one of our authors.

SECTION 1

# Meeting Political Objectives in a New Media Environment



## CHAPTER 1

# Key Emerging Trends in Political and Advocacy Communications

BY MICHAEL A. BASSIK

MSHC PARTNERS

Several major trends are emerging from the new media landscape. This chapter looks at some of those trends and offers suggestions for how political organizations can harness the Internet, including:

- Several election cycles of research and development are defining success in political marketing online.
- Successful online marketing campaigns begin with strategy and planning.
- Political marketing online can be used to persuade voters.
- Presidential candidates are leading the way in political advertising online.

## Introduction

Predictions of an online political marketing revolution have surfaced every year since the first campaign email was sent in 1992.<sup>4</sup> Back then, we referred to the emergence of *cyber-politics* or *e-politics* as part of a seismic shift that would change the nature of how candidates communicate with the electorate. “Television would soon be a thing of the past,” we pronounced – pounding our fists harder and harder into the vast podiums at which we spoke.<sup>5</sup>

More than a decade later, we recognize that not

much has changed since our fist-pounding activities began. “Don’t get me wrong,” noted David Plouffe, Barack Obama’s campaign manager. “The Internet is a powerful organizing and fundraising tool, and it’s getting more and more important every day, but it’s still not the persuasion and message tool that TV is.”<sup>6</sup>

The Internet is clearly changing the way in which candidates find and empower their most ardent supporters, solicit small-dollar donations and generate earned media. But despite countless conferences, articles, studies and meetings in which the innumerable benefits of Internet marketing are espoused, the web has yet to gain a foothold as a political advertising medium.

It’s no secret that the average political campaign is risk averse. Never the hotbed for groundbreaking research and development, campaigns are slow-moving entities – erected and demolished for a single, short-lived purpose. In this environment, the web’s relative unscalability, incongruous pricing models and distinct reporting metrics make it difficult for traditional media consultants to embrace, let alone understand. And with an incumbency factor of upwards of 90 percent among members of Congress and state and local legislators, there’s little or no reason to rock the boat. And not rocking the boat is exactly what we can expect.

- Despite findings that 24 percent of Americans regularly learn about the candidates



online and that 79 percent of adults – about 178 million – go online each week, candidates will continue to ignore interactive marketing in favor of increased television budgets.

- In a year in which commercial marketers are expected to devote approximately 10 percent of their advertising budgets to the web, political candidates at all levels of the ballot will spend approximately one percent of their advertising budgets online.
- Political campaigns will continue to evaluate the success of their online operations by two metrics – return on investment and earned media generation – while continuing to measure direct mail, phones, radio and television by their abilities to improve candidate favorability, increase name recognition and persuade voters.

Yet despite all the bleak predictions of small and non-existent online media budgets and counterintuitive media planning choices, more candidates will experiment with online political advertising in 2008 than in all previous election cycles combined.

While the statistics may seem overwhelmingly negative, there is much to celebrate about the growth of the online political advertising industry. Presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain continue to make online advertising a central piece of their paid marketing efforts, the two national parties are already hiring seasoned online advertising experts to guide them through the 2008 election cycle and dozens of down-ballot candidates are expected to adopt web marketing as an important part of their election and re-election strategies.

## The Changing Media Landscape

While the political establishment has yet to recognize the web's advertising capabilities, they are beginning to notice that *something* different is taking place in the mind of the voter, making the use of traditional advertising media increasingly difficult.

- **The Power of Word of Mouth:** “How can we begin to understand why Mitt Romney outspent Mike Huckabee on television in Iowa by 6 to 1, yet lost,” ask political consultants Mark Mellman and Michael Bloomfield. “While 30-second spots will remain a central means of persuasive communication,” the authors continue, “we have to recognize the power of individuals to influence one another.”
- **The Rise of Consumer Control:** Depending on who you ask, television viewers with digital video recorders (DVRs) skip between 60% and 99% of ads, “a trend expected to

get worse as DVR penetration grows from 8% of homes [in 2005] to a projected 40% by 2009.”

- **Push versus Pull:** More than ninety-five percent of adult Internet users use search engines to find information. In North America alone, the average Internet user conducts 77.4 searches per month.

## Case Study

Despite John Kerry's loss in the 2004 presidential race, one of the untold stories of the past election cycle was the way in which his campaign and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) successfully used Internet advertising to sway post-debate perceptions and analysis.

After each of the three televised presidential debates, the Democratic National Committee launched a banner ad blitz that generated more than 130 million ad impressions and marked one of the most sophisticated attempts ever to influence post-debate opinions. The buy spanned more than 50 web sites, including the homepages of Reuters.com, NYTimes.com, washingtonpost.com, MSNBC.com, USA Today.com, Salon.com, and Weather.com

The media declared Kerry the victor of the debate and countless articles gave the “thinking ahead award” to the Democratic Party for its innovative and effective use of the web. Fortunately, the success of this campaign was not limited to anecdotal evidence.

Dynamic Logic conducted an independent, third party ad effectiveness study on Yahoo! to measure the impact of the DNC's post-debate ads on the electorate. Of the more than 1,500 people polled after the final debate, 55 percent who saw DNC post-debate ads thought that Kerry had won the debate compared with 49 percent of those who were not exposed.

In addition, 50 percent of those who saw the DNC banner ads associated the ad's message with Kerry. When asked, “Did Kerry finish strong and ready to lead?” – the message in the ad – 50 percent of those exposed said yes compared with 42 percent of people in the non-exposed group. Among women, the numbers were more impressive – 52 percent to 41 percent.

Within this changing media landscape, previous myths and misconceptions about the Internet are being replaced by realities – driven by research, trial and error and experiences using the Internet for commercial marketing.

First, the Internet is not a replacement to traditional media outlets. Rather, the web complements television, radio, phones and direct mail and belongs in the overall media mix. To that point, online advertising is best used in concert with offline media and events.

Young voters who rely on technology to communicate, learn and work have become an important bloc. More than 20 million young voters turned out in 2004 – an increase of 9 percent over 2000. Candidates interested in reaching out to this growing segment of the electorate must embrace web marketing to do so effectively and efficiently.<sup>4</sup>

Third, the Internet is an extremely effective medium for persuading voters, increasing name recognition and improving favorability. Those who say otherwise are ignoring a decade of research to the contrary.

Finally, presidential candidates lead the way. The break-through moment for online political advertising will come from a national campaign within the next two election cycles. However, more research is necessary to convince the online political establishment that online advertising deserves its share of scarce media dollars.

Publishers should work together to fund and publicize successes.

## Conclusion

Will 2008 be the year in which traditional political consultants warm to the idea of online political advertising? Probably not. But all signs point to a *banner year* for online advertising this election cycle. National, statewide and local candidates are beginning to see the web as an ideal complement to their traditional marketing efforts, and are slowly experimenting with ads on search engines, blogs and local newspaper Web sites. And online publishers are eager to fund advertising effectiveness studies to show skeptical consultants that the web is an effective use of scarce advertising dollars.

Risk-averse political campaigns are unlikely to change overnight. But with continued research and education, it is just a matter of time before the political community catches up with their commercial counterparts and makes the Web a staple of any modern day political media buy.

### Best Practices



While still a nascent industry, the following online political advertising best practices have emerged since 1998 – when academics and practitioners began studying the impact of political advertising on the electorate.

1. Plan ahead. Whereas the standard 30-second spot reigns on television, the web is full of dozens of different advertising formats and targeting capabilities. Campaigns should give themselves at least three weeks to plan their first online advertising campaign.
2. Budget accordingly. The Internet is an extremely cost-effective medium when compared with its traditional counterparts. This does not mean, however, that the Internet is cheap. Campaigns spending \$1,000,000 in traditional advertising should be willing to invest between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in online media to maintain the industry-standard online media mix.
3. Use ad servers to track performance. By using an advertising server to deliver and track advertising performance, candidates can find out everything from the reach and frequency of their advertising efforts to the number of individuals who interacted with an ad without clicking-through. Ad serving provides unparalleled control over ads once they're live and gives you the power to easily evaluate the effectiveness of online advertising efforts.
4. Think beyond the gimmicks. Campaigns have a tendency to use the Internet exclusively to launch humorous and “gimmicky” advertising efforts. In addition to fun online stunts, candidates should use the web to extend the reach and impact of offline advertising efforts through standard banner, blog and search engine marketing.
5. Start small. The Internet can be an intimidating medium for online advertising novices. Start small by placing advertisements on search engines and blogs to reach early-deciders, political influentials and information-seekers. Budget allowing, slowly expand to targeted banner advertising as you learn what works and what does not.
6. Think outside the vacuum. The web is most effective when used in tandem with traditional media efforts. Advertising campaigns on the Internet should coincide with offline advertising campaigns, large-scale offline events (e.g., debates, announcement speeches, endorsements) or both.

7. Conduct media planning and creative development. No matter how easy it is to buy and create an ad online, there is no substitute for professional online marketing help. Even the simplest search engine marketing and blog advertising campaigns will perform better when created and managed by seasoned pros. Online advertising should be entrusted to individuals with both marketing and technical know-how. If you do, however, decide to design ads on your own, remember that short and simple messages perform best.
8. Set realistic goals. The Internet has revolutionized the way in which candidates raise money. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been amassed through simple email appeals to a candidate's most ardent supporters. And millions of supporters have made unsolicited donations. That said, for most, online advertising is – and always will be – a very inefficient and ineffective fundraising medium. As such, online ads should not be judged on pure return-on-investment or email-acquisition standards.
9. Revise terms and conditions. Most online publishers do not include immediate cancellation clauses in their standard advertising contracts. Be sure to amend advertising contracts to include such safety measures so that an ad campaign can be ended if the candidate decides to leave the race or change his or her advertising strategy.

## CHAPTER 2

# Voters Online – Who Are They and What Do They Look Like?

BY KAREN A.B. JAGODA

E-VOTER INSTITUTE

This chapter looks at two different groups of people: voters who use the Internet and the political consultants and campaign staffers who are trying to reach them. It is not just about the online audience but why it matters to candidates and causes and the best ways to communicate with it. It is one thing to look for traditional voters who merely use online tools and quite another to understand how the Internet has helped create a new kind of voter in a changing political campaign environment. Specifically, this chapter looks at a number of trends in online politics:

- The online audience is representative of all voters.
- The Internet has changed the way voters use media and make decisions. The rules about communicating with them are being re-invented.
- The power in campaigns is shifting from candidates to voters.

In addition, this chapter will

- Explore the population of online voters.
- Identify what is known about the online audience in general that is relevant to consultants looking to identify and persuade voters using web-based tools.

## The General Environment

What are political consultants thinking? Why do they continue to spend the majority of the campaign budget on television ads, direct mail and phone banks?

Why the continued resistance to integrating Internet communications tools into a winning campaign strategy? How can the Internet be used to persuade swing and independent voters? These are just some of the questions vexing the online community and political consultants alike.



**What are the political consultants thinking? Why do they continue to spend the majority of the campaign budget on television ads, direct mail and phone banks? Why the continued resistance to integrating Internet communications tools into a winning campaign strategy? How can the Internet be used to persuade swing and independent voters? These are just some of the questions vexing the online community and political consultants alike.**

Less than 100 years ago, it was so much easier to find likely voters. They were male, white and read the newspaper. Today:

- Voters of all ages and ethnic groups now have a habit of using online tools to research candidates and causes, contribute money,

research the competition, send messages to candidates and forward messages to friends and family. Voters' media choices are increasing, their media habits are fragmenting and there is an increase in competition for their time.

- People feel less associated with the traditional parties. The past few years have seen a rise in voters registering as Independents or decline-to-states. Everyone is being overwhelmed by political messages through mail, phone, television and cable.
- The online audience has matured since 1996 when Republican nominee Bob Dole became the first presidential contender to ask people to go to his Web site. Online denizens are now using computers with better graphics, bigger screens and high-speed broadband and wireless connectivity capabilities, which result in snap access to the web. They have higher expectations for rich media including video on Web sites, and they are more digitally oriented: mobile devices, TiVo, iPods are part of the way they get entertainment, news and information.
- Voters are more comfortable entering personal data and credit card information online but at the same time are more concerned about privacy.
- They are more familiar with email – the good and the bad – and are more connected with their friends and family online.
- Money spent on traditional media does not guarantee success for a candidate or cause.
- The campaign is about the voter, not just the candidate.

## Key Characteristics of Online Media

To understand the behavior of voters online, it is helpful to get a broader view of the way the Internet has helped change how people consume media. A few points about voters and their use of the Internet are important to keep in mind when planning an integrated media strategy:

- The distinction between traditional and new media will disappear.<sup>7</sup>
- Consumers of all media have shorter attention spans and are more interested in getting information when and how they want it. According to “The User Revolution: The New Advertising Ecosystem and the Rise of the Internet as a Mass Media,” produced by Piper Jaffray Internet Research, “Multitasking and multi-channel use will be the norm with consumers using an increasing number of Web sites, television channels and

other sources for information and entertainment. The majority of consumers surf the Internet while watching television.”<sup>8</sup>

- The Web is now a routine media channel for most demographic groups.<sup>9</sup>
- Just as they expect retailers to have online stores, average voters expect a candidate to have a Web site.
- The Internet has changed the way people interact with brands. What's more, commercial advertisers have embraced this functionality. Instead of one-way communications appealing to a mass audience, the Internet allows for targeting and user-based interactivity.
- People who use the Internet expect to play an active role and their passion often drives their behavior. The Internet has fostered peer-to-peer communications and citizen journalists have changed the landscape of the news cycle. Howard Dean and Ron Paul both incorporated complete strangers into their campaigns and in doing so, made news.
- Voters want balanced coverage of political news. They enjoy learning about opposing political viewpoints and may see negative online ads as educational in certain contexts. They may also see these messages and be turned off from a candidate. Of course, part of the goal for a consultant could be to suppress voter turnout.
- Consumers show an increasing interest in ratings and reviews. A study released in November 2007 conducted by comScore with The Kelsey Group shows that nearly one out of every four Internet users reported using online reviews prior to paying for a service delivered offline by restaurants, hotels, travel, legal, medical, automotive and home services. More than three quarters of these review users in nearly every category reported that the review had a significant influence on their purchase. Users noted that reviews generated by fellow consumers had a greater influence than those generated by professionals.<sup>10</sup>
- Webcasts, online social media sites and Web video are ways to develop relationships with constituents that go beyond the meet-and-greet. Online users have become accustomed to downloading video and accessing information on their own schedules. Piper Jaffray Internet Research also addresses the importance of video, calling it “the Killer App of the Web, supplementing or supplanting most other types of content.”<sup>11</sup>

- People who are online indicate a strong intention of voting and are very likely to seek out political information online.<sup>12</sup>
- People also actively filter content. “One unfortunate by-product of media fragmentation, combined with the spray-and-pray approach taken by some marketers,” says Nick Nyman, CEO of Dynamic Logic, “is that consumers, needing ways to deal with this advertising onslaught, have developed mental and technical firewalls to help filter it all. Keeping that context in mind, the challenge for online advertisers is to understand what techniques are likely to penetrate these firewalls to engage consumers.”<sup>16</sup>
- Online usage is now on par with television viewership.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, integration of advertising across online and offline mediums helps reinforce a message. Offline media often drives voters to look for information online.

## Voter Perspectives

As reported in the E-Voter Institute’s 2007 research of voters,<sup>13</sup> the most popular ways for candidates to capture voters’ attention are:

FIG 1: VOTERS ON THE BEST WAYS TO REACH THEM	
METHOD	% RSPNDNTS
TV Ads	64
Web site	53
Word of Mouth	48
Direct mail	37
Email	36
Newspaper ads	35
Radio ads	35
Internet video sites	31
Online ads	30
Blogs and Podcasts	29
Yard signs	29
Social network sites	24
Webcasts	21
Phone	12
Text messaging	10
“Objects in the Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear: Change is Accelerating in the Political Landscape,” E-Voter Institute 2007 Research Findings, September 2007, 15.	

A general view of what consultants think about online tools for reaching base and swing voters is helpful to better understand how the Internet is being defined by political professionals:

**FIG 2: REACHING BASE AND SWING VOTERS ONLINE**

% CONSULTANTS WHO THINK INTERNET TOOLS ARE USEFUL FOR REACHING BASE AND SWING VOTERS		
METHOD	LOYAL BASE	SWING AND INDEPENDENT
Candidate email newsletter	56	10
Online fund raising	53	7
Webcasts	34	12
Blogs/ Podcasts	33	19
Candidate Web site	32	14
Internet for GOTV	30	11
Email	24	13
Voter generated content	22	19
Social Networking Sites	21	20
Online Video	21	18
Online Ads	10	18
Paid Search	9	16
“Objects in the Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear: Change is Accelerating in the Political Landscape,” E-Voter Institute 2007 Research Findings, September 2007, 14.		

## Demographics and Behavior of the Online Audience

What do we know about the online audience in general? How should their behavior be seen in order to best target messages using online tools? What can we learn from consumer advertisers who have been pioneers in the use of online communications?

### Who is Online?

- eMarketer projects that 65.2 percent of the U.S. population will use the Internet at least once a month in 2007. This rate is projected to rise to 66.6 percent in 2008 and up to 70.6 percent by 2011.<sup>15</sup>
- eMarketer forecasts that 64.9 percent of all households are online and of those, 82.7 percent will have a broadband connection in 2007. By 2008, it is projected that 67.2 percent of all households will be online and that 89.4 percent of them will be broadband households.<sup>16</sup>

## Consultants Still Hesitate to Use the Internet

Writing in the *New York Times Magazine* in December 2007, Matt Bai addressed one of the reasons why the political campaigning industry has been slow to adopt Internet marketing techniques:

Perhaps only in Washington, where so few people have dominated so much for so long, is this trend (towards using the Internet) viewed as inherently negative. That's because, for decades, presidential campaigns have been the exclusive province of a small bevy of ad makers and strategists who profited from the illusion that they, and only they, could foresee the electorate's every reaction to everything.<sup>17</sup>

Internet ad spending lags behind all other U.S. advertising spending. It is estimated that U.S. adults consume 21 percent of their media from the Internet while only 7 percent of ad budgets are spent online. In the case of political budgets, the percent of dollars spent online is the reverse, according to Evan Tracey at TNS in the *Wall Street Journal*.<sup>18</sup> A higher percent of political ad budgets are spent offline.

What are the main concerns political strategists, media planners and communications experts have about the Internet? According to E-Voter Institute's 2007 research, political strategy decision-makers think that:

1. The people they are looking for are not online.
2. Even if the people they are looking for are online, they are not able to target them with appropriate messages.
3. Not enough information is available about how to target people online (i.e., strategists do not know how to best use the Internet).
4. Clients are not asking about it and are hesitant to utilize it.
5. The Internet is not a medium that can be used to sufficiently reach others.
6. The Internet is not an emotional medium.
7. Using the Internet takes too much time

However, very few consultants think the Internet is too expensive or a security risk.

What are the real reasons consultants hesitate to embrace the Internet as part of their campaign strategies? The consultants know how to buy traditional media like television, radio, direct mail and phone, and understand how they will be paid for their efforts. Developing an effective online presence takes new skills beyond those required for a good television ad, phone script or direct mail piece. Why change what seems to work? Based on historical data, results from traditional media can be predicted. No candidate has used the Internet to win. Therefore, while interesting, Internet advertising is not seen as mandatory.

Buying online media can be more time consuming and the effort may not be recognized as effective because not enough is spent to do a fair test. The ability of the Internet to allow niche targeting challenges the current definitions of definable groups of likely voters. The Internet almost makes it too easy to figure out where to send messages.

Many consultants still hope to get through one more presidential cycle without having to learn about this new media. Their peers are still not using it and candidates may not ask for anything more than a Web site.

While money is being raised using candidate's Web sites and online appeals from emails, the powers that control the campaign budgets are not spending that money online but rather tucking it into the television budget to buy more airtime to chase the trends of daily polls. The Golden Rule applies here: he who has the gold rules. As Christopher Drew reported in the *New York Times*, "And with more money than ever on the line this time around, resentment has been building at how, win or lose, presidential elections have become gold mines for the small and often swaggering band of media consultants who dominate modern campaigns."<sup>19</sup>

- There are strong correlations between education and income in households with broadband connectivity. The eMarketer results indicated that fewer than one-third of Americans earning under \$30,000 per year had a broadband connection in 2007, compared with 76 percent of those earning \$75,000 or more. In 2007, seven in ten college graduates had broadband connections, compared with 21 percent of Americans without a high school diploma. Slightly over half of those in urban areas had broadband while nearly that many in the suburban areas had fast access. Only 31 percent in rural areas were connected to the Internet by broadband.<sup>22</sup>
- According to comScore Media Metrix, adult women (18+) represent 51.3 percent of the online users and men 48.7 percent, roughly the same gender breakdown of the general population. It is estimated that 50 percent of men have broadband access at home compared with 44 percent of women.

- The demographic profile of U.S. Internet users by age and race/ethnicity reveals further how much the Internet looks like the general population.

**FIG 3: ETHNIC MIX OF US INTERNET USERS BY AGE**

% OF RESPONDENTS IN EACH GROUP (2006)			
AGE	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC
18-29	86	77	67
30-41	85	77	61
42-51	80	69	58
52-60	75	49	46
61-70	55	31	27
71+	27	7	17

“Hispanic Americans Online: A Fragmented Population,” eMarketer, November 2007, 12.

**FIG 4: US INTERNET USERS BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

AS % OF TOTAL INTERNET USERS		
RACE/ETHNICITY	2007	2008
White (non-Hispanic)	73.3	72.4
African American	11.0	11.2
Hispanic	10.0	10.4
Asian	5.8	6.0

“Hispanic Americans Online: A Fragmented Population,” eMarketer, November 2007, 9.

According to the March 2007 Pew survey “Latinos Online,”<sup>23</sup>

- 71 percent of non-Hispanic whites are online.
- 60 percent of African-Americans are online.
- 56 percent of Hispanics are online.

But when we look at college graduates

- 91 percent of non-Hispanic whites are online.
- 93 percent of African-Americans are online.
- 89 percent of Hispanics are online.

The presidential campaign of 2008 will further reveal the role gender and ethnic identity play in how voters make decisions.

### Hispanics

Who are Hispanic-Americans, and how can candidates reach them? While many focus solely on illegal

immigrants, the first and second-generation Hispanics who are U.S. citizens and contribute money to candidates, talk to their friends about politics, and vote have been generally neglected by candidates. In the 2008 election, there has been increasing awareness of the need to reach out to this diverse community.

- Hispanic-Americans come from over two dozen countries that have multiple official languages and dialects. Nearly two out of three Hispanics in America come from Mexico. Nine percent are from Central America, eight percent from South America, eight percent from Puerto Rico, five percent from Cuba and six percent from other countries.
- The size and origin of the Hispanic-American population differ widely by state.
- According to the Pew Hispanic Center, 61 percent of Hispanic adults were not born in the U.S. while 23 percent are second-generation and 16 percent are third-generation. By 2010 Hispanic-Americans are projected to be 37.9 percent first-generation, 32.3 percent second-generation and more than 29.8 percent third-generation.

Degrees of acculturation among the population differ from 50 percent who are Spanish-oriented (more fluent in Spanish than English) to 26 percent who are bi-cultural (fluent in both languages) to 24 percent who are relatively assimilated (much more fluent in English).

eMarketer notes that until 2006, Pew did not conduct telephone surveys in Spanish thus leaving out people who could not speak English well enough to answer the questions. Use of random digit phone surveys also leaves out many Hispanics who have only mobile phones but not landlines. Since 34 percent of Hispanic Americans are under 18, compared to 25 percent of the total US population, a clearer view of the next generation of Hispanic voters needs to be articulated.

According to E-Voter Institute’s 2007 findings, 18 Internet tools are not seen as effective by most consultants for reaching and persuading Latino/Hispanic voters. Four of the five methods chosen most often by consultants as “effective” are offline, traditional campaign tools. Word of mouth is the most noted method, with (73 percent) of consultants choosing it, followed by television or cable ads (69 percent), candidate events (63 percent) and radio ads (60 percent).

Online approaches are among the least popular choices suggested by consultants for reaching out to this community, with only candidate Web sites (36 percent) among the top ten methods chosen. Besides candidate Web sites, the other methods ranked as follows: email (31 percent), online ads (23 percent), online video (23 percent), social networking sites (23 percent), blogs and podcasts (14 percent) and webcasts (13 percent).

What do consultants think are the most effective methods for reaching Latinos and Hispanics?



**FIG 5: REACHING HISPANICS VOTERS**

ACTIVITY TO REACH LATINOS/HISPANICS	% OF CONSULTANTS
Word of Mouth	73
TV/Cable Ads	69
Events with Candidate	63
Radio Ads	60
Direct Mail	56
Yard Signs/Billboards	47
Phone	44
Candidate Website	36
Newspaper Ads	34
Debates	33
Email	31
Online Ads	23
Online Video	23
Social Networking Sites	23
Text Messaging	17
Blogs and Podcasts	14
Webcasts	13
"Objects in the Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear: Change is Accelerating in the Political Landscape," E-Voter Institute 2007 Research Findings, September 2007, 18.	

**Search**

The Pew Internet and American Life Project said in December 2007 that 47 percent of U.S. adult Internet users surveyed last year had looked for information about themselves through Google or another search engine. Pew also found that 53 percent of adult Internet users admitted to looking up information about someone else, celebrities excluded. With an average of 44 searches per user per month in the United States, Google has seen a 50 percent increase in the number of searches in just two years with nearly 100 billion Google searches in the United States in 2007.<sup>24</sup>

Search for local candidates is growing. Some analysts estimate that local searches make up half of all online searches.<sup>20</sup> While presidential cycles typically draw an incredible amount of attention, many more candidates run for state and local office. These races have very locally-based audiences who may have limited access to information about lesser known candidates. Voters do not generally feel they are getting enough information from political leaders in their speeches and so they are using search engines to find out political information. They are also taking the time to learn about opposing political views in a way that is less public than attending a rally or fundraiser.

By linking behavior to search, EMILY’s List (the nation’s largest political action committee) has tried some new techniques to find women voters using the Google search engine. According to a Los Angeles Times article by Tom Hamburger and Dan Morain in late December 2007, “Whenever someone in Iowa searches online for ‘recipe,’ ‘stocking stuffer,’ or ‘yoga’ for instance, a banner will pop up inviting the searcher to visit a Web site supporting Clinton.” Hamburger and Morain’s article suggests that EMILY’s List targeted a common reason why women might not attend caucus sessions: they are busy with family obligations, such as cooking dinner. To help with the problem, the site offered easy to make “caucus-night recipes.”<sup>25</sup>

Search has become integrated into our everyday lives and multiple applications will continue to evolve. Searching for maps, video, audio and text will become even more powerful tools for voters online to compare and contrast alternative options.

**What Adults Are Doing Online**

- Research conducted by Harris Group for Deloitte & Touche and provided to eMarketer offers insight into the weekly habits of U.S. Internet users and shows some interesting similarities between age groups:

**FIG 6: WEEKLY HABITS OF US INTERNET USERS**

ACTIVITY	GEN X 25-41	BOOMERS 42-60	MATURES 61-75
Use search engines or portals	93	91	90
Read about local news, weather, or current events	88	87	86
Read national/world news, weather or current events	82	81	88
Purchase products	78	77	79
Seek product reviews, conduct, shopping research	74	73	70
Read entertainment and celebrity news	69	58	46
Read sports news/information	54	56	57
Deloitte & Touche, “State of the Media Democracy” conducted by Harris Group, provided to eMarketer August 2007, 7.			

- The YouTube audience is massive with hundreds of millions of worldwide video views daily. According to Nielson/NetRatings in July 2007, the audience was estimated as evenly spread across all ranges:

**FIG 7: YOUTUBE AUDIENCE DISTRIBUTION (JULY 07)**

AGE	% OF AUDIENCE
<18	18
18-34	19
35-44	21
45-54	20
55+	21
GENDER	% OF AUDIENCE
Male	54
Female	46

Nielsen/NetRatings 2007 provided by Google.

- eMarketer estimates that 65.6 percent of U.S. Internet users purchased a product online in 2006.<sup>26</sup> The Pew Internet & American Life project came up with a somewhat higher figure of 71 percent. Additionally, eMarketer projects small steady growth over the next few years. It is estimated that U.S. online buyers spent \$1,123 in 2007 with a projected increase of nearly 14 percent \$1,279. in 2008.
- Data on online activities for U.S. Internet users, when broken down by race/ethnicity, show some interesting variations.

**FIG 8: ONLINE ACTIVITIES US INTERNET USERS ENGAGE IN DAILY OR NEAR DAILY**

	% OF RACE/ETHNICITY			
	EMAIL	READ NEWS	FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	WATCH VIDEOS
White (non-Hispanic)	91.5	68.0	26.0	10.1
African American	83.5	63.0	32.8	15.9
Hispanic	85.6	60.1	34.7	19.1
Asian	85.4	63.1	33.0	14.8

“Hispanic Americans Online: A Fragmented Population,” eMarketer, November 2007, 15.

## Influencing the Influencers

We all know them. You might be one. The Influentials – those people who are prominent in their communities, outspoken in their opinions, and volunteer for social and political activities. For candidates and causes, finding these people and encouraging them to commu-

nicate with their wide network of friends, family and professional colleagues is essential.

### African-American Influentials

There has not been much research about how African-Americans use the Internet for political purposes. There is some evidence from a Burson-Marsteller report about African-Americans who are considered e-fluentials – defined as those who have influence over others, frequently engage with their peers, families, businesses and other audiences and get their political information online.

Some differences are revealed in the study between African-Americans and the average white U.S. Internet user:

- African-Americans are 20 percent more inclined to vote in an on online poll, 50 percent more likely to forward a coupon or promotional code in an email and 22 percent more likely to post a review on a shopping or review Web site.
- African-Americans are 59 percent less likely to create/post photos or videos on a public Web site, 53 percent less likely to write their own blog and 69 percent less likely to post on someone else’s blog.
- African-Americans are slightly more likely to send an email to a company or organization but slightly less likely to send an email to a well known news or media company.<sup>27</sup>

With the presence of Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential campaign, it is reasonable to expect that there will be more African-Americans participating online. This will provide an even greater opportunity to measure how African-American voters are using the Internet.

### Activism

The role and definition of a political activist is changing. Traditional campaigns have relied on volunteers coming to a campaign office to stuff envelopes, make fundraising calls, and plan campaign events. Voters needed to drop by the campaign office to get a yard sign, physically attend a rally to show support, or find an envelope, a stamp and a mailbox to deliver a financial donation.

Online activism has grown from being a grassroots source of funds and volunteers to a multi-dimensional piece of the total puzzle. Online activism today includes:

- Signing up for a candidate’s newsletter.
- Signing up to receive notices from politically active organizations.
- Spending time on a candidates’ Web site or blog.

- Sending email to friends and family about politics.
- Contributing to a candidate or cause online.
- Sending an email to a candidate or politician about their concerns.
- Attending a meeting or rally as a result of an online notice from a trusted friend or source.
- Telling friends about a candidate or cause as a result of an email or online notice.
- Viewing online video about a candidate or cause.
- Registering to vote or voting as a result of receiving an email or online notice.

According to E-Voter Institute data, those most responsive to online political notices or emails are:

- Younger voters and Democrats, who are slightly more likely to participate in politics in response to online notices and emails.
- Men, who respond in greater numbers than women (38 percent vs. 28 percent).
- Liberal constituents, who respond more (39 percent) than either moderates (25 percent) or conservatives (29 percent).<sup>28</sup>

While activism is no guarantee for voter turnout, the activists who use the Internet are 42 percent more likely to respond to notices from candidates by telling a friend than by taking any direct action themselves.

### Citizen 2.0

August 2007 research from Yahoo! suggests that of all voters who are online, 51 percent of them belong to a group that Yahoo! calls Citizens 2.0. These people are characterized as having:

- A tendency to share and discuss ideas and convince others regarding political issues.
- A propensity to search and learn about political issues.
- An attitude of skepticism about political news and articles.
- A tendency to volunteer time and contribute money.<sup>29</sup>

Edwin Wang, who conducted much of the Yahoo! Analysis, said, “Projections were based on the official count of 122 million voters from the 2004 Presidential election and cross-referenced the 87 million voters who are online as reported by the respected PEW study in 2007 (71-72 percent of all Americans over 18 are online). Citizen 2.0 - they are 51 percent of the 71 percent of American voters online. However, other respected

market research sources have indicated that 4 in 5 voters, not just Americans, are online, which validates the fact that, if anything, these projections are actually quite conservative.”

An individual who fits the profile of Citizen 2.0 is unique from the traditional citizen voter in that 82 percent of Citizen 2.0 voters will chase stories through various media outlets when the stories spark their particular interest. A majority of Citizen 2.0 voters, estimated at 71 percent, enjoy discussing politics among family and friends and nearly two out of three say they will often discuss their political views when others bring up the subject.

Using the knowledge about this group to spark interest in candidates and causes can lead to the viral spread of information and perhaps influence opinions as well as Independent and swing voters. As a rapid response mechanism, it can be very effective to quickly get the word out about controversial encounters.

The Citizen 2.0 tends to be composed of more men than women (52 percent vs. 48 percent) while the citizen voter group tends towards women over men (54 percent vs. 46 percent). Voters in the two different groups are approximately the same mean age and share the same marital status. There are more citizen voters with no children than Citizen 2.0 voters.

Citizen 2.0 uses the Internet to gather information about politics. News Web sites attract 87 percent of this group and 82 percent use search engines. Candidate Web sites attract just over half of this group, as do blogs and politically-based sites. Two out of five look at online political groups and one-third found online ads useful.

## Rise of the Poli-fluentials

A smaller group, called Poli-fluentials, is defined by The George Washington University’s Institute for Politics, Democracy & the Internet as both influential in their communities and politically active. Its report, *Poli-fluentials: The New Political Kingmakers* (October 2007) indicates that this group makes up 20 percent of the likely voters who responded to their survey. Their sample was drawn from a group of registered voters who received an online invitation to participate. These findings are not representative of all voters but of a small and highly influential subset of likely voters.

These Poli-fluentials have traits that make them especially appealing to the candidates, political parties and advocacy organizations. They are:

- Much more likely to volunteer.
- Significantly more technologically savvy.
- More voracious consumers of news, especially alternative sources of news, and tend to seek out the Web sites of candidates, issue groups and public officials.
- Have larger social and professional networks (but their networks are less likely to

contain a wide variety of opinions).

- More likely to be Democrats than Republicans.
- More likely to be liberal or very liberal than conservative or very conservative.
- Very highly educated, tend to have higher incomes and older than average voters.
- Equally likely to be men and women
- Make online political contributions at a greater rate than other respondents.
- Young people who more likely will report being active in politics online.
- More likely to volunteer as young people but more likely to remain active by making political donations when over the age of 50.

### Newspapers

A Millward Brown study conducted in September and October 2007 for the National Newspaper Network and the Newspaper Association of America found that readers of newspaper sites are 52 percent more likely to be categorized as influencers<sup>31</sup> – based on the MRI definition as those who introduce and promote acceptance of a product, idea, service or opinion to their friends, family, neighborhood, groups and communities – as compared to those who use the Internet but do not go to newspaper sites. The study found that on average, adults who use newspaper Web sites influence 18 people weekly within their influence circle, 38 percent more than Web users who do not use newspaper Web sites. The newspaper Web site users are also more likely to be asked their opinion by business colleagues and common interest group members.

The study shows that readers of newspaper Web sites tend to be early adopters of new products and technologies. Nearly one third of those who read newspapers and use newspaper Web sites say that they like to try new products or the latest technology. About 24 percent of those who use only newspaper Web sites and don't read the newspaper say the same thing. Of those who use the Internet but do not go to newspaper Web sites, only 17 percent say they are early adopters.

Most interestingly, advertising on newspaper Web sites is deemed more credible than ads on other online sources. Over one third of those who use newspaper sites say that ads on newspaper sites are credible. This is compared to only 17 percent of the same group saying that ads on social networks are credible and about a quarter saying that ads on search engines or special interest sites are credible.

### Online Social Networks

E-Voter Institute's 2007 research looks specifically at those who participate in online social networks and those who do not. When those who were politically ac-

tive were divided into groups according to participation in online social networks, some interesting differences were noted. In general, 86 percent of online social networking site members reported doing something politically active while 77 percent of those who do not belong to online social networking sites have been politically active.<sup>32</sup>

**FIG 9: CALL TO ACTION- IMPACT OF E-MAIL MESSAGE**

% OF THOSE IN SOCIAL NETWORKS OR NOT		
ACTION FROM E-MAIL NOTICE	SOCIAL NETWORK MEMBER	NOT A MEMBER
Tell a friend about a candidate	51	36
Contribute to candidate or cause	17	12
Volunteer for candidate or cause 1	19	9
Attend a meeting/rally for a candidate	19	13
Voted as a result of online notice	36	33
"Objects in the Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear: Change is Accelerating in the Political Landscape," E-Voter Institute 2007 Research Findings, September 2007, 8.		

Forrester Research has defined a social technographics ladder of participation in online social networks that can be useful to political strategists trying to figure out how to better understand the value of user-generated content. People may fall into several categories at once but in general, the levels are as follows:

- Creators post blogs, upload pictures, write articles and/or get others excited.
- Critics post ratings on products or services and/or contribute to online forums.
- Collectors use RSS feeds and/or add tags to web pages or photos.
- Joiners maintain a profile on a social networking site and/or visit social networking sites.
- Spectators read blogs, watch videos from other users, listen to podcasts and/or read reviews.
- Inactives do not use any online social networks.<sup>33</sup>

Their data (over 10,000 online people surveyed nationally) shows how supporters of candidates are participating in social networks:

**FIG 10: POLITICAL SUPPORTERS AND PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA**

% OF US ONLINE ADULTS						
	CREATORS	CRITICS	COLLECTORS	JOINERS	SPECTATORS	INACTIVES
Democrats	21	29	13	27	53	40
Republicans	15	21	10	20	47	47
Independent, Swing	15	26	10	23	48	46
Clinton	23	29	15	27	49	42
Edwards	22	33	14	25	62	29
Obama	24	33	14	33	59	34
Giuliani	14	21	9	19	47	47
McCain	16	19	8	20	44	48
Romney	13	24	14	21	53	43
Thompson	11	21	10	16	47	47

Josh Bernoff, "The Social Profile of Political Candidates," Forrester Research, December 2007.

It is interesting to note that Democrats tend to participate more fully in social technologies and are at least 10 percent more likely to do just about anything involving social technologies. By contrast, Republicans are the opposite: they are 22 percent less likely to be a be joiners and 21 percent less likely to blog or upload video. Independents (defined as people who call themselves "Independent" as well as swing and undecided voters) are somewhere in the middle, approaching the average in Joiner and Critic activity.

When looking at candidate supporters, there are important differences among Democrats. One in three Obama supporters is a Joiner. Nearly two-thirds of the Edwards supporters are Spectators. Clinton supporters contain the least number of Spectators and the highest percentage of Inactives. Obama, Clinton, and Edwards voters are all rich with Creators (at least 22 percent of their supporters). In the age of user-generated content, these creative supporters can be the source of inspiration for others to get involved.

The profile of supporters of Republicans is perhaps the most revealing. Note the relatively low levels of Creator participation. No Republican gets above 16 percent. Mitt Romney's supporters are more active than the rest of the Republicans except in the category of Creators. It would appear that the Republicans are predominately interested in being Spectators. This may indicate that candidates would be wise to present material that can be forwarded to friends and family.

### Best Practices for Reaching Voters Online



1. Old rules for communicating with voters do not always apply online. Direct mail pieces flooding the mailbox and robo-calls may be seen as acceptable, but sending unsolicited email appeals will backfire (the same goes for sending any mobile communications that have not been requested by the recipient).

2. Voters are looking for authenticity and truthfulness in political leaders. Messages and stories must resonate. People are tired of spin and packaged messages – online and off.

3. People talk. Voters enjoy discussing politics with colleagues, family and friends and find it important to connect with others who share their political beliefs. Accordingly, it should be made easy to share information about candidates and causes.

4. Voters engage in a wide variety of activities online and their behavior changes over time. Shopping, exchanging news about sports events and checking the weather are just a few examples of these activities. Figuring out where the voters are going to be must be part of a strategy to get their attention online.

One last reminder—Money can't buy you love.



# The Political Corner

## A conversation with Mindy Finn

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*Mindy Finn is director of online strategy for Romney for President, Inc. and the former deputy director of the RNC's eCampaign and deputy webmaster for Bush-Cheney 04.*

### Why not advertise online?

Americans consume media in many different ways – some obtain information exclusively from one channel while others use various combinations of online, print and broadcast from which to become informed voters. Online outreach is just one more way to cost effectively intercept people at the point where it will make the most impact based on their individual media consumption habits.

So the question is not “why advertise online,” but rather, “why not?”

Historically, political consultants have justified online advertising solely on direct response metrics, but it should also be considered for its branding abilities and integrated into the campaign marketing mix alongside auto-calls, direct response, television, radio and print. Winning or losing will not be decided on who conducts the most aggressive online advertising campaign, at least in the near future, but it represents one more touch point and an opportunity to connect with voters.

It is understandable why some consultants have been hesitant to embrace online advertising. After all, for years they have relied on television, where there are proven models for demonstrating that investing millions of dollars will result in a measureable shift in poll numbers. To date, there hasn't been a campaign that has relied heavily enough on Internet advertising to show a direct increase in poll numbers – we need that test before some will be convinced to move more advertising dollars online.

Campaigns that use, or are considering using, online advertising may ask “How do we know we are reaching voters?” From a media strategy perspective, one recommendation is to buy enough inventory to “flood the zone.” In other words, despite the sophisticated targeting capabilities of online advertising, it is sometimes more efficient on a cost-per-impression basis to target a wider audience you know will include non-supporters in order to reach those who are your likely voters.

Another consideration is the earned media that can result from online advertising. For instance, a Web video supported by an ad campaign can generate earned media value worth ten times what a candidate paid for it. This is especially true in the 24-hour news cycle tied to the blogosphere, where a little advertising can make an otherwise discounted piece of media more valuable than it would have been on its own.

If you are new to online advertising, don't be overwhelmed because you don't know the lingo or how everything works. Take it one step at a time and don't be turned off out of simply not understanding. Start with a simple search marketing campaign, especially to access terms that are rightfully yours. As you are ready to do more, use a combination of an aggressive search marketing strategy with display advertising and experiment to see what combination works best. For display advertising, an ad network allows you to geo-target and optimize to certain actions, which can be much more cost effective than buying on individual sites.

*This conversation was conducted by phone interview with Tony Winders.*



## CHAPTER 3

# Reaching Voters Online

BY KAREN A.B. JAGODA AND TONY WINDERS

E-VOTER INSTITUTE AND VALUECLICK MEDIA

We know the basics of political Internet use: get email addresses and raise money online.<sup>21</sup> But there is more to political communications and how the Internet is changing the process. The Internet touches all dimensions of a campaign, from advertising to field operations to voter mobilization. After all, the point of all this activity is to win an election, which means people have to actually vote and not just talk about it.

This chapter addresses the need to reach voters online as well as accomplishing traditional political communications objectives. As with all media planning, historical data from Web publishers and networks provided by third party organizations is essential for finding the right mix of online media properties on which to place ads. Specifically, this chapter discusses why:

- Paid online advertising is key to a successful media budget because of the power to reinforce and magnify a message from all other media.
- Free online tools still take human resources to manage properly and this cost needs to be figured into how time and manpower are spent in a campaign.
- Likely voters will respond to various online advertising techniques to build relationships, fundraise and get out the vote.

## Campaign Goals

Political campaigns need to accomplish several goals: build awareness, persuade voters, build supporter lists, fundraise, manage field operations, conduct rapid response, and run get-out-the-vote activities.

## Awareness

Gaining name recognition and awareness of a candidate are important in a crowded election field. As noted in the previous chapter, the percentage of American households penetrated by the Internet is large (in fact, it mirrors the voting population). The efficiency and extensive reach of online advertising provides an effective complement to television in introducing a candidate or ballot initiative to the public. Paid search and online display ads are good ways to reinforce a message.

## Persuasion

While television still represents the most powerful persuasion media of our time, online advertising should not be overlooked for its ability to influence voters and journalists and increase favorability ratings as reflected by polls. In order for any candidate's message to truly resonate with voters, the message must be engaging and create an emotional connection. Even if a viewer does not click through to the official Web site from an online ad, the message may be very persuasive if targeted properly. The power of rich media, video and the opportunity to interact with the online audience makes online advertising, particularly online display ads, a powerful tool to help achieve the reach and frequency needed to persuade voters.

## Building Contact Lists of Supporters

Political marketers, long the experts of telemarketing and direct mail, have begun to harness the power of email marketing just as aggressively by database matching, rental of email lists and co-registration through a



variety of sites. They are able to acquire email addresses economically, manage data efficiently and develop relationships with newly identified supporters and the loyal base. As postage rates and printing charges continue to rise, this alternative to building grassroots support becomes more appealing.

### Fundraising

Online fundraising on a national level began with the McCain 2000 campaign. As people have become more comfortable entering credit card numbers into web forms, online fundraising has grown in its effectiveness. Online banners and email appeals can drive traffic to a candidate’s fundraising Web page. While the average online contribution is still around \$100, people make multiple contributions online and develop contribution habits that will grow over time. Online advertising for fundraising shows strong return on investment as the cost for these efforts is significantly less than for traditional fundraising events or expensive mailings.

### Campaign Management

The Internet can make several aspects of campaign management more efficient, especially in the areas of field operations, volunteer recruitment, event promotion, voter registration drives and petition circulation. Online advertising can augment these functions by using targeting and lead generation techniques to find desirable campaign workers and supporters.

### Rapid Response

The ability to create attack ads or to respond quickly to accusations is enhanced by the real-time nature of online advertising. Within hours, a standard banner or video ad can be up and running as part of a media plan to communicate a message and/or to direct users to more information. Of course, the same techniques can be used to introduce messages about a competitor with the hope that they do not have the Internet capabilities to respond quickly. Paid search is another tool to employ as people look for information about a story they see online or covered in traditional media.

### Get-out-the-Vote (GOTV)

Ultimately all political communication comes down to getting out the vote. Online advertising can be used to remind likely voters, encourage those who might have excuses, reach undecided voters, corral swing and Independent voters and deploy voter suppression tactics (such as “road blocking” across online advertising properties, or using a “Network Blast” on ad networks can preempt other candidates’ ads from appearing on certain pages). Political, news, lifestyle and business Web sites are all likely places for online display ads with GOTV

messages. Renting email lists is also an effective way to reach likely voters, as is paid search where people might be looking for last minute information about candidates, issues, and polling places.

## Finding voters online

When consultants are asked about the best ways to reach loyal base voters online, Internet activities often rank high on the list. The same is not true for reaching swing and Independent voters. Online advertising is seen as twice as effective for reaching the base while television ads are seen as twice as effective for reaching swing and Independent voters. The E-Voter Institute includes email, online ads, candidate Web sites, blogs, podcasts, webcasts, online video and social networking sites in this category in order to understand the large scope of Internet activity in a campaign.

**FIG 1: THE #1 MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO REACH BASE AND SWING & INDEPENDENT VOTERS**

PERCENT OF CONSULTANTS WHO CHOOSE THIS METHOD		
METHOD	LOYAL BASE	SWING & INDEPENDENT
Events w/Candidate	21	24
Online	20	10
Direct Mail	17	10
Word of Mouth	15	15
Television/Cable Ads	13	27
Phone	6	4
Other	6	6
Text Messaging	1	1
Yard Signs/Billboards	0	1
Newspaper Ads	0	1

Online includes email, online ads, candidate Web sites, blogs and podcasts, webcasts, online video and social, networking sites. E-Voter Institute 2007.

### Likely Voters Online

Generally, campaigns spend money to get their messages to likely voters. With turnout at an average of 50 percent of all registered voters, targeting registered voters alone does not produce the desired result for candidates. Money must be spent on insuring that those most likely to vote for your side are the ones who get the message, recognizing that often efforts are taken to suppress turnout.

- Reaching loyal base voters is always the place to start in a campaign. These are the people who have identified themselves as supporters of a campaign and in many cas-

es have given the candidates permission to communicate with them on a regular basis. The Internet is the most cost effective way to maintain and grow a relationship with these likely voters and to motivate them to take action.

- Swing and Independent voters are increasing, and it is hard to predict how they will vote for candidates at all levels on the ballot. These people are not easily classified in groups because they resist labels by nature. The Internet may be a place to experiment with messages to see which messages will resonate the best with voters in this category.
- Undecided voters are a real wildcard in a race. When do people really make up their minds about candidates and issues? At the last minute these people may vote the party all the way down the ballot or vote on their emotions for specific candidates based on something they see that morning. The Internet clearly has the potential to reach this group to help them make up their minds.

### Growing the Voter Base

Each election cycle sees renewed efforts to register new voters and to increase voter turnout among traditionally marginalized groups, such as younger voters. The Internet provides a variety of ways for campaigns to reach these groups, encourage them to be engaged with the candidate and develop relationships with them. The old rules about party politics are being challenged by changes in lifestyles, access to media and the ability of people to talk to friends, family members and strangers about political views.

The following voters are open game for all parties:

- Consultants have a hard time predicting where to find the young voters, who have just emerged as a powerful voting bloc. Campaigns have an opportunity to engage this group of voters by using social networking sites and blogs. The challenge for 2008 is to figure out how the activity in social networks can be translated into actual votes.
- New U.S. citizens come from a wide range of countries and may or may not be fluent in English. However, they are prime targets for candidates. Posting information in different languages is an important way to reach them and their families.
- New residents of a state need educational materials about state and local issues, ways in which they can get involved in campaigns and neighborhood action groups. These

people need to change their voter registration and are relatively easy to find through efforts geared towards their change in home address.

- People who have registered but have not consistently voted are people who sometimes vote but might have work schedule conflicts, child care emergencies, or travel requirements which keep them from voting. This group is a good target for an absentee voter drive since absentee ballots make it easier for people to vote on their own schedule. Online messages could compel people to ask for the absentee ballot. Following up is then possible through the Internet or traditional means to make sure those ballots are returned.

Finally, your campaign can augment its voter registration efforts by using the Internet to reach into likely groups of people such as young married people, minorities, women and students. The Internet can be very a cost effective way to experiment with messages to learn more about where unregistered eligible voters might be found and persuade them to register and vote.

### Target Audiences

Campaigns can use the Internet to target messages, matching desirable messages to specific demographic groups. Campaigns can also use the Internet to more narrowly define groups with specific appeals.

As an overview, E-Voter Institute research provides a window into some of the ways that consultants use the Internet to reach liberal activists and social conservatives. Many agree that the Internet is most effective with people who are already passionate supporters of a candidate, ideology, issue or political party.

**FIG 2: EFFECTIVE METHODS FOR REACHING LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES**

PERCENT OF CONSULTANTS WHO AGREE		
METHOD	LIBERAL ACTIVISTS	SOCIAL CONSERVTVS
Blogs and Podcasts	77	<b>47</b>
Email	76	63
Online Video	72	<b>46</b>
Social Networking Sites	65	33
Online Ads	64	<b>51</b>
Webcasts	63	40
Text Messaging	53	<b>21</b>
E-Voter Institute 2007.		

The stark differences between how blogs, social networks and text messaging are seen demonstrates the concern Republican consultants might have about controlling the message.

Another relevant group in 2008 is single women online. Note the differences seen by consultants in E-Voter Institute research about how to reach this group.

**FIG 3: BEST WAYS TO REACH SINGLE WOMEN ONLINE**

PERCENT OF CONSULTANTS WHO AGREE	
METHOD	REACH SINGLE WOMEN
Email	57
Candidate Web sites	52
Social Networking Sites	51
Online Video	40
Online Ads	39
Text Messaging	35
Blogs and Podcasts	30
Webcasts	22
E-Voter Institute 2007.	

In 2008, the Democrats and the Republicans are straining to clearly identify their loyal base voters. Independent voters are mudding the waters and traditional definitions of liberals and conservatives are being challenged. The Internet has helped constituency groups flourish and the key to any winning campaign is the ability to appeal to more than just their own kind. The Internet is key to reaching across divisions and giving voice to a broader range of voters.



# The Political Corner

## A conversation with Rob Shepardson

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*Rob Shepardson is an expert on marketing and policy communications. As a founding partner at SS+K, he heads up the agency's efforts on behalf of the Obama for America campaign.*

### Developing a gold standard for online political advertising

Political advertising online is not yet part of the established political marketing mix. Other online content venues, such as Web sites, social networks, online fundraising, and blogs, are used quite extensively, but political uses of online advertising lag behind. As a result, the political community has not yet developed a clear, gold standard model for online political marketing. Here are some things to look for in developing that gold standard.

#### 1. Earned Media

One reason display advertising online hasn't been embraced has to do with the fact that so much awareness in presidential elections is driven by free media. As a result, paid media competes against free media to accomplishing awareness objectives. In presidential campaigns, the desire to gain free coverage in traditional media is unlike anything else.

#### 2. Persuasion

Political organizations need to use the Internet to target the undecided voter – the person who is persuadable and interested in learning more about a candidate. For the most part, when you go online, all you find is a virtual pep rally for each candidate. There are plenty of speeches, blogs, and a cadre of online activists, all of which caters to the core supporter, but there needs to be more contextualization to help persuade undecided voters to vote for a particular candidate over the other.

#### 3. Fundraising

Political organizations have embraced online advertising for fundraising efforts. No matter how little the amount someone donates, it is one of the strongest measures of a voter's interest. Other proxies for converting voter interest into voter action exist, such as volunteerism and tell-a-friend features. There has been some limited use of video, but its been primarily used to take a piece of offline political communication and putting it online (i.e., by repurposing a speech).

#### 4. Voter Organization

Using Web 2.0 applications in get-out-the-vote efforts is important. There is a big question mark as to whether – or better said, how – online outreach and marketing will make an impact on actually getting people to the polls.

*This conversation was conducted by phone interview with Tony Winders.*



SECTION 2

# **Developing an Online Marketing Strategy**



## CHAPTER 4

# Search Engine Marketing

BY ERIC FRENCHMAN  
CONNELL DONATELLI INC.



**“This is really the beginning of the Google era of campaigning where the battleground is the region of pixels alongside search results.”**  
- Steven Levy, Newsweek<sup>31</sup>

This chapter will look at:

- Using search engine marketing to help people find answers to their search queries about political candidates and issues.
- How search engines determine ad placement.
- Using search engine optimization.

Search engine marketing (SEM) still carries an air of mystery for many political candidates and campaigns. That’s not because any single discipline involved in SEM is too complicated, but because putting them all together at the same time presents a number of ongoing challenges. It’s kind of like planning a series of parties. There are venues to choose, invitations, decorations and catering to manage, guests to welcome and meaningful contacts to make. Next comes supervising the cleanup and evaluating the overall performance of the events, only to start the whole process over, again and again – all the while tweaking the details and watching for unforeseen market changes and new opportunities as they occur.

Remember that search is built around people looking for information. Serving the right information to the right person at the right time is key. This is a critical point when constructing a search campaign. Since

people are looking for information, the entire process – from choosing the right keywords to constructing the ads and finally sending the clicks into the appropriate page – should always be based on helping people find answers to their search queries.

Developing an effective search advertising campaign is a multi-step process that includes:

- Identifying campaign goals and developing strategies directed toward achieving them.
- Selecting the right key words.
- Creating relevant text ads (or in some cases display and video ads) and landing pages.
- Auction-style bidding, (typically on a cost per click (CPC) basis) and establishing daily spending limits to maximize your budget.
- Tracking results on everything from clicks to conversions to measurable actions like email sign ups, links to video or donations made.
- Using what you learn to refine your choices (such as keywords, landing pages, or where and when the ads run) to improve your search campaign’s performance over time.
- Taking advantage of relevant real-time news events that impact your candidate or campaign.

## Paid Search Expectations

A well-managed political search strategy can have a huge impact on traffic to a candidate’s Web site and on donations to a candidate’s campaign and branding objectives. It needs to include both paid search advertis-



ing and organic (non-paid) search engine optimization (SEO). This process involves improving a site's rankings among non-paid search results listings.

Search advertising allows you to control what you spend and track the results. The process is one best entrusted to experienced professionals because when done properly, the return on your investment and your campaign's ability to respond to negative news and do damage control quickly and effectively is priceless. However, done improperly, the campaign can easily overspend and get little back in return for its efforts.

Search ads can be used to identify and recruit supporters and to solicit donations. They can be used to get out the vote among supporters or to reach out to undecided voters in the final days and hours before an election. They can be purchased on a national basis or geo-targeted right down to the zip code level, depending on the audience your campaign needs to reach.

## It's All about User Experience

Why is search such a powerful tool in the political environment?

Search is engaging. "Unlike television, search engine users actively request information. Search is a 'lean forward' medium, whereas television is a 'lean back' medium."<sup>32</sup>

It can be updated frequently and cost-effectively – making it ideal for experimentation early in the campaign cycle and for micro-targeting messages to unpredictable likely voters – right up to Election Day.

It is among the most easily monitored of all advertising media – allowing political marketers to see what works, refine their approach, and improve their return on advertising investment over time. For example, campaigns may use search to build name recognition early in the campaign cycle. As goals are more clearly defined and conversions become more valuable than total number of clicks, campaigns can manage the costs of their search relative to the value of the specific actionable responses it wants to achieve.

Thinking about search in terms of the user experience and keeping your search ads focused on specific campaign goals will yield the best results over time.

Having relevant advertising drives your cost per click, elevates your position in the search results listings, and ultimately impacts your conversions or click rates. For example, buying a competitor's name with an undifferentiated standard text ad (like "Vote for me") would not be a recommended strategy. But recognizing that the user is looking for information and asking them to research your campaign's position too can dramatically improve your relevancy and results.

## Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

### Which comes first... the visitors or the site ranking?

Each major search engine has its own criteria for determining relevancy and therefore placement of organic (non-paid) search results. Most major search engines change their algorithms regularly to keep overzealous marketers from gaming the system. In addition to its increasingly-sophisticated automated monitoring for relevancy, Google employs human "search auditors," who review the quality of search results for specific queries.

Simply stated, the more that people visit a site and the better job that site does of meeting site visitors' information needs, the higher it will be ranked among natural search results.

In some ways, this seems like a "which comes first: the chicken or the egg" question: the higher the site ranks on the results list, the more people would click on its link. But Google won't list a site high in the rankings until it has enough clicks to prove relevancy.

Having said that, there are a number of things site owners can do to increase the relevancy of their Web site. These steps fall into two basic categories: improving site and landing page content and making sure that the text, images and video you feature can be easily and properly indexed by the search engines.

Hiring an optimization expert who can work with all the variables can boost your ratings significantly. He or she can help you to:

- Make sure you're using proper meta tags to describe the site to the engines.
- Create content that resonates with users so they will trust your message, make repeat visits to your site and even share your content with others.
- Update content frequently so the search engine will spider your site often.
- Offer helpful links to other high-profile sites.

The result is that your link will earn a high rank among natural results, increasing the likelihood that searchers will find your message. Once done correctly, the traffic generated by effective SEO is virtually free.

One final note: if Google finds a site that breaks its search engine rules in an attempt to wrongfully gain a higher search rank then Google removes that site from their index entirely (which is the virtual equivalent of being banished).<sup>33</sup>

Rather than attempting to outsmart the system, wise political marketers work on improving their site indexing and keeping their content fresh and relevant, which is a true service to the people they're ultimately trying to reach.

## Metrics for Success:

### On Bidding and the Value of a Click

Maximum bids can be set, based on cost per click (CPC) or in some cases, cost per action (CPA) or cost per thousand (CPM). Different maximums can be established on a daily basis, multi-day basis or variable day basis. For example, your campaign might be willing to pay more during weekdays than on weekends or on the day before or day of an election than the month before. Day part advertising is also available. Campaign strategy and percentage of available budget drive the bidding.

It's a good idea to decide up front (or at least somewhere along the way) what click-throughs and resulting actions are worth to your campaign. Then, gauge the amount you're willing to spend based on the results your search ads deliver.

The value of specific responses can vary greatly, but reasonable benchmarks to use as a starting point might be as follows:

- Drive traffic to your site to find out more < \$.25/per click through
- Email sign-ups < \$2./action
- Online donations < \$25./action

What's the range of prices that a political advertiser might pay for search advertising in the current market? Depending on a campaign's goals and the duration that a specific keyword is used, the CPC could be as low as 3 cents or as high as \$5 (for a very short time).

## Placement and Frequency

### The big three: Google, Yahoo! and MSN

Americans made 10 billion online searches in November 2007, according to comScore Search analysis. More than half of those searches, 59 percent (5.9 billion queries) went through Google. Yahoo! came in second place with 23 percent; Microsoft got a 10 percent share, and Ask and Time Warner picked up the remainder – each handling around 4.5 percent of all U.S. searches in November.<sup>34</sup> While the numbers can fluctuate from month to month, Google is by far the top search engine. Yahoo! and MSN consistently finish in the number two and three slots.

Google has used its market advantage to continually improve its product offerings, and tracking and reporting capabilities making it especially attractive to search advertisers.

Google AdWords is simple to use, even for novices,

because of its reporting capabilities. This includes such features as cost per click (CPC) auction-style pricing and day part scheduling. More recently, Google has expanded its offerings to include some that are priced at cost per thousand (CPM) and cost per action (CPA) rates. It also offers tracking with transparent reporting of where a given search ad ran and where conversions occurred – at the URL and domain level. Its content network product has been improved to include site exclusion and site targeting tools as well as image and video search ad formats.

While Yahoo! and MSN have a way to go in terms of reporting capabilities, it's still a good idea to include them in your search campaigns. Doing so gives you more visibility into competitive bids, and they offer traffic you'd miss by advertising on Google alone. One strategy is to make sure your Google campaigns are running as optimally as possible and then take the best performing words to Yahoo and MSN.

## Who's on first? How search engines determine placement

Major search engines consider a number of factors in determining which search results are listed first. Certainly, the rate you are willing to pay impacts your ranking, but many other things also come into play. One such factor is the site relevancy.

Here's why: search engines are extremely competitive. They want to deliver the best product possible to users. Their credibility rides on their ability to deliver quality responses to search queries and to do it consistently. They can't afford to give away top slots to the highest bidders only to disappoint users who click through and find those sites don't deliver relevant information.

From an advertiser's standpoint this means that the site content on your link must back up the key words you sponsored. Increasing relevancy of your landing pages increases your chances of earning and staying in a top sponsored link position.

So, while spending does increase the likelihood that your candidate or campaign will receive a high position among sponsored listings, it doesn't guarantee the top spot. Generally speaking, the top spot goes to the advertiser with the highest relevancy in addition to being one of the highest bidders.

Another factor to consider is your daily budget cap. If, for example, you are paying \$.50/click and your daily budget cap is \$7, then you would reach your budget limit at 14 clicks per day. The closer you get to that budget cap on any given day, the less likely you are to be shown in the top sponsored links.

### Being at or near the top matters.

When Google introduced universal search (that is, search that looks at everything from news results to books, blogs, and videos along with Web site listings) in

2007, the number of possible relevant results got much greater and therefore, the results lists got much longer. Now, a candidate's official site is no longer automatically listed as the number one, natural (non-paid) search result. Wikipedia, news results or even books by the candidate may come up before the official site on a page where only four to five natural results can be seen above the fold.

## Case Study: Newsweek calls McCain "frontrunner" in search engine ads.

### The Goal

To create a search campaign for the John McCain campaign that delivered a strong, measurable return on investment.

### The Scope

At various times throughout 2007, the McCain campaign bought 10,000 different words.

### The Keywords

The candidate's name, the opponents' name(s), specific issues like "health care reform," news events

### The Engines

Google, Yahoo!, MSN (which together delivered more than 92 percent of the search market.)

### Results

- For every dollar the McCain campaign spent on search, they brought in \$3 - \$4 in campaign contributions.
- The McCain campaign received a phenomenal amount of free "earned media" for its search advertising throughout 2007. Major articles and references to the campaign's impressive search ROI appeared in a variety of publications including *Newsweek*<sup>37</sup>, *The Wall Street Journal*<sup>38</sup>, *AdAge*<sup>39</sup> and *WIRED*<sup>40</sup>. Web sites like *NationalJournal.com*<sup>41</sup>, *CNNPolitics*<sup>42</sup> and *ClickZ*<sup>43</sup> picked up the story as did a number of bloggers.<sup>44</sup>
- The McCain campaign became known as a pioneer in the field of political search.

This makes paid search advertising even more critical. In the increasingly crowded world of search, you need pay per click (PPC) advertising to give your campaign message a visible presence above the fold. Paid placement gives you credibility and being at or near the top matters.<sup>34</sup>

## Designing Search Ads

### How to choose keywords

Good keywords should flow out of the goals of your campaign and should reflect an awareness of the broader environment, such as relevant news, new developments in your campaign or your opponent's campaign, or upcoming primary, convention or election dates.

Keywords may be informational in nature, focused on branding your candidate or campaign. They may be comparative in nature – distinguishing your candidate from others on specific issues like "gas prices" or "war in Iraq" among people who are shopping online for a candidate. They may flow out of the way that the business of politics is organized (by party or conservative/liberal stance on a given issue.) They may be designed specifically to generate leads or even to make direct sales.

In general, informational keywords drive the most traffic. The more narrowly-targeted your keywords are, the less traffic they attract. But because targeted traffic represents the equivalent of pre-qualified leads, it typically delivers much higher conversion rates.

For political campaigns looking for actionable responses (signing up for an email, viewing a video, joining the team, making a donation), the total number of click-throughs is not as valuable as the conversion rate, so more narrowly-targeted keywords are generally more beneficial.

One exception may be early in the campaign cycle when informational campaigns may be beneficial. In those cases, running informational display advertising along with search advertising can be especially beneficial.

Keyword selection, like all of search advertising, is both a science and an art. It involves planning, execution, and fine-tuning to expand your campaign and increase your effectiveness over time.

But even among opposing candidates of the same party in the same election, not all keywords will deliver the same results for all candidates. Each campaign must know what it has to sell, establish clear goals, and develop a search strategy out of which keywords and search advertising flows.

### Anatomy of a text search ad

Search text ads consist of a title containing your keyword, a brief description, and a Web address link to your landing page. Descriptions should include a pre-qualifying statement and a specific call to action.

Google limits text ad titles to no more than 25 characters while Yahoo! has a 40-character limit. Google limits text ad descriptions to two lines/35 characters each. Yahoo! offers short and long-format descriptions with limits of 70 characters and 190 characters, respectively.

The following ads are examples of text ads run by two presidential candidates prior to the 2008 Iowa cau-

cus. The McCain ad ran on a search query for the name Rudy Giuliani. The Obama ad ran on a search query for Obama's own name.

The McCain Campaign Surge  
Only Conservative Candidate Who Can  
Beat Hillary Clinton. Find out why.  
JohnMcCain.com/Electability

Obama Campaign Web site  
Help elect Barack Obama President  
Of the United States: Sign-up now  
BarackObama.com

The targeted McCain ad sold electability and was directed to a unique "electability" landing page. While the Obama ad solicited sign-ups, it was more informational and linked to the candidate's homepage.

At various times, on various searches, for various purposes, text ads with different landing pages can be used to focus attention on other relevant issues to sell benefits of one candidate over another. In most cases, landing pages should be matched to searches for relevancy. Campaign-produced videos or videos featuring an opponent's weakness in an area where your candidate is especially strong can be powerful answers to search queries.

Because online results can be tracked immediately, search ads can be fine-tuned quickly and cost-effectively as campaigns discover which ones work and which deliver the greatest return on ad spend.

## Best Practices for Search Engine Marketing<sup>45</sup>



1. Advertise on Google, Yahoo! and MSN. They reach the vast majority of search users (who tend to be extremely loyal to their engines). These three search engines alone bring in over 92 percent of search queries and also serve paid search ads on AOL and Ask search results pages.

2. Buy competitors' names – not because your campaign believes in the power of your political opponent's name or is trying to steal an opponent's traffic, but because multiple campaigns might have a product that meets people's search needs. Positioning your candidate next to another candidate allows searchers the opportunity to choose from among all their options in the same way that customers choose from Coke, Pepsi and other soft drink brands in a single soda aisle at the grocery store.

3. Advertise on your own candidate's name - This sounds like a no-brainer, but it is also a defensive strategy to combat negative advertising from your opponents. Your brand name is your biggest deliverer of results and should be your lowest cost per click at \$.10 or less (the low cost is because of relevancy. What could be a more relevant result to a search for your candidate or campaign than the candidate or campaign's own name?).

4. Advertise on issues as well as on the candidate's name + issues. This is where the faint of heart bail out. It's not as simple as it sounds and it's often where non-political advertisers fall short as well. Campaigns need a well-thought out strategy for buying issue words and should retain the services of someone with experience for this task. Being highly relevant in your advertising process will drive the returns you achieve. Buying keywords around "Iraq War," for example, and serving a generic ad that clicks into your homepage will yield poor relevancy often resulting in either high cost per clicks (CPCs) or outright rejection by a search engine. Issue-based advertising in a search engine requires discipline to maintain high relevancy.

5. Always use post-click conversion tracking codes to measure true cost per sale or cost per donation – don't just rely on cost per click numbers which don't reflect the effectiveness of search in terms of achieving specified campaign goals. Effective search advertising is all about hitting your metrics – so the more a campaign knows, the better off it will be. As mentioned above, the McCain for President 2008 campaign got an average of \$3- \$4 in donations for every dollar spent on search advertising in 2007. The campaign would not have known that without post-click conversion tracking.

6. Choose good landing pages. - Campaigns need multiple landing pages to maximize conversions and increase relevancy. Sending every searcher to the Web site homepage or a generic landing page makes it too difficult for them to find the information they're really looking for. Plus, that traffic encourages clickers to navigate around your Web site, often losing focus. Your search campaign should focus not on driving high volume traffic to your site, but on driving high-quality traffic there. Tightly controlled landing pages drive high quality results. Political advertisers should keep landing page relevancy at the forefront. Current Search engine policies can still lead to the rejection of keywords. Even the McCain for President 2008 campaign, called "the clear frontrunner" in search engine ads by Newsweek, had a few of its proposed keywords rejected in 2007.

*(Best Practices based on recommendations from 2008 Rimm-Kaufmann study.)*<sup>46</sup>



# The Political Corner

## A conversation with Richard Kosinski

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*Richard Kosinski leads Yahoo!'s political advertising unit, where he is responsible for sales, marketing, research and the development of advertising platforms and tools that candidates need to fundraise, acquire supporters, and to activate the voter base.*

### Developing Strategies for Online Political Advertising

Political candidates have become among the savviest users of technology. The rapid adoption of the Internet as a platform for fundraising and email list generation has evolved to one that further engages supporters through social networks, photos, and videos. However where paid media is concerned, the public sector lags the private sector by seven years, with somewhere between one to two percent of all political paid media moving online. The private sector is shifting hundreds of billions of dollars in order to follow audiences online. Candidates and consultants who neglect to invest in online media this year risk missing an opportunity to connect and persuade supporters and undecided voters. With more than 500,000 elected offices in the US, there's a huge opportunity.

### Targeting: Media Strategies Based in Certainty

Internet is not a strategy unto itself. Rather it should be a pillar of an overall strategy to identify, connect and activate supporters and persuade undecideds. The technology platforms for online advertising are much more sophisticated than even two years ago during the mid-term election. While earned media and social media are cost efficient to get out a broad message, they don't provide the control that a campaign requires. Here's where paid media plays a critically role: identifying specific audiences with certainty and providing platforms to message to them. Depending on your campaign objectives and your online partner, you can get varying degrees of timing, targeting and pricing to make the ads more relevant and enhance results. At a basic level targeting includes geography by zip-code and demography. More advanced are in-banner video, pre-roll, and enhanced data capture from within the ad unit. Thanks to targeting, campaigns can send multiple messages to multiple audiences, and scale their results.

### Strategies for Political Campaigns

Start with search. It's the ultimate direct marketing platform in that you only pay for what voters are interested in. Buy your candidate's or issue's keyword. Use multiple providers to capture all the demand that you can afford. I've seen a candidate buy \$10/day of their candidate's name keyword and feel as though they had search "covered" when in fact the demand for that candidate's keyword is in the hundreds of dollars per day. They're leaving money on the table! Keywords can range from 25 cents to \$6.00 per keyword.

Display ads can be used to create awareness for your candidate or issue, fundraise, communicate a message, or generate support and persuade. While print provides sight, and television offers sight, sound and motion, the Internet provides it all with instant accountability. Within the first 24 hours you can determine if your ad is resonating with viewers. You can limit ads units to two to three common unit sizes and create ones that encourage the viewer to participate. Ads can run as low as \$1 per thousand impressions.

Demand rigorous reporting and analytics, including campaign delivery, interaction times and a detailed analysis of who is looking at ads. Evaluate whether display ads helped drive search activity. Most importantly don't be afraid to learn. Candidates haven't been exposed to all that's possible and should meet with publishers they respect and give them a task to work on. Start with small tests, learn and grow, and you'll be way ahead in political advertising.

*This conversation was conducted by phone interview with Tony Winders.*

## CHAPTER 5

# Online Display Advertising

BY JAY FRIEDMAN, RENA SHAPIRO AND TONY WINDERS  
GOODWAY 2.0, GOOGLE, AND VALUECLICK MEDIA

This chapter will discuss:

- Display advertising as an efficient way to drive awareness and traffic to an organization or candidate's Web site.
- The targeting capabilities of display advertising compared to broadcast and direct response media.
- Measuring the persuasive abilities of display advertising and online video.

Display advertising is unique in its ability to simultaneously serve both the awareness and performance-based objectives of political campaigns. Display advertising can include static, Flash or video banners in varying sizes and formats, the standards for which are governed by the Interactive Advertising Bureau ([www.iab.com](http://www.iab.com)). The performance aspects of display advertising online have been proven many times over in the commercial world as evidenced by numerous cross media effectiveness studies and revenue growth. Companies like Intel allocate over 35 percent of their marketing budgets online, further supporting the success of online advertising as a medium to connect with any target audience. This could be disregarded given that Intel sells a computer-based product. Or, more appropriately, it could be seen as a best practice given the amount of time citizens of all ages spend online.

**FIG 1: MULTIMEDIA THAT U.S. CONSUMERS CONSIDER MOST AND LEAST ESSENTIAL TO THEIR LIVES, 2002 & 2007** <sup>51</sup>

	2002		2007	
	MOST	LEAST	MOST	LEAST
Television	39%	20%	36%	18%
Internet	20%	33%	33%	24%
Radio	26%	14%	17%	18%
Newspapers	11%	31%	10%	35%

Note: numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding and/or lack of response.

**FIG 2: TIME SPENT USING SELECT MEDIA PER DAY BY U.S. INTERNET USERS, BY AGE, JANUARY 2007 (MEAN HOURS)** <sup>52</sup>

	ECHO BOOMERS	GEN X (32-41)	BABY BOOMERS (42-62)	TOTAL
Internet	3.28	3.00	2.69	2.91
Television	2.73	2.63	2.83	2.78
Radio	1.79	1.88	1.93	1.87



**Why are Fortune 500 companies flocking towards online display advertising? Because of the high degree of targeting, transparency and control marketers have to efficiently manage and optimize their investment in the online channel to reach a desired formula for success.**

Political marketers are not blind to the Internet. In fact they are becoming increasingly sophisticated about Web site design, email marketing, database marketing and fundraising online. And because blogs, social networks and YouTube have made headlines recently, these free, “Web 2.0” forms of exposure are being embraced more aggressively than ever. However, none of these tactics can drive a high volume of targeted traffic or provide as much control the way buying, measuring and optimizing media online can do. Television, radio and direct voter contact are essential and powerful tools; today, however, these tools must be complemented by an integrated online plan to lower acquisition costs and competitively utilize all media budgets more effectively.

### Is online display advertising as effective as a 30 second television spot?

Chances are you or someone else on your campaign is going to say, “Not a chance.” However, a Harris Interactive study designed to measure the impact of online advertising found that 30 second commercials in embedded video ads within Web sites perform at parity with television in terms of delivering brand-building messages that may strengthen likeability. This is a monumental study for campaigns. Now, candidates have a way to build their brand and increase their likeability through another medium beyond just television. This chapter outlines how campaigns deliver the right message to the right person at the right time utilizing display advertising online.

## Targeting Options

All candidates have specific groups of voters they must connect with for various reasons. They must connect and engage supporters for donations, party-loyalists for awareness building and undecided voters for persuasion. With traditional television advertising, the media

team must select which message is the most important and then place that one single message on television or in direct mailings.

Online, you can pick multiple messages and match them all with the audiences you are trying to reach. This can be done by contextually targeting the types of sites they frequent (for example, finding moms on sites like JustMommies.com or Parenting.com), by their geographic location, demographic and psychographic data, registration profile data, online behavior and a host of other targeting options that are unique to online advertising.

According to a 2006 American Advertising Federation survey, behavioral targeting is the most effective online targeting method, followed by demographic, contextual and geographic targeting.

**FIG 3: MOST EFFECTIVE ONLINE ADVERTISING TARGETING METHODOLOGIES ACCORDING TO U.S. ADVERTISING EXECUTIVES <sup>53</sup>**

Behavioral	52.4%
Demographic	32.9%
Contextual	30.5%
Geographic	14.6%
Other	4.9%

### Contextual

How do you know which sites your target audience is reading? How do you know which newspaper, online discussion board or online article will have an article which is about your candidate’s top issue? With the number of Web sites growing at 156 percent year over year, it is impossible to know exactly where your candidate’s top issues might appear inside an article.<sup>47</sup> However, you can proactively place your message alongside an article relevant to specific keywords or categories through contextual targeting technology.

Contextual targeting means placing display ads alongside content, usually articles deemed to be relevant to the advertiser’s message in some way. In its simplest form, this can be achieved by placing ads on Web sites in a particular classification or category or within specific sections of an individual Web site. Another more precise form of contextual targeting involves technology that “reads” the words on a page and targets ads in real-time based on the targeting criteria associated with specific keywords.

There are many types of targeting technologies to match ads contextually to articles, the most precise of which can understand the difference between Java the coffee, the computer language or the island. Using these technologies gives you the ability to control the message surrounding keywords and topics, whether that is a candidate’s name, his or her top issues – even the opponent’s

latest blooper moment.

Without knowing what blogs or articles will write about a candidate, it is possible to make sure a message is distributed across the web simply and effectively with contextual targeting. For example, if there is an article about global warming on CNN.com, then there might be an ad next to the article driving readers to find out more about global warming from Al Gore's new Web site. If a candidate is big on Social Security and there is an article about Social Security at Politico.com, then that candidate's message can automatically appear alongside the article. Sites where a candidate would never want to appear can be excluded (for example, partisan sites whose authors and users may disagree with you such as AnnCoulter.com or DailyKos.com).

### Demographic Targeting

Just like in television advertising, companies and Web sites collect demographic data on their users. People can be targeted online in two ways: by self-reported registration information or by demographics inferred by third party data. Users provide basic profile information when they sign up for a service. Advertisers have the ability to use this self-reported information to identify types of people based on a wide range of demographic criteria. For example, advertisers who want to reach women ages 25 – 45 have the ability to place ads targeting only these specific users. In addition, third party companies, including comScore Media Metrix and Nielsen/NetRatings, provide access to panel-based information that provides an index to determine what sites are most likely to attract with a desired demographic target.

### Psychographic Targeting

Psychographic targeting involves identifying people online whose values, personality, attitudes, interests and lifestyles match those of the advertiser's message. This type of targeting enables an advertiser to reach people at the exact time they are pursuing an interest online by knowing the issues which they care most about. For example, someone reading an article on HuffingtonPost.com is clearly interested in politics. A user who reads an article on ObesityHelp.com is likely taking control of their weight and health. With psychographic targeting, what matters most is the specific site a person is reading. Campaigns have the ability to hand-pick the types of sites and categories which hold the key to the audiences they are most interested in reaching. This can be done directly with the sites, or through an advertising network, like ValueClick Media or Google, which provide turnkey access to thousands of sites. comScore Media Metrix and Nielsen/NetRatings both provide forms of psychographic data by offering an index by which you can measure how sites compare with one another relative to any given psychographic trait.

### Behavioral Targeting

Behavioral targeting takes into account from one to hundreds of behaviors and allows advertisers to anonymously predict performance irrespective of demographics or lifestyles of online users. Rather, behavioral targeting is concerned with identifying specific users based on their recent actions, not what page they are on at a given moment in time. Behavioral targeting is one of the biggest growth trends in online advertising, led by its increasingly accurate ability to predict future actions based on past behavior.

A real-world example of this can be drawn again from Al Gore's popular movie *An Inconvenient Truth*. Partisanship aside, there were likely a number of average online users who were not particularly environmentally conscious prior to seeing this movie. Upon seeing the movie, many began thinking more seriously about the environment and started to explore the issue online. With behavioral targeting, as users go from Web site to Web site, their behaviors are tracked and defined. After seeing Gore's movie, a user may decide to visit the movie's Web site. From there, he or she may conduct a couple of searches and then spend time engaged in popular environmental sites. Advertisers wanting to target environmentalists defined as "a user who has visited at least four pages containing environmentally-related content on at least two different sites" can now target this user instantly by working with publishers and networks who offer behavioral targeting.

Now take that idea and apply it to the campaign. A voter who visits a candidate's site but doesn't sign up or donate online can be behaviorally targeted. Also known as user re-targeting, this can be done in partnership with behavioral targeting and ad serving vendors who will provide a unique pixel tracking code to place on the site so users can be identified for targeting on other sites. Combining re-targeting with message sequencing (no fancy terms, it's exactly what it sounds like), the campaign can show this particular user a new message with a stronger call to action, and the likelihood to convert them to performing that action is often five times greater than an initial user.

User behavior is logged via cookies in each user's browser, not by IP address. This means that a user who has two browsers (i.e., Firefox and IE) or two computers could either be identified twice or only on one browser based on their browsing habits. Nearly every Web site and page is now tagged with behavioral pixels which are literally a one pixel by one pixel, transparently-colored piece of code embedded within the page. Most all major ad servers (DoubleClick, Atlas and Mediaplex), allow online publishers and ad networks to embed cookies to provide their clients the best possible targeting options.

At first glance, this might sound a bit like George Orwell's 1984 to most political candidates. However, with online marketing, as opposed to telemarketing or direct mail, ad servers and ad networks do not have access to personally identifiable information about users. The



walk-sheets and phone banks that campaigns use have much more private information than any online system. Behavioral targeting is simply an attempt to show more relevant ads to online users. Portals do have personally identifiable information from which to target registered users, but this is not cookie- or browser-driven.

### Technographic Targeting (GEO, ISP, TLD, DNS, etc.)

In addition to the targeting methods described above, there are several technical attributes that can be used to identify users and serve targeted ads to them accordingly. Known as system targeting or “technographics” this is not one specific way to target, but rather a range of methods capitalizing on all of the information that can be obtained about online users by an ad server. These anonymous points of data can be powerful when applied to the specific objectives of a marketer.

The range of technical, or system, targeting attributes include:

- Geo-targeting – The IP address of the server from which a user accesses the Internet can be used to place them in a certain country, state, designated metropolitan area (DMA) or ZIP code. You can literally draw a map around your district to reach people only within that area.
- ISP/TLD – Target only users who access the Internet from a particular Internet Service Provider, such as Earthlink or AOL, or users who access a Top Level Domain such as .gov or .edu.
- Day-part – Target users only during certain times of day.
- Connection Speed – Target only users accessing the Internet from a broadband connection.
- Browser/OS – Target only users of a particular browser type or operating system, such as only Macintosh users who use the Firefox browser.

All of these targeting approaches can be used in tandem with one another and as additional filters to refine the targeting parameters of the behavioral, demographic and contextual targeting methods mentioned above.

## Media Placement Strategies

With millions of sites online, knowing even where to start researching can be quite intimidating. To media buyers, online is broken into main segments: Portals, ad networks and individual sites.

## Portals

Portals like Yahoo!, MSN, Google and AOL provide many benefits, two of the most important of which are 1) a safe environment for your message and 2) having a significant amount of control over the placement of ads.

The safe environment exists because all content is controlled by one publisher – in this case the portal. There is some user-generated content on portals, but this is only found in very specific sections of the sites. Because advertisers can control exactly where their ad is placed, there is little to no concern about a message being placed next to inappropriate content.

An additional benefit to portals is the large database of users with personally identifiable information, including surfing and search history. The ability to apply this on a user-by-user basis for behavioral targeting, search re-targeting, or highly narrow geo-targeting (ZIP level) can be highly valuable to smaller campaigns.

A common misconception about portals is that they are the only source to secure large reach in a one-stop shop scenario. While portals do indeed reach a large number of users, most ad networks now reach many more users in aggregate rather than the major portals.



**Buying site direct (one site at a time) can be tremendously beneficial in providing advertisers with a rifle-shot media plan which hits a target audience dead on. That said, the downside is the inherent difficulty associated with optimizing placements within each site, one site at a time.**

## Ad Networks

The premise on which ad networks are built is simple. With hundreds of thousands of Web sites on which to advertise, it is far too cumbersome to aggregate thousands of good Web sites and individually place ads across each of them. Smaller publishers also benefit, as no small site can afford to hire their own sales force and still be profitable.

Ad networks provide significant reach, cost-effectiveness and flexibility when optimizing a campaign for creative or site effectiveness. While the largest and most credible networks are fully transparent, occasionally they cannot disclose 100 percent of the sites on which an advertiser may appear. These may be quality sites, but the networks have agreements not to disclose them in order to avoid competing with the site’s own sales force and rate card. An advertiser should always be able to elect not to run on this inventory, and transparent net-

works will always provide a list of sites outside of which you are guaranteed never to appear. While reporting on individual sites is possible, rarely, if ever, will networks provide individual site performance by name.

Online advertising networks represent the inventory of several sites, sometimes numbering in the tens of thousands, creating an extensive reach vehicle that is comparable to portals and far beyond the reach of any single television outlet. The sites available on networks can range from the largest, most high-profile media properties to niche passion sites with very little traffic – and everything in between. On their own, the sites in a network would have little relevance to political marketers, but collectively they can efficiently deliver highly targeted audiences with performance on a massive scale.

The concern most often raised when considering working with ad networks has to do with transparency, or knowing where ads will appear. While in the past networks were largely a “blind” buy, demand from marketers has forced networks to become more transparent, with most disclosing the full list of sites where an advertiser’s ads will appear.

All of the targeting techniques referenced throughout this document can be deployed on an ad network, making them one of the most scalable ways to target a particular audience segment. Perhaps more important than targeting, however, is the use of a network’s optimization technology, which dictates the optimal placement of ads based on hundreds of variables, a decision process that takes place within a split second during which a page loads on a user’s screen. Optimization uses sophisticated predictive algorithms to serve the ad most likely to generate the highest performance for advertisers, the highest yield for publishers and the most relevance for consumers.

comScore Media Metrix is the only company to audit ad networks through its monthly Ad Focus report, giving marketers the ability to compare how to use various ad networks with portals and single sites on a media plan.

## Social Networks

Chances are that your candidate already has a profile on a few social networks. This is a great way to maintain and grow your base. However, there are also ways to draw in more than just your base through these networks. You can utilize social networking’s ad technology to reach like-minded individuals to draw awareness to your issues and campaign goals. By placing ads onto these high-traffic sites, you have the ability to reach more than just your “friends” or “connections.” Moreover, you can reach your exact demographic and target voter through advertising on social networking sites.

## Blogs

In recent years, blogs have proliferated. There are now more blogs in existence than the circulation figure of USA Today. That means that more people are writing news, stories and opinions than there are people who read the world’s most “read” newspaper. Most top news sites have blogs of their own to try and emulate this type of writing style which has exploded in popularity online. Blogs give opinions, don’t always give all the facts and are not edited - which is all the more reason why they are so popular.

Often these blogs are read via RSS feeds. There are ways to advertise on these RSS feeds directly, reaching only the most dedicated, active and enthusiastic readers. Examples are Pheedo or FeedBurner, which run tens of thousands of RSS feeds for many political sites.

The bottom line with both blogs and credible Web sites is that you cannot control what is said on these sites about your candidate. What you can control is proactively placing your candidate’s message alongside the writing, be it an article or a blog, which tells the reader where to find more information about your candidate.

**FIG 4: CANDIDATES RUNNING DISPLAY ADS BETWEEN JANUARY AND DEC. 16, 2007<sup>54</sup>**

CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN	NUMBER OF IMPRESSIONS
Romney for President	103.8 million
John McCain 2008	94.6 million
Obama for America	75.3 million
Tim Tancredo for President	1.6 million
Hillary Clinton for President	1.1 million
Friends of Fred Thompson	651,000
John Edwards for President	189,000
Huckabee for President	25,000

## Creative Options

Just as there are dozens of different ways to target or buy online, there are a number of creative options available for implementation online as well.

### Video Advertising

With broadband penetration among online households in the United States predicted to reach 89.4 percent in 2008, the ability to use video in online advertising

campaigns has never been more accessible to political marketers.<sup>50</sup> Online video provides an alternative way to stand out in a crowded, cluttered, local television market and a way to reach out to the younger, more affluent, professional voters who cannot be reached through normal television advertising.

## Presidential Candidates' Use of Display Advertising

According to Kate Kaye, of online advertising trade publication ClickZ, "Between January and mid-December [2007], the candidates ran more than 277 million display ad impressions. AdRelevance showed Romney for President bought the most in that time, 37 percent. McCain's campaign came in at a close second with 34 percent. About 27 percent of all presidential candidate display ads were placed by Obama for America."<sup>48</sup>

At the time of publishing this report, Nielsen Online AdRelevance data for January, 2008, showed a total of 11.8 million impressions served by presidential candidates, led by Obama for President with 10 million, with the remainder comprised of Romney, McCain and Richardson. To put this in perspective, by comparison, major portals and ad networks serve billions impressions each day!

In another article, Ms. Kaye writes of 2008 online advertising projections, "The preliminary Political Media Buying 2008 forecast from PQ Media estimates \$4.5 billion will be spent by political advertisers in '08 and leading up to this year's presidential primaries on all media measured, including broadcast and cable television, direct mail, PR, newspaper and Internet. The estimated \$73 million sliver expected to go towards the Web represents a measly 1.6 percent of the whole."<sup>49</sup>

There are a few major ways candidates have been using video online to complement television buys, including:

- In-banner video ads can be of any length and play within the space of a standard banner ad unit. Because in-banner video ads are delivered within standard banner sizes, there is plenty of available inventory on most sites.
- In-stream consists of re-roll and post-roll ads alongside videos users have selected, usually between 5 and 30 seconds in length. Typically a companion banner appears on the page during the time of the video and

remains there until another page is called, allowing users to access more information without disrupting their video viewing experience.

- Video overlays are ads that run over in-stream ads as "ticker-type" across the bottom of the screen or other Flash-based text ads taking up to 15 to 20 percent of the screen. These ads look much like the crawl on CNN or ESPN and are displayed while the viewer is watching the selected video.

The same display targeting capabilities mentioned previously in this chapter can be applied to video advertising including the ability to choose not to appear alongside user generated content or to geographically target by state, DMA or ZIP codes. In addition, the online video audience can be highly segmented based on contextual, demographic, psychographics and behavioral attributes.

## The YouTube Phenomenon

YouTube's vision is to entertain, inform, educate and inspire the world through video. Many political organizations and campaigns have used video sites like YouTube to distribute video content. Online video should be an integral part of any campaign through three ways:

1. **Fish Where the Fish Are:** Any video asset you have should be placed in your candidate's Brand Channel. You control what is placed into this channel as well as the comments which are stated on your channel. It is not enough anymore to have video on your own site; instead, fish where the fish are on YouTube.
2. **Engage the Community:** Utilize the YouTube community by testing out your media shop's commercials. YouTube can serve as a giant focus group for your creative ideas. You can even utilize the YouTube community by asking its members to create your next commercial. This idea of user-generated video has been tremendously popularized by the YouTube Debates in 2007 and will continue to grow.
3. **Buy Insurance:** Don't just assume that placing videos on YouTube means you will get tens of thousands of views. The only way to ensure that your video becomes the next most watched video is to promote your video through advertising. The ads ensure that your message is front and center and your promoted video spots will get tens of thousands of impressions and views.

There several reasons why political marketers should look beyond television to distribution of video ads on-line:

- Online video reaches a different audience than the traditional television viewer. In general terms, this audience is younger, higher-income and better educated.
- Local television is likely to be sold out in the most desirable day-parts and against the most popular programming, including local news, sports, financial and primetime and late night.
- A clutter issue exists. Because the local stations have few avails, they bunch up political advertisers in the same pod, which is unheard of in normal network procedures, even in cable.
- If not sold out in the major markets, television is highly priced, even though the lowest rate is mandated by the FCC. Video is generally less expensive than television, but as is the case for all new media, price depends on volume.
- Regional or ZIP code targeting is not available in local television advertising.

### Display ads with rich media

Rich media can connote different things to different online professionals, so it is important to begin with a definition. For the purposes of online advertising, rich media is any standard IAB ad unit containing animation or sound. This means they are not static images or basic GIF or JPG animations, but rather use rich animations or video and are built in Flash or proprietary rich media technologies such as Eyewonder, Eyeblaster or PointRoll.

Rich media provides the most creative flexibility along with the ability to have users interact directly with the ad unit itself.

A few specific types of rich media ads include:

**Flash ads** – Eye-catching animation that presents a marketer’s message as creatively as possible. Flash ads may include audio and may include high interaction with a brand, such as playing games like pong or golf within a banner ad.

**Expandable** – On a mouse-over or click, a standard banner ad unit expands to reveal more of the marketer’s message.

**Floating** – Creative does not appear as a standard in-page unit, but rather as a floating ad unit over the page with which a user can choose to interact or close.

**In-banner video** – Any use of video within a standard banner format.

**Data collection** – Allows people to register for an email list or make a donation all from within the banner and without ever leaving the page where the user encountered the ad.

**Widgets** – Enables users to “take” your widget or gadget and place it as an ad format on other sites.

### Pricing

Display advertising pricing varies widely based on the nature of the site, and on what pages within the site where ads will appear, as well as the many targeting options that are offered by publishers.

Media can be purchased on a cost-per-thousand (CPM), cost-per-click (CPC) or cost-per-acquisition (CPA) basis. Online media is typically priced on a net basis, making it necessary for agencies to gross up the amount by an agreed upon percentage for client billing purposes or to arrange another fee structure for providing online media buying services.

**FIG 5: U.S. ONLINE DISPLAY ADVERTISING METRICS, 2006-2011** <sup>55</sup>

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Cost per 1,000 impressions (CPM)	\$3.50	\$3.31	\$3.44	\$3.60	\$3.76	\$3.86
Revenue per 1,000 pages (RPM)	\$1.75	\$1.99	\$2.24	\$2.45	\$2.62	\$2.70
Revenues (billions)	\$5.8	\$7.2	\$8.6	\$10.0	\$11.2	\$12.2
% change	23.0%	22.6%	19.9%	16.6%	12.1%	8.6%

**FIG 6: AVERAGE CPM FOR ONLINE DISPLAY ADVERTISING IMPRESSIONS AMONG THE TOP 10 INTERNET ADVERTISERS IN THE UNITED STATES, JULY 2007<sup>57</sup>**

CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN	NUMBER OF IMPRESSIONS
1. Low Rate Source	\$2.10
2. NexTag, Inc.	\$2.04
3. Experian Group Limited	\$2.77
4. Countrywide Financial Corp.	\$2.03
5. InterActive Corp.	\$4.11
6. Netflix, Inc.	\$3.38
7. AT&T Corp	\$3.21
8. Privacy Matters	\$3.04
9. Verizon Communications, Inc.	\$3.91
10. Reunion.com LLC	\$2.07
Top 10 total	\$2.53

## Metrics & Optimization

One thing commonly heard inside the beltway is, “I like television because I can measure its impact in the polls.” The response is, “not as well as online, you can’t.” The reality is that polls reflect all sources of information that influence voters (or advocates in the case of a cause.) If a candidate has a bad debate, no number of television rating points (TRPs) will erase the memory of a bad performance.

In fact, measuring your online marketing campaign means good news and bad news – and great news. The good news is that online is completely measurable. The bad news is that knowing what you want to measure is not always intuitive, especially for people from a traditional media background. The great news is that if you plan your campaigns thoroughly and design them correctly, then you’ll likely be delighted with the results.

The most common way of buying online advertising is on a cost-per-thousand (CPM) basis. Oddly, while CPM may be the most common method to buy, it’s the least common metric by which it’s judged. CPM buys are almost always calculated to conform to the metrics and desired outcome of the buyer, including cost-per-acquisition, cost-per-dollar donated, cost-per-visitor to a Web site and so on. These metrics can be distinguished by putting a lower case “e” in front of the desired metric. For example, effective cost per acquisition becomes “eCPA.” If a campaign is bought at a \$3.00 CPM, but it takes 3,000 impressions to get an email address, then the eCPA is \$9.00

This can also be done in reverse, with the benefit being very much to the buyer. If the desired outcome is to collect email addresses, the buyer can purchase them at,

say, \$1.50 each. The publisher then places those ads on sites where it takes the least number of impressions to deliver each email address. Good publishers will optimize quickly and earn good profits on these buys with no risk to the buyer.

Political measures of success can sometimes be different from corporate measures of success. Fundraising, favorability ratings, poll rankings and votes all matter in politics. With online marketing, many of these end goals are measurable and able to be optimized throughout the campaign. The most important and difficult way to measure political success with only advertising is to focus only on a single metric, such as fundraising, that defines success for your campaign. If fundraising is the objective, then the click through rate is completely irrelevant, and so is every other metric except for “effective cost-per-dollar raised.” This means that the sites or networks on which the campaign is being run should each be measured to define the amount of money being paid to that site or network for each dollar raised. It’s as simple as that. The sites that are profitable according to the campaign’s pre-defined profitability requirements should be retained and others should be dropped.

### Best Practices for Online Display Advertising



- Use display advertising in concert with other components of an online plan and the rest of an integrated media mix.
- Learn the metrics of online advertising effectiveness and start testing in small increments.
- Develop creative and compelling online advertising that inspires prospective donors and voters to respond.
- Work with established and experienced individuals, organizations and publishers who understand the complexity of online advertising and the sensitivity of political communications.



# The Political Corner

## A conversation with Phil Noble

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*Phil Noble is the founder of Phil Noble and Associates, a political and public affairs consulting firm, and PoliticsOnline, the premier international company providing fundraising and Internet tools for politics.*

### **Building online advertising metrics**

Adopting online advertising into the political marketing mix has been a long-term process. In 2007 and 2008 political campaigns reached a breakthrough, incorporating online advertising as part of their campaign equation from day one. Their level of usage and sophistication may not rival the corporate world, but online advertising is no longer an afterthought. It has earned a permanent place at the table rather than in the squeaky chair across the room.

Online advertising has had to prove its worth to political campaign strategy. Its rise is comparable to television, which had to prove itself before it rose to prominence during the elections of the 1960s. Because online advertising is so measurable, it is shameful that the political consulting community does not have more metrics to show after ten years. However, we're still at the beginning of the beginning. If this is Web 2.0, what will Web 48.0 look like? We will get there – and it will look a lot different than the Web as we know it today.

The level of online advertising sophistication in the 2008 election cycle has taken a quantum leap forward since the last election. More than just buying banner placements, candidates are now actively changing creative rotations, targeting more granularly and buying keyword searches on things other than their own names. People are strategically using online advertising in real ways, though still at spending levels that are pennies-on-the-dollar compared to television.

Campaign consultants are so used to one-way advertising that they don't think about or expect to get something back from the advertising that they can then monetize in political terms for the campaign. And because this concept is so novel, publishers are missing a real opportunity to capitalize on it.

The ability for online political advertisers to measure actual impressions delivered with such accuracy is a unique selling point that deserves a radically different, more performance-oriented sales pitch. Publishers should be saying, "If I run this ad, then these specific things will happen, or you don't pay us a dime. And if they do happen, you pay us double!" If I were a campaign manager, I would say "prove it!" and be willing to pay a premium for seeing my poll numbers move as a result.

Eventually we will get to a place where online advertising can take credit for increases in statewide name recognition, but the first step is to determine a cost-per-acquisition model that starts by delivering dollars and people. In fact, fundraising metrics are a good place to start, since political campaigns have already begun experimenting with online advertising to raise money. Candidates understand fundraising metrics because they know the value that one new supporter will donate over the life of a campaign, whether that means donating money, making calls or canvassing door-to-door.

*This conversation was conducted by phone interview with Tony Winders.*



## CHAPTER 6

# Using Lead Generation for Supporter Recruitment

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This chapter will discuss the advantages of supporter recruitment, which the online advertising world calls “lead generation,” how it may be utilized by political organizations, how lead generation works, political case studies as well as compliance and data security considerations.

This chapter will discuss the ways in which “lead generation”:

- Offers political organizations an unparalleled opportunity to monitor and measure the performance of their advertising campaigns in real time and to modify the attributes of the campaigns “on the fly.”
- Provides effective geographic and demographic targeting.
- Offers advanced filtering and lead validation capabilities to ensure that only highly qualified leads are delivered.
- Can be tailored to fit an organization’s unique lead quality and volume expectations.
- Can be created for both large and small organizations with varying resources and technological capabilities.

## How Lead Generation Works

“Lead generation” is a cost-effective way for all forms of political organizations, including political parties,

candidate campaigns and issue advocacy groups, to generate potential donors, volunteers and supporters. We call these “highly qualified leads.” Each highly qualified lead represents a specific individual who has affirmatively expressed an interest in potentially supporting the mission of a given political organization.

Stated simply, online lead generation is a process by which lead generation vendors present an online consumer with online forms to complete. By forms, we are referring to Web sites on which the consumer is presented with questions that the consumer is supposed to answer by electronically inputting his or her responses. The questions may range from seeking basic contact information to seeking a consumer’s opinion on a specific topic presented.

The forms that the consumer completes have typically been designed by an advertiser or, for purposes of this chapter, a political organization with a specific marketing objective in mind. The political organization will have engaged the lead generation vendor to coordinate a lead generation campaign on its behalf. The forms ask the online consumer to fill in varying data fields depending upon the needs of the political organization for a given advertising campaign. Once the consumer inputs the requested data in the online form, the data is placed into a database that is given by the lead generation vendor to the political organization to use in following up on the information provided by the consumer. Several examples are presented below as to how lead generation can be used for the benefit of political organizations.



## Political Applications of Lead Generation

Lead generation marketing can help political organizations to:

- Build awareness of a political party, candidate or issue.
- Drive voters and prospective voters to a specific Web site.
- Target a marketing initiative on key geographic areas – national, regional, state or major metropolitan areas.
- Build a permission-based database of interested voters.
- Combine auto-dialer technology with a permission-based database to broadcast voice messages to a large audience.
- Recruit and mobilize volunteers for grassroots campaign activities.
- Organize a petition drive or a letter-writing initiative to contact political officials.
- Send out email newsletters with information on upcoming candidate appearances, grassroots activities, webcasts, reminders to vote, etc.
- Fundraise.
- Conduct political polling, surveys and research.

## Data Points Collection

Lead generation advertisements typically collect the following pieces of information from consumers:

- IP Address
- Time/Date Stamp
- Email Address
- Gender
- Date of Birth
- Title
- First Name
- Last Name
- Mailing Address
- City
- State
- Zip Code
- Phone Number

Depending upon the marketing objectives of an advertiser, more extensive and specific data fields may be collected from consumers. In that regard, an advertiser can present consumers with a list of custom questions. In the political context, these questions might include requests for party affiliation, political interests, marital status, occupation, or any other relevant question that may help meet the political organization's marketing objectives. More specific data points from consumers on the front end obviously create more targeted leads for an advertiser on the back end of a lead generation campaign.

## Monetizing Leads

Political organizations can monetize these leads (i.e. turn them into donors and volunteers) in several ways, depending on the specific data points collected from consumers. This follow-up involves personal contact with the voter through:

- Telephone
- Email
- Postal mail

The pricing of a lead generation campaign will vary based upon the number of custom questions posed to consumers and how many contact points an advertiser chooses to collect.

## Case Study: A Political Party Builds a Database of Supporters

Lead generation advertising is a way for a political organization to quickly and cost-effectively build an extensive email database of supporters. Political parties have used lead generation to identify individuals potentially interested in supporting that party's candidates for elected office. Potential supporters provide their email addresses through an online form. Once these email addresses are populated into a database, the database can be used by the political party as a cost efficient way to communicate to and solicit contributions from a large pool of potential supporters in a short time period through the utilization of email newsletters.

Political organizations can also use lead generation to build a permission-based phone call list.

## Targeting

One of the principal advantages of lead generation advertising is that political organizations have the option of acquiring targeted leads. Lead generation vendors offer advanced targeting capabilities to ensure that an advertiser's campaign is seen only by its target audience. These capabilities typically include the ability to target advertising campaigns based on a consumer's demographic information, such as age and gender, as well as geographic targeting based on the consumer's ZIP code. In other words, if a political organization only wants to pursue a marketing initiative by contacting consumers by telephone in certain ZIP codes, a focused lead generation campaign will only produce leads identifying consumers who provide telephone contact information in those specific ZIP codes. In addition, some lead generation providers have the ability to geographically target the serving of banners and other creative materials before collecting any information from the consumer through IP-based targeting technology.

## Data Filtering and Validation

In producing targeted leads, top lead generation vendors should have extensive rules-based filtering to remove blatantly unqualified leads (i.e. by using bad word or letter combination filters and age filters). In addition, top providers should also have the ability to employ basic and advanced lead validation techniques to ensure that only highly qualified leads are delivered to the advertiser. Basic lead validation methods include

- Email domain name verification.
- Removing duplicate leads generated on the same campaign or other campaigns belonging to the same advertiser.
- Verifying that city, state and ZIP code are a valid combination.
- Verifying phone number by matching the state against the area code.

More advanced validation techniques can validate the consumer's actual street address by checking it against the U.S. Postal Service database. Top lead generation vendors also typically have relationships with third party validation companies, which offer even more advanced validation techniques that can match the consumer with the address and phone number that they provided.

## Case Study: An Advocacy Group Initiates a Letter-Writing Campaign

Lead generation advertising is an ideal method to identify potential support for a specific political cause and then to leverage that support by automating the process by which potential supporters can send a letter to a member of Congress about their support for a specific issue. For example, an advocacy group has identified individuals who may support its efforts to lobby Congress to stop checkout fees from being instituted by large retailers. Individuals who provided their contact information to the advocacy group then also had the option of sending a letter to Congress about the issue on which the advocacy group was focused. As a result, an individual was able to authorize the mailing of a form letter by the advocacy group in the individual's own name to his or her specific representative in Congress. Lead generation advertising proved to be an effective mechanism to identify support for the advocacy group and that support to take actual steps to further the group's goals (sending a letter to Congress).

## Attracting Voters to a Lead Generation Advertisement

A central consideration that any advertiser, including a political organization, must consider in setting up a lead generation campaign is how online consumers will reach the advertising campaign. This concept is referred to as "traffic sources" or "driving traffic" in the lead generation industry. There are two principal traffic sources for lead generation campaigns: individual Web site publishers and publisher networks. Publishers can drive Internet traffic in a variety of ways including search, display advertising (i.e. banners), email marketing and co-registration pathways.

Political organizations interested in launching a lead generation campaign can utilize one or more publisher networks that can act as a "one-stop shop." Publisher networks recruit, screen, contract with, monitor, track, manage and pay as many as thousands of Web site publishers that are experts in the various methods of driving Internet traffic. In addition to aggregating a universe of publishers, top lead generation networks are capable of assisting a political organization to:

- Develop creative materials for an initiative.
- Provide the technology platform that will host the creative materials.
- Procure traffic to the marketing initiative.
- Handle the distribution of creative material

to the traffic partners.

- Securely capture, store and transport collected data.
- Analyze the data to determine the effectiveness of the marketing initiative with information provided by the advertiser.

### Case Study: Petitioning the President and the United Nations

A lead generation campaign was set up by a public interest coalition to generate political support to stop the genocide occurring in Darfur by petitioning the President and the United Nations Secretary-General to take immediate steps to stop the killing. The coalition wanted to generate large volumes of supporters for the campaign in a short period of time. Lead generation advertising proved to be an effective mechanism to achieve those objectives.

## Advantages of Lead Generation

Lead generation offers political organizations an unparalleled opportunity to monitor and measure in real time the performance of their marketing initiatives. As a result, organizations can modify their advertising campaigns “on the fly” to enhance their performance. Through the crafting and refining of questions posed to consumers to acquire information from those consumers, political organizations can uniquely tie the content of their advertisements to their objectives for any given advertising campaign. For example, by adjusting the questions posed to consumers, political organizations can directly impact the quality of the resulting leads.

Beyond lead quality, lead quantity can also be effectively controlled through online lead generation advertising. Specifically, lead volume can easily be scaled to meet the specific and changing needs of a given political organization. Volume can be monitored and controlled through daily or monthly quotas so that an organization only receives the number of leads that it needs to fulfill the specific purpose of its marketing initiative.

Finally, lead generation allows a political organization to start small by testing various concepts and advertising material before expanding a marketing program to a larger scale and expending substantial marketing dollars. For example, candidates for office might have two different messages that they want to test with potential voters. Through lead generation, both messages can be separately presented to consumers and then the response of the consumers can be measured in order to determine which message is, in fact, the most attractive to potential voters. Through such testing, candidates can

reliably identify the optimal message to be subsequently presented to potential voters through a variety of advertising tools (television, radio, print, billboard, online) without having to incur the wasted expense of presenting a sub-optimal message through all of the tools before realizing the message was sub-optimal.

## Compliance and Data Security

Prior to launching a lead generation campaign, a political organization should draft and post a privacy policy and terms and conditions. Both documents should be accessible to online consumers when reviewing an advertiser’s offer. A well-drafted privacy policy clearly and fully discloses the political organization’s policies with respect to the collection, use, and sharing of consumer information and informs consumers how to opt-out of such collection, use, and sharing. In conjunction with a lead generation campaign, it is particularly important that an advertiser’s privacy policy address whether any third party transfers of personal information, such as transmissions to or from a lead generation vendor or to a third party marketing partner, will occur. Terms and conditions should clearly explain to the online consumer what steps must be taken in order to complete the advertiser’s offer. Both the privacy policy and the terms and conditions should identify some method by which the online consumer can contact the political organization.

For more detailed information about best practices associated with a lead generation advertising campaign, an advertiser should examine the various resources available through the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB). The IAB is a major trade organization that represents over 300 leading companies engaged in various forms of interactive advertising. One of the functions of the IAB is to recommend standards and best practices that foster industry-wide growth. In 2005, the IAB established the IAB Lead Generation Committee, which has subsequently established best practices for lead generation. More complete information on the IAB’s Lead Generation B2C and B2B Best Practices for U.S.-based advertisers and publishers can be found at <http://www.iab.net/>.

As a technological consideration, the IAB’s Lead Generation Committee has also published extensive best practices guidance on data transfer. The two primary considerations identified by the IAB with respect to data transfer best practices are

- Security – All lead generation data should be transferred and received in an encrypted format.
- Common Format and Setup – All lead generation data should be transferred in a common format via common, secure Internet technologies.



**For more complete information on the IAB's best practices for data transfer, visit:**  
[http://www.iab.net/media/file/standards\\_pdf\\_LeadGenerationDataTransferBestPractices.pdf](http://www.iab.net/media/file/standards_pdf_LeadGenerationDataTransferBestPractices.pdf).

Top lead generation vendors have advanced systems to ensure that highly sensitive data is captured, stored, and transferred in a secure environment. A secure environment includes secure physical infrastructure, computerized access controls, advanced network systems, and network security controls and operational controls.

Physical security is ensured by utilizing facilities with strict access controls that prevent unauthorized access to physical hardware where data is being collected, processed and stored. Computerized access controls include authentication and authorization policies, governing use of passwords, frequency of password expiration and various levels of access needed by the users to perform their job duties. Network devices and systems are protected by network access policies, firewalls and intrusion detection systems in accordance with best practices and standards such as the Security Configuration Guides published in <http://www.nsa.gov/snac/>. Finally, operational controls consist of periodic review of network logs, proper alerting procedures in case of virus outbreak or compromise, timely security upgrades of operating systems/services and installation of antivirus software.

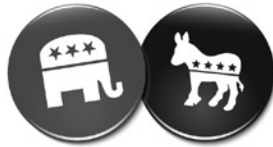
As a final point, political organizations should also consider having their legal counsel review whether any unique legal issues should be addressed before running a lead generation campaign. As part of that review, advertisers should direct their counsel to consider the implications of the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 if the advertiser intends to use email as a mechanism for distributing its offer. More complete information on CAN-SPAM compliance and Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") enforcement of CAN-SPAM requirements can be found at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/canspam.shtm>. An additional resource that may be useful to legal counsel with respect to lead generation is the FTC's Dot Com Disclosures, listed at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/dotcom/>.

The above suggestions are not intended to be an exhaustive list of compliance or data security issues that a lead generation advertiser may encounter. They should, however, provide a meaningful starting point for an advertiser to think about compliance and data security prior to the launch of a lead generation campaign.

## Best Practices for Supporter Recruitment/ Lead Generation



- Identify the precise objectives for your lead generation initiative.
- Communicate your marketing objectives to your lead generation vendor.
- Define objective performance criteria that will be used to measure whether your marketing objectives are being met.
- Consult with your lead generation vendor regarding the real time monitoring and measurement of your lead generation campaign performance.
- Provide timely feedback to your lead generation vendor on marketing initiative performance.
- Make modifications to the campaign as needed to enhance performance.
- Leverage expertise and assets of top lead generation vendors to effectively build and manage a successful marketing initiative.
- Have a privacy policy and terms and conditions that adequately disclose to consumers how their data is collected, used and shared, and how they can complete the offer.
- Make sure that lead data capture, storage and transfer is done in a secure environment to ensure data integrity as well as compliance with applicable laws and regulations.



# The Political Corner

## A conversation with Evan Tracey

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*Evan L. Tracey is the founder and chief operating officer of Campaign Media Analysis Group, a TNS Media Intelligence company. CMAG is the leading custom media-research company for politics and public affairs advertising expenditure data.*

### Changing conventional campaign wisdom

Today online media is used in the political marketing mix primarily as a utility for communication and fundraising. Campaigns are emailing with reporters and text messaging to the people on their lists. They are posting videos to YouTube and on their sites and making fundraising appeals, all of which can be done without an extensive amount of banner advertising.

Online advertising has also had a slow adoption rate because conventional wisdom for campaign management is to run a textbook replica of the last campaign. If you lose it will be because of the candidate, not because you took a risk and lost. There is a slow-to-change philosophy engrained in the profession as a whole because nobody wants to be accused of doing anything that will cause the campaign harm.

For example, buying bulk ad impressions, such as through ad networks, is efficient because of the low cost and ability to reach passionate committed readers. However, there is a perception that candidates do not have control in these environments, which is hard to overcome due to a lack of understanding by political consultants.

Rather than complain about how much campaigns spend on television, online publishers would be better off demonstrating the efficiencies of online advertising compared to direct mail and setting up tests to see if they can outperform it. It would also be worthwhile to show how 30 to 50 year-olds are using online advertising in ways they didn't five years ago. An even stronger case would be to focus on showing how all of the tools – direct response, broadcast and online advertising – work together. The campaigns that will ultimately be most successful will be the ones to marry television and the web together, including advertising.

There is also a unique dynamic that occurs when selling a candidate on any medium. A candidate is not something tangible for people to buy. Consequently, campaign expectations and perception are measured by winning on Election Day. While over-targeting television will shut you out, finding very efficient ways to fundraise or reach distinct audiences will resonate.

Another factor is young voters. Candidates must always market to youth, as they're the "x factor." The web is a familiar form of communication for them and you can rely on relatively free ways to reach them via MySpace, text messaging and YouTube. The good news for online advertising is that the generation now Googling and YouTubing away will get older with these technologies.

*This conversation was conducted by phone interview with Tony Winders.*

# Glossary

*The definitions in this glossary are based on Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) Glossary of Interactive Advertising Terms 2.0, [www.iab.net](http://www.iab.net) and were compiled for this publication by Joe Laszlo of the IAB.*

**Ad banner** - A graphic image or other media object used as an advertisement. See [www.iab.net](http://www.iab.net) for voluntary guidelines for banner ads.

**Ad impression** - 1) An ad which is served to a user's browser. Ads can be requested by the user's browser (referred to as pulled ads) or they can be pushed, such as e-mailed ads; 2) A measurement of responses from an ad delivery system to an ad request from the user's browser which is filtered from robotic activity and is recorded at a point as late as possible in the process of delivery of the creative material to the user's browser -- therefore closest to the actual opportunity to see by the user. Two methods are used to deliver ad content to the user - a) server-initiated and b) client-initiated. Server-initiated ad counting uses the publisher's Web content server for making requests, formatting and re-directing content. Client-initiated ad counting relies on the user's browser to perform these activities. For organizations that use a server-initiated ad counting method, counting should occur subsequent to the ad response at either the publisher's ad server or the Web content server. For organizations using a client-initiated ad counting method, counting should occur at the publisher's ad server or third-party ad server subsequent to the ad request or later in the process. See [www.iab.net](http://www.iab.net) for ad campaign measurement guidelines.

**Ad network** - An aggregator or broker of advertising inventory for many sites. Ad networks are the sales representatives for the Web sites within the network.

**Behavioral Targeting** - A technique used by online

publishers and advertisers to increase the effectiveness of their campaigns. Behavioral targeting uses information collected on an individual's web browsing behavior such as the pages they have visited or the searches they have made to select which advertisements to be displayed to that individual. Practitioners believe this helps them deliver their online advertisements to the users who are most likely to be influenced by them.

**Blog** - Generic name for any Web site featuring regular posts arranged chronologically, typically inviting public comments from readers. Blog postings are generally short and informal, and blog software is generally free and very easy for individual users, making it a popular tool for online diaries as well as more professional publications.

**Channel** - 1) A band of similar content; 2) a type of sales outlet (also known as channel of distribution) such as retail, catalogue or e-commerce.

**Click rate** - Ratio of ad clicks to ad impressions.

**Clicks** - 1) A metric which measures the reaction of a user to an Internet ad. There are three types of clicks: click-throughs, in-unit clicks and mouseovers; 2) the opportunity for a user to download another file by clicking on an advertisement, as recorded by the server; 3) the result of a measurable interaction with an advertisement or keyword that links to the advertiser's intended Web site or another page or frame within the Web site; 4) a metric which measures the reaction of a user to linked editorial content. See [www.iab.net](http://www.iab.net) for ad campaign measurement guidelines. See also, click-through, in-unit clicks and mouseover.

**Click-stream** - 1) The electronic path a user takes while navigating from site to site and from page to page within a site; 2) a comprehensive body of data that describes the sequence of activity between a user's browser

and any other Internet resource such as a Web site or third-party ad server.

**Click-through** - The action of following a link within an advertisement or editorial content to another Web site or another page or frame within the Web site. Ad click-throughs should be tracked and reported as a 302 redirect at the ad server and should filter out robotic activity.

**Contextual Ads** - Existing contextual ad engines deliver text and image ads to non-search content pages. Ads are matched to keywords extracted from content. Advertisers can leverage existing keyboard-based paid search campaigns and gain access to a larger audience.

**CPC (Cost-per-Customer)** - The cost an advertiser pays to acquire a customer.

**CPC (Cost-per-click)** - Cost of advertising based on the number of clicks received.

**CPL (Cost-per-lead)** - Cost of advertising based on the number of database files (leads) received.

**CPM (Cost-per-thousand)** - Media term describing the cost of 1,000 impressions. For example, a Web site that charges \$1,500 per ad and reports 100,000 visits has a CPM of \$15 (\$1,500 divided by 100).

**CPTM (Cost per Targeted Thousand Impressions)** - Implies that the audience one is trying to reach is defined by particular demographics or other specific characteristics, such as male golfers aged 18-25. The difference between CPM and CPTM is that CPM is for gross impressions while CPTM is for targeted impressions.

**Display Advertising** - A form of online advertising where an advertiser's message is shown on a destination Web site, generally set off in a box at the top or bottom or to one side of the content of the page.

**Floating ads** - An ad or ads that appear within the main browser window on top of the Web site's normal content, thereby appearing to "float" over the top of the page.

**Fold** - The line below which a user has to scroll to see content not immediately visible when a Web page loads in a browser. Ads or content displayed "above the fold" are visible without any end-user interaction. Monitor size and resolution determine where on a Web page the fold lies.

**IAB (Interactive Advertising Bureau)** - IAB is a non-profit trade association devoted exclusively to maximizing the use and effectiveness of interactive advertising and marketing. See [www.iab.net](http://www.iab.net) for more information.

**Impression** - A measurement of responses from a Web server to a page request from the user browser which is filtered from robotic activity and error codes and is recorded at a point as close as possible to opportunity to see the page by the user.

**IMU (Interactive Marketing Unit)** - The standard ad unit sizes endorsed by IAB. See [www.iab.net](http://www.iab.net) for more information.

**Interactive advertising** - All forms of online, wire-

less and interactive television advertising, including banners, sponsorships, email, keyword searches, referrals, slotting fees, classified ads and interactive television commercials.

**Keyword** - Specific word(s) entered into a search engine by the user that result(s) in a list of Web sites related to the key word. Keywords can be purchased by advertisers in order to embed ads linking to the advertiser's site within search results. See "Search engine marketing."

**Leaderboard** - A wide ad unit. The IAB guidelines recommend one size of leaderboard: 728 x 90 pixels.

**Lead Generation** - Fees advertisers pay to Internet advertising companies that refer qualified purchase inquiries (e.g., auto dealers that pay a fee in exchange for receiving a qualified purchase inquiry online) or provide consumer information (demographic, contact and behavioral) where the consumer opts into being contacted by a marketer (email, postal, telephone, fax). These processes are priced on a performance basis (e.g., cost-per-action, -lead or -inquiry) and can include user applications (e.g., for a credit card), surveys, contests (e.g., sweepstakes) or registrations.

**Medium Rectangle** - A medium-sized, roughly squarish ad unit. The IAB guidelines recommend one size of medium rectangle: 300 x 250 pixels.

**Midroll** - Form of online video ad placement where the ad is played during a break in the middle of the content video. See Preroll and Postroll.

**Page view** - When the page is actually seen by the user. This is not yet measurable; the best approximation today is provided by page displays.

**Pay-per-Click** - An advertising pricing model in which advertisers pay agencies and/or media companies based on how many users clicked on an online ad or email message. See CPC.

**Pay-per-Impression** - An advertising pricing model in which advertisers pay based on how many users were served their ads. See CPM.

**Pay-per-Lead** - An advertising pricing model in which advertisers pay for each "sales lead" generated. For example, an advertiser might pay for every visitor that clicked on an ad or site and successfully completed a form. See CPL.

**PII (Personally Identifiable Information)** - Refers to information such as an individual's name, mailing address, phone number or email address.

**Portal** - A Web site that often serves as a starting point for a Web user's session. It typically provides services such as search, directory of Web sites, news, weather, email, homepage space, stock quotes, sports news, entertainment, telephone directory information, area maps and chat or message boards.

**Postroll** - Form of online video ad placement where the advertisement is played after the content video plays. See Preroll and Midroll.

**Preroll** - Form of online video ad placement where the advertisement is played before the content video

plays. See Postroll and Midroll.

**Reach** - 1) Unique users that visited the site over the course of the reporting period, expressed as a percent of the universe for the demographic category, also called unduplicated audience; 2) the total number of unique users who will be delivered a given ad.

**Re-Targeting** - A form of behavioral targeting that involves using a cookie to deliver ads related to a user's previous activity (for example, abandoning a shopping cart) at a later time, elsewhere on the Web.

**Rich media** - Advertisements with which users can interact (as opposed to solely animation) in a Web page format. These advertisements can be used either singularly or in combination with various technologies, including but not limited to sound, video or Flash, and with programming languages such as Java, Javascript and DHTML. These guidelines cover standard Web applications including email, static (e.g., HTML) and dynamic (e.g., ASP) Web sites, and may appear in ad formats such as banners and buttons as well as transitionals and various over-the-page units such as floating ads, page take-overs and tear-backs.

**ROI (Return on Investment)** - Net profit divided by investment.

**Search** - Fees advertisers pay Internet companies to list and/or link their company site or domain name to a specific search word or phrase (includes paid search revenues). Search categories include:

**Paid listings**—text links appear at the top or side of search results for specific keywords. The more a marketer pays, the higher the position it gets. Marketers only pay when a user clicks on the text link.

**Contextual search**—text links appear in an article based on the context of the content instead of a user-submitted keyword. Payment only occurs when the link is clicked.

**Paid inclusion**—guarantees that a marketer's URL is indexed by a search engine. The listing is determined by the engine's search algorithms.

**Site optimization**—modifies a site to make it easier for search engines to automatically index the site and hopefully result in better placement in results.

**Search engine** - An application that helps Web users find information on the Internet. The method for finding this information is usually done by maintaining an index of Web resources that can be queried for the keywords or concepts entered by the user.

**Search engine marketing (SEM)** - A form of Internet marketing that seeks to promote Web sites by increasing their visibility in the search engine result pages.

**Skyscraper** - A tall, thin online ad unit. The IAB guidelines recommend two sizes of skyscrapers: 120 X 600 and 160 x 600.

**Social marketing** - Marketing tactic that taps into

the growth of social networks, encouraging users to adopt and pass along widgets or other content modules created by a brand, or to add a brand to the user's social circle of friends.

**Social network** - An online destination that gives users a chance to connect with one or more groups of friends, facilitating sharing of content, news and information among them. Examples of social networks include Facebook and LinkedIn.

**Textual ad impressions** - The delivery of a text-based advertisement to a browser. To compensate for slow Internet connections, visitors may disable "auto load images" in their graphical browser. When they reach a page that contains an advertisement, they see a marker and the advertiser's message in text format in place of the graphical ad. Additionally, if a user has a text-only browser, only textual ads are delivered and recorded as textual ad impressions.

**Third-party ad server** - The independent, outsourced companies that specialize in managing, maintaining, serving, tracking and analyzing the results of online ad campaigns. They deliver targeted advertising that can be tailored to consumers' declared or predicted characteristics or preferences.

**Unique user** - Unique individual or browser which has either accessed a site (see unique visitor) or which has been served unique content and/or ads such as e-mail, newsletters, interstitials and pop-under ads. Unique users can be identified by user registration or cookies. Reported unique users should filter out bots. See [www.iab.net](http://www.iab.net) for ad campaign measurement guidelines.



# Endnotes

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# Authors

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Michael A. Bassik is the Vice President of Interactive Marketing at MSHC Partners. Under Michael's leadership, MSHC Partners has executed more than three hundred online marketing campaigns on behalf of clients including the Democratic National Committee, the United Nations Foundation, the American Cancer Society, and MoveOn.org.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and American University's Washington College of Law, Michael was named a Campaigns & Elections Rising Star in 2006, is a frequent guest lecturer at universities across the country and has been featured in The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The International Herald Tribune, MediaPost and Advertising Age. Michael also serves on the Board of Directors of the Washington, DC Advertising Club.

## Eric Frenchman

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Eric Frenchman is an online advertising and marketing consultant from "the great state of New Jersey" and Chief Internet Strategist for the D.C.-based online advertising agency, Connell Donatelli Inc.

Currently working on the online advertising team for the McCain for President 2008 Campaign, Eric also manages the online political advertising for a number of other candidates and advocacy campaigns.

Since 1998, Eric has managed multi-million dollar online advertising and CRM campaigns for AT&T, DLJdirect, Harrisdirect and BMO Investorline. In 2003, Harrisdirect was recognized as Best Financial Advertiser. By 2005, it was ranked 17th largest online advertiser in the US.

Eric holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineer-

ing from Rutgers University and a master's in business administration from the Rutgers Graduate School of Management.

An avid gamer, Eric shares his expertise and insights about online political advertising and life in the digital age on his "PardonMyFrench" blog: [www.ericfrenchman.com](http://www.ericfrenchman.com).

## Jay Friedman

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Jay Friedman is the President and co-founder of Goodway 2.0, an online and emerging media partner company of Goodway Group. Goodway Group and Goodway 2.0 partner with advertising agencies and advertisers to develop measurable and profitable online and other non-traditional marketing programs.

Friedman created and launched Goodway 2.0 in June 2006 to provide online and emerging media services primarily to agencies representing the political, automotive, restaurant and homebuilder markets. Since its inception, Goodway 2.0 has become a sought-after digital media expert by agencies representing presidential and senatorial candidates, advocacy groups and automotive associations within three of the four world's largest auto manufacturers. Goodway 2.0 leverages tactics across portals, ad networks and individual sites to drive measurable results within online, mobile and in-game for its clients.

Prior to launching Goodway 2.0, Friedman was with Young & Rubicam, a top ten global marketing firm. At Y&R, Friedman managed the day-to-day operations of the \$20MM Dallas, TX, field office, during which time the Dallas office achieved and maintained the highest client-driven ratings of any field office within the system. Additionally while at Y&R, Friedman was responsible for the successful national effort to consolidate regional direct-to-consumer marketing programs to reduce time

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Friedman is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin with degrees in Journalism and Spanish. He lives with his wife and two children in Plano, TX.

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Julie is the principal author and editor of several publications, including *Constituent Relationship Management: The New Little Black Book of Politics*, and *Person-to-Person-to-Person: Harnessing the Political Power of Online Social Networks and User-Generated Content*, as well as *The Politics-to-Go-Handbook: A Guide to Using Mobile Technology in Politics* and *The Political Consultants' Online Fundraising Primer*. She co-authored *Putting Online Influentials to Work for Your Campaign*. She has appeared in national and international newspapers, magazines, and media, including MSNBC, C-SPAN, Fox News, CBS and NBC.

Julie previously served as the assistant to the president of ROME Foundation International, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing health care in emerging countries. She worked as a writer, editor and program manager for international initiatives in Korea, Ukraine, Haiti and the United States. Julie is a founding board member of Young Champions, a non-profit that addresses youth health issues, and a co-founder of Mobile Monday DC, the local chapter of an international community of mobile technology experts and enthusiasts.

As an undergraduate, she studied Literature, Philosophy and Classics at Messiah College. Julie also studied at Keble College, Oxford University, as well as in Edinburgh, Scotland. She was a Pew Younger Scholar of Literature at the University of Notre Dame. She received an M.A. from The George Washington University, where she was a University Fellow.

## Josh Gray

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Josh Gray is the executive vice president of strategic development for ValueClick, Inc., and is responsible for the company's integration initiatives and new product development. Prior to taking on this role, Mr. Gray was general manager of Webclients.net, ValueClick Media's lead generation network. Mr. Gray joined Webclients.net in 2000 as its chief financial officer and chief operating officer and two years later became the CEO and president. He led the company's growth through his strategic vision and implementation of several new lines of services, which ultimately resulted in the acquisition by

ValueClick, Inc. in 2005. Prior to joining Webclients.net, Mr. Gray was employed by KPMG, a leading national accounting firm. His areas of expertise include mergers and acquisitions and business process consulting. In 2003, he was the recipient of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Advertising and Media in the Greater Philadelphia and Central Pennsylvania region. Mr. Gray received his bachelor's degree from Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

## Karen A.B. Jagoda

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Karen Jagoda is a founder and President of E-Voter Institute, a trade association representing Web publishers and political and advocacy solution providers. The Institute, created in 1999 as a bipartisan organization, conducts research on the intersection of politics and the Internet. Along with a variety of sponsors and partners, the Institute has held numerous conferences that have brought together campaign experts and Internet insiders to consider the implications of changes in the political landscape.

Karen is the host of Digital Politics, a weekly Internet radio show available on <http://signonradio.com>, sponsored by the Union Tribune Publishing Company.

In order to make the E-Voter research more widely available, the Institute released the book *Crossing the River: The Coming of Age of the Internet in Politics and Advocacy*, which Karen edited (Xlibris, 2005).

Karen Jagoda is a native of Baltimore and received her B.A. with a dual major in mathematics and political science from Goucher College and a Masters of Business Management from Johns Hopkins University. After living in Washington, DC for over 20 years, she resides in La Jolla, California with her husband and Cairn terrier.

## Rena Shapiro

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Rena Shapiro works at Google, Inc. in the Elections & Issue Advocacy group where she consults candidates and issue advocacy groups on how to leverage Google's media solutions. Previously, Rena handled all New Business Strategy for manufacturing companies in the Industrial Markets Vertical for Google. Rena currently volunteers on Google Grants through the Google.org Foundation.

Prior to joining Google in 2003, Rena worked at Addison Branding & Communications as well as Primo Angeli Fitch, both branding and communications agencies. Rena received her B.A. in History from Barnard College of Columbia University, where she is active in the Alumni Association, serving on the Barnard College Alumni Careers Committee. Rena is currently pursuing her M.B.A. at Babson College, focused on Entrepreneurship and Marketing Innovation in Technology.

## Tony Winders

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Tony Winders is vice president of marketing for ValueClick Media, the advertising network division of ValueClick, Inc. (NASDAQ: VCLK), the world's largest independent provider of integrated online marketing technology, media and services.

Mr. Winders joined ValueClick through its acquisition of Search123 in June 2003, where he was vice president of sales and marketing for the growing pay-per-click search engine. At Search123, Mr. Winders was responsible for managing an inside the sales team and all aspects of corporate communications, advertising, event marketing and public relations.

Prior to joining Search123, Mr. Winders was president and CEO of InterActive Agency, Inc. (iAgency), one of the world's first interactive marketing services agencies, which he co-founded in 1995. An early pioneer of Internet public relations, direct marketing and advertising, Mr. Winders was responsible for developing innovative campaigns for eToys, DIRECTV, NBC, latimes.com, Warner Bros., E! Online, SegaSoft, Interplay, CompuServe, F/X Networks, Imagine Television, Twentieth Century Fox, Paramount, Symantec, Qualcomm, Coca-Cola and several other dot-com startups and technology, media and entertainment companies.

Mr. Winders began his career in interactive media in 1994 as the director of marketing at Viridis, a CD-ROM games developer in Santa Monica, California. He received extensive public relations agency experience in the early 1990s, as director of client programs for Murphy/O'Brien Communications in Beverly Hills and as an account executive at Paladino & Associates Public Relations in Hollywood.

An active member of the interactive media community, Mr. Winders oversees industry relations for ValueClick Media, including its memberships in the Interactive Advertising Bureau, the Direct Marketing Association and the Online Publishers Association. He is a member of the Digital Coast Roundtable in Los Angeles and was a co-founder of its Industry Relations Committee. He was a founding board member of VIC (Venice Interactive Community) and has served as an instructor of Internet marketing at UCLA Extension.

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