

A YouTube Moment in Politics:

**An Analysis of the First Three Months
of the 2008 Presidential Election**

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Fall 2006/Spring 2007**

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Executive Summary

With the development of YouTube in 2005, and its rising popularity as a campaign tool, this study seeks to explore the changing role of the Internet, with particular emphasis on YouTube and its effects on political campaigning. The 2006 congressional election demonstrated the power of online video in impacting constituent opinion and election results. As a result, a content analysis was conducted to examine the videos posted during the first three months of the 2008 presidential election. Emphasis was placed on those videos that generated the highest number of page views and thus ranked among the top five features each week, per candidate with the most views (John Edwards, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama). The research was designed in part to explore whether we are moving in a new direction in the realm of Internet politics, from the increasing use of websites, to the development and increasing popularity of alternative forms of online media, user and campaign generated features and networking content, as well as new roles for campaign staff that are internet and YouTube-focused. In conducting the above analysis, the study determined that the content on YouTube that generates the highest number of page views includes both negative campaign content and informative video clips. However, it is important to note that there is a gradation of negative candidate-related content on YouTube, related to the intent of the user as well as the nature of the video posted. As a consequence, YouTube has provided important opportunities for independent actors to play a role in the context of a political campaign.

Introduction

The Internet first became a significant political tool in offering one-way communication for candidates with the development of candidate websites. However, politics online is no longer as valued for its one-way communication but is now praised, and used for the opportunities it provides to conduct two-way communication between candidates, their campaigns, and potential voters. Blogging emerged in 2004 as the first development in two-way online political communication. In that Presidential election year, Howard Dean became the first candidate to use blogs, or text based message boards, as a forum to interact with voters and discuss politics and campaign issues and concerns. While blogging remains a major medium for both candidates and constituents to gather, debate, and discuss the news, politics, and other topics of note, new types of user generated content and online video have increasingly emerged as a significant part of the campaign environment, offering candidates and voters a unique way in which to conduct two-way communication.

In 2005 YouTube, an Internet website that hosts a vast array of video content, was developed for users to upload video, share clips with their friends, and provide a forum for social networking around video content. When the political world took note of this new medium, they believed that it would provide candidates and constituents with the opportunity to post web video on and about the candidate. To date, the content posted on the site, by both the campaign and voters, ranges from news clips, speeches, interviews, comedy, satire, and negative campaign content. During the 2006 congressional election, we first see user and campaign generated content in a political campaign, the results of which led to the uploading of a large and wide range of video, including features both

praising and insulting candidates. After the posting of two influential videos in 2006, one displaying Conrad Burns of Montana falling asleep at a farm bill meeting, and the other of George Allen of Virginia referring to his opponent's campaign tracker using racial slurs, these two candidates running for reelection for Senator, and at the time ahead in voter support before the videos were posted, ultimately lost their elections. Therefore, the 2006 election highlighted for the first time the impact that online video could have on constituent opinion and election results.

However, the election of 2006 turned out to be just the beginning of online video and its increasing popularity in the political arena. In 2006, most campaigns did not incorporate web video from the beginning of their campaigning – it was more of an afterthought. At the time, candidates were still focused on developing 15 to 30 second TV campaign ads. The 2006 “YouTube moments,” described above (referring to Conrad Burns and George Allen), thus became a historic turning point, where the use of the web became capable of changing the nature of the political campaign. While these videos were incredibly influential, in 2006, web video was not at the forefront of the campaign strategy. Now, though, in 2008, there has been an immediate focus on web video elements and tactics, with campaigns directly establishing campaign staff positions and strategies. Thus “web video has more of a seat at the political table in 2008” (Barko Germany). For example, at the beginning 2008 election, the top three Democratic presidential candidates (John Edwards, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama) all announced their presidency via online video posted on YouTube. Therefore, with a major emphasis in the 2008 election being placed on web video that is both user and campaign generated, this study undertook a content analysis on the video content posted on

YouTube of the top three Democratic candidates who had the largest number of views among all the Presidential candidates. The content analysis explored the number and types of videos posted on YouTube in order to determine what style of video was generating the most page views, the common trends among these videos, and how they could potentially affect voter opinion and election results.

YouTube and online video represent another way for constituents to collect information about a candidate. It has become both the traditional campaign pamphlet and the blog of 2008. Moreover, in 2008, YouTube has begun to shape how people see the presidential candidates. Therefore, candidates, no matter what party they are affiliated with, have decided that they can benefit by engaging with the voter through this medium. As a result, this study will explore also and identify the type of content that is being posted that focuses on specific candidates in the 2008 race. In addition, in identifying the top rated videos per week and over the full analysis process, conclusions will be drawn as to what type of videos are generating user attention, the characteristics and trends within these videos, and how that will affect campaigns and election results.

Internet and Politics

In today's political arena, websites and Internet resources, such as weblogs, social networks, podcasts and compatible video formats are being shared as a means of consuming and disseminating information via the web. As a result, websites are becoming a major if not the number one resource for political campaigns to contact supporters, volunteers, and donations. At the same time, for the consumer, or, in this case, the voter, the Internet has become a primary resource for campaign media explored via weblogging, campaign websites, news sites, social networks, video sharing and podcasts. While traditional websites are still offering significant value to the political world, technology is pushing the envelope steps further with the use of weblogging, the development of social networks, the availability of podcasts (news and opinion related), and video sharing through sites such as YouTube, which provide the general public with video clips (of up to 5+ minutes in length). Thus the issue is no longer whether politics is online but, instead, in what form and with what consequences.

Politics on the Internet has expanded beyond static two-dimensional web pages that used to serve as online billboards, flyers for a candidates position, and the traditional barriers of physical organizing. This has ushered in a new era of online consumer media and networking content that is saturated by political and campaign content. Furthermore, the phenomena of campaigns and the Internet is becoming less about what is featured on the campaign website, and instead consists more of user-generated and user-spread content that circulates virally on the Internet, connecting supporters from across the globe. As a result, this study will seek to explore whether we are moving in a new direction in the realm of Internet politics, from the increasing use of websites to the

development and increasing popularity of alternative forms of online media and networking content, and whether it is changing the face of politics and political campaigning.

The Internet has had an increasing impact on politics. There have been changes in campaign teams, strategies and plans with the introduction of the Internet. For example, there has been a change in campaign material, shifting from traditional forms of candidate information such as direct mail pieces, candidate websites and mass emails to the current use of blogs and user generated video content, specifically YouTube. As a result, with the Internet's increased use, there has been a loss of control to direct content on the side of the candidates, and larger, constituent influenced and faster impacts on campaigns, the status of candidates, and election results – from Howard Dean in 2004 to George Allen in 2006 and today's 2008 Presidential Candidates. This study analyzes the Internet's historic influence, its current significance, its future role in the world of politics, and the who, what, where, when, why and how of the Internet and politics. It focuses, in particular, on the impact of the critical new medium, YouTube, and of bloggers discussing posted YouTube content on politics, candidates, and election results.

However, in order to begin to explore Internet politics, its effect on traditional politics, and the new media used to interact and expose candidates or campaign material, we must begin by understanding the most influential factors. The basics, in Internet politics, are essential, as the phenomenon of Internet politics can be considered like a state-of-the-art building structure. It is advanced and complicated, especially in regard to the new media developments (i.e.: blogging and youtube), and thus requires a clear understanding of the foundation of the campaign itself, in order to understand how all the

elements of the structure, the online components, fit and function as one within the context of the campaign and how they might aid or harm the candidate.

The Internet is a unique forum for politics as it provides back-and-forth communication and allows for an exchange of information between users and sources. The Internet also offers its users greater access to information and the ability to express themselves in various online political arenas. In addition, individuals use the Internet as a tool to find and join groups that share their similar ideological, cultural, political and lifestyle preferences. According to statistics, 37% of the adult population and 61% of online Americans use the Internet to gather information on candidates and political views (Kush). Also, the online American tends to be more educated than the national average, affluent, younger, and employed. In politics in particular, individuals use the Internet to gather information, interact with candidates and chat with fellow citizens. Furthermore, “with the advent of the Internet, the amount and the specificity of election information available to Joe Voter has been both increased and conveniently indexed” (21, Kush). With the Internet, the average individual can register to vote, research candidate positions on specific issues, discover what corporations or organizations have donated to a campaign, gather voting records, and email local candidates. “In short, with a computer and some effort, you can change from Joe Voter to ‘cybercitizen’” (21, Kush). Furthermore, as the Internet continues to move forward beyond what we know as the traditional forms of online campaigning and into more tech savvy and progressive online tools (for example, online Town Halls and video podcasting), we will be interacting with candidates in completely new ways.

However, before exploring these new progressive media, we must ask, who is the average Joe Voter, ‘cybercitizen,’ or netroots activist, and what are their goals and intentions in investigating and utilizing the online political world. According to Jerome Armstrong, the liberal political activist who worked on the Presidential campaign of Governor Howard Dean, and Markos Moulitsas Zuniga, creator of Dailykos, a popular blog on the Internet, “the netroots activist, much like the new generation of grassroots activists, is fiercely partisan, fiercely multi-issue and focused on building a broader movement” (Armstrong 146). The netroots activist thus engages in netroots activism, or grassroots activism but in the cyber world. For example, on the website site, Meetup.org, individuals develop profiles, congregate around issues, and then eventually meet in person with other like minded activists (Safire). In the *New York Times Magazine*, Armstrong explains that “*Meetup* epitomize[s] to me the whole *netroots* to grass roots type of political activism that the Internet enable[s]. The morpheme (an indivisible, meaningful element of a word, like *net* in ‘network’) grounded the meaning of the word in something that was already political jargon” (Safire). Furthermore, anyone - candidate, voter, netroots or grassroots activist – with a persuasive message, in the online world, “can be a community organizer, an ad-maker, a reporter, a publisher, a theorist, a money raiser or a leader” in cyber space (18, Sifry). As a result, the ‘cybercitizen’ has become an individual who embraces and engages in the convenience, availability, and resources of the online world that allow “ordinary people to participate in processes that used to be closed to them” (16, Sifry).

However, while the Internet supplies its users, both the voters and the candidates, with access to a wealth of information, direct methods of communication, and the means

to express their opinions freely, for the candidate the Internet offers an arena to communicate with voters, including providing voters with up-to-date information, the exposure of a candidate's opponent (through various media), and the development of campaign websites. Also, many candidates use the Internet to advertise on various politically affiliated websites in order to reach those constituents who will not visit the candidate's actual homepage. Furthermore, to candidates, campaign websites are essential as they encourage visitors to contribute funds, become volunteers, recruit friends for the campaign, read good news about the candidate, and view attacks on their opponents. In addition, many candidate websites are now providing their constituents with video clips, such as uploading YouTube video content and audio files, such as podcasts and broadcasted speeches. Finally, the Internet has become an extremely valuable resource for candidates to use as a fundraising tool. For example, during the Bush-Kerry campaign, Kerry raised more than \$10 million a month online, a record at the time but one that will be dwarfed by the 2008 totals. In raising money online, we are seeing small-scale contributions with vast participation. Also, it is important to note that a large sum of the political cash being raised online is being spent on traditional political outreach and communication methods such as mailings and TV advertising.

The Internet's Evolving Role

In order to understand the significance and role of the Internet in advancing politics and campaigning, it is important to determine how the Internet first became involved in politics, the initial campaigns it affected, and the role it plays today. We first see the basic use of the Internet in politics, specifically campaigning, in 1992, with the presidential campaign of Bill Clinton and Al Gore. It was during this election that candidates first had an “Internet presence” even though the “online campaign was effectively limited to text centered applications” (67, Klotz). As a result, Clinton and Gore took advantage of the Internet as a campaign resource by sending emails posting press releases, speeches and position papers within discussion groups and on bulletin boards (Klotz).

In 1996, the Internet played a more significant role in campaigning and elections as it began to reach and engage increasing numbers of audiences. However, although it was not yet a vital resource in the political world, still a Web presence and/or demonstrating knowledge of the Web was considered “Web campaigning.” On October 6, 1996, during the first presidential debate, Senator Bob Dole, Republican nominee, “took Internet politics to a new level,” as Koltz put it (68, Klotz). When Senator Dole was given his final two minutes for closing remarks, he ended his statement with a reference to his website which allowed for a new visibility for Internet campaigning. Senator Dole’s exact words were, “and if you really want to get involved, just tap into my home page www.dolekemp96org” (68, Klotz). Although he failed to mention the dot that falls between the key phrase and the “org” portion of the web address, symbolic of how new the Internet was at the time, Dole generated a response that led to an additional

500,000 hits to the site within the first 24 hours following the debate. Unfortunately for Dole, “his server was unprepared for the amount of traffic the statement generated, [as] the Dole site crash[ed]” in response (68, Klotz). Regardless, after this event, “Internet politics would never be the same” (68, Klotz).

Today, however, the Internet is an essential aspect of politics and campaigning. All candidates running for a position or who hold a position have a website. Also, not only do candidates have websites but so do important groups advocating political issues, political parties, activist groups, and the media. Every realm, or aspect of the political world whose larger goal is to disseminate information and gather support, has a website devoted to the individual, the group, or the cause. Furthermore, as the Internet plays a significant role in politics and in society, as one of the main resources for information and communication, America is moving beyond just basic websites for both candidates and political issues. Today, it is no longer about whether the candidate has a website or not but how the site is used (72, Klotz). Also, “information dissemination remains the major function of campaign sites [...] with issues dominating campaign sites (76, Klotz). In addition, a candidate’s success depends not just on making significant information available but more importantly, it depends on “informing, persuading and involving others in the promotion of the candidate” particularly in the cyber world (24, Schneider and Foot). Today, though, we are rapidly on the brink of pushing Internet politics steps further. While the basic website remains important for candidates, issues and policies, it is becoming an outdated resource for the average voter, and more specifically, those engaged in politics online on a regular basis. We are moving beyond solely depending on and using websites to gather information. Now, with the rise of social networks and the

use of podcasts, blogs, and video content, the Internet and politics is exposing, generating and relying more than ever on more information, circulated virally, as a transmission of ideas via syndication or sharing of traditional media, generated through users on the Internet.

YouTube: History

One of the most recent Internet resources, introduced to the online political world is YouTube. This hot new Internet device, located at www.YouTube.com, has the slogan “broadcast yourself” by allowing anyone with technical knowledge to post what they wish. As a result, individuals of all walks of life are permitted to upload video onto the site, title it, and attach keywords so that the video can be easily found and viewed by individuals searching for political materials or campaign footage. “According to Robert Gardiner Maiden Lance Inc.: ‘With YouTube, I mean bang, it’s out there. You send it to your friends, they send it to their friends [and] the press picks it up’” (Matthews). Therefore with this resource at one’s fingertips, candidates in particular can use the site to upload footage, conveniently and with access to the general public, to promote themselves or attack their opponent.

“With the Internet and YouTube there is no discussion. It’s automatically posted” and as a result, the candidates and their campaign teams have no way of controlling the time of post or the content chosen (CBS News). Matthew Dowd, long time Bush strategist, fears a loss of spontaneity in politics especially at a time “when the public wants authenticity, [he] think[s] the internet and YouTube is causing people and politicians to actually be less authentic because they worry about what’s going to get caught on the Internet” (CBS News). For example, during the 2006 Congressional Election, a picture and video clip posting of Senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut kissing President Bush helped undermine Lieberman’s candidacy that led to his loss to anti war candidate Ned Lamont in the 2006 Democratic Party primary. The content posted on YouTube can have a significant impact on multiple parties depending on the

perspective – either enriching or damaging a candidate, his reputation and campaign. “You can influence it, but you can’t control it anymore, so you have to let go a little bit” says Joe Trippi (CBS News). Trippi, who was campaign manager for Howard Dean in 2004, sees YouTube as a “tool for weeding out overly-manufactured candidates” and instead providing the public with both genuine and satirical campaign content (CBS News).

In 2005, three young men in a garage in Menlo Park gave birth to this rising phenomenon and Internet resource. For Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim (who left YouTube last year to attend graduate school) YouTube began as a personal video sharing service. As it expanded, they received, in November 2005, initial funding, a sum of \$3.5 million, from the venture capital firm, Sequoia Capital (Cloud). Additional funding of \$8 million, from the same company, followed quickly after, in April 2006 (Cloud). With this funding, these three men were able to turn YouTube into a global phenomenon and increasingly popular user generated video sharing resource. The site originated in its earliest stage in February 2005. Three months later, they began a public preview and in December of 2005, officially launched the service. In the Spring of 2005, when the site went live, the founders discovered that people were posting videos of their choice. In addition, many were linking to YouTube from their MySpace pages. As a result “YouTube’s growth piggybacked on MySpace’s (MySpace remains YouTube’s largest single source of U.S. traffic, according to HitWise)” (Cloud). Thus, with the increasing popularity and adjustments being made based on usership, YouTube has developed into an “entertainment destination” where people watch more than 100 million videos on the site daily (YouTube Fact Sheet).

According to YouTube's business plan, YouTube "is a consumer media company for people to watch and share original videos worldwide through a Web experience"(YouTube Fact Sheet). The site allows everyone and anyone to watch and/or, post video content on YouTube, both on the site itself and within the Internet-scape. The video content on the site offers a wide ranging set of video choices, from hobby and interest videos, to current events (both aired on TV and first hand accounts), class projects and satire, to name a few. In providing video based content, the site has three main features: "video embedding," which allows users to insert YouTube video clips into their MySpace accounts, blogs or other websites that allows an individual to post video content; "public or private videos" offering users an opportunity, when uploading, to either broadcast their videos publicly or share them privately; and finally "subscriptions" which allow users to keep track of their favorite video postings and users within the site's network (YouTube Fact Sheet).

Moreover, YouTube has established a community for personal video, videobloggers, comedians, musicians, filmmakers and professional content owners to distribute their work. On the site, unlike traditional broadcast channels, YouTube allows its users to watch what they want, when they want it, and there is no set programming. As a result, users can post the video footage of their choice and the online community of users then determines what is popular through personal ratings and comments on each video posting.

Based on the website's traffic and statistics, Youtube receives more than 65,000 video uploads and serves more than 100 million video views per day. According to Hitwise, "YouTube videos account for 60 percent of all videos watched online" and

people are “spending an average of 17 minutes per session on the site”(YouTube Fact Sheet). In addition Nielsen NetRatings reports that YouTube has almost 20M unique users per month on the site (YouTube Fact Sheet). Furthermore, the average YouTube user is between 18 and 49 years old and from a broad range of geographical locations.

With the successful development of this video-sharing network, YouTube’s founders were able to sell the company to Google for \$1.65 billion dollars in October 2006. The two were able to sell this new “both easy and edgy” phenomenon, as *Time* magazine called it, since it provided an array of video content without having to download any software or register on the site (Cloud). “The unmediated free-for-all encouraged a valuable notion that the site was grass-roots, community run and – to use an overworked term – ‘viral’”(Cloud). As a result, this new medium proved to be a forum in which people found themselves engaged for hours. Thus, advertisers wanted to be on YouTube, (which is why Google paid so much for it), in a variety of formats, from promotions, to sponsorships, contextual based advertising, and traditional banner ads (YouTube Fact Sheet). However, despite having sold the company, Steve Chen and Chad Hurley, two of the three founders of YouTube, still manage the site’s day-to-day operations.

The Rise of Online Politics

Before the introduction and rising popularity of the Internet as a major, if not primary resource for political campaigning, candidates and their campaign teams focused on the use of direct mail, phone-banking, rallies and media appearances. Now, with the introduction and significant popularity of the Internet as a resource used by both the campaign and the general public to gather news, and more specifically political information, campaigns have adjusted their focus. For example, in 2004, Internet blogs were first introduced into the campaign landscape. The use of blogs, both as a forum for dialogue and fundraising, helped Howard Dean go from an unknown governor to a “political powerhouse” (CBS NEWS).

One of the most popular and widely used political media is weblogging, also known as blogging. Blogs, an Internet format also used by Howard Dean, are online journals or dialogues conducted among a group of people in hopes of fostering a sense of community. To many, “blogs have become the new information ecosystem,” and they are used as a forum to start discussions, provide information and invite feedback from users, who are often constituents (Jost and Hipolit). As a result, “in the blogosphere [or the world of blogs] there are no rules. There is only the limits of your ability and your hunger” to engage with other users (10, Power).. Blogs provide the public with a personal approach to presenting news and information. For example, “blogs allow people to discuss thematic, big picture issues in a very episodic anecdotal way” (134, Trammell). Research demonstrates that Americans are more often turning to blogs for political information as one of many sources, and that “blog content can be perceived as more influential and credible than traditional media content. [Moreover] blogs have the

potential to play a significant and persuasive role in political campaigns” (136, Trammell). While, for many, they may not be an individual’s primary source for information and news, blogs draw a significant number of constituents who value multiple perspectives on political issues, debate and discussion. In addition, as a significant number of individuals read blogs, many increasingly only read blogs or feeds from blog aggregators. Blogs have actually become the significant source of information for a large percentage of the population, so much so that traditional media outlets have also created forums or blog feeds and comments. For example, many columnists at all major newspapers are turning their columns into blogs where they can entertain or engage users and acquire feedback.

Furthermore, often, individuals turn to blogs not only as a forum to discuss their ideas and perspectives but also as a means of gathering the news, as many find that the media fails to portray and communicate the news and information accurately. Also, blogs motivate individuals to act as “fact checkers and bias-detectors” in addition to engaging in dialogue (Korzi). As a result, blogs provide a voice for the public and a place to challenge traditional media. Furthermore, the strongest two motivations individuals hold for accessing blogs are first, their desire “for information that [they] can’t get from traditional media” and secondly, to “check on the accuracy of traditional media”(155, Kaye and Johnson). As a result, political blogs provide the public with breaking news that may not be portrayed the same way or even found in mainstream media, along with corrections or complaints about the news coverage, and commentary about national or world events. This way, blogs are changing information consumption patterns as they provide instant feedback, open access, a forum to communicate ideas and the ability to

influence mainstream news coverage by checking facts, adding material and prolonging stories. In this way, political blogs have become a very important tool for the pro-democracy activists in challenging potentially repressive regimes.

For candidates, as blogs became increasingly popular, candidates began to use them as a resource for fundraising and as a mobilizing tool (Jost and Hipolit). In addition, candidates saw blogging as a way to communicate with supporters and volunteers. In 2004, seen as the breakout year for the Dean campaign's role in Internet politics, this campaign launched one of the most successful Internet campaigns in the history of Internet politics up to then, acting as the benchmark regarding the impact of the Internet on politics. At the beginning of Dean's campaign, Joe Trippi, campaign manager for Governor Dean, asked his colleague Matthew Gross to post a message on the message board of SmirkingChimp.com, a small but well known and heavily trafficked forum for anti-Bush sentiment. Trippi suggested that the message read, "*Ask the Dean Campaign' thread over at the SmirkingChimp*" (17, Sifry). This is considered to be one of the most influential moments in Presidential politics. Gross continued the message by adding that individuals should feel free to use the space for comments and questions and that members of the campaign, Trippi and Gross included, would respond to comments and questions as soon as possible. He also warned that if they did not respond immediately, that individuals should feel free to discuss questions or issues amongst themselves, thus creating dialogue in an interactive forum.

About an hour later and thirty responses deep, one of the posts read, "this is too cool, an actual direct line to the Dean campaign committee! Pinch me – I must be dreaming!" (17, Sifry). In response to Gross's thread, over 400 people posted comments.

Another comment on the board read, “that was an amazing day to see that rise out of nowhere. People were floored to see that the thread title was ‘Ask the Dean campaign’”(1, Sifry). Furthermore, Trippi and Gross were actually interacting with constituents - asking and answering questions. This is something no one had ever seen before in the world of Politics. “Never before had the top-down world of presidential campaigning been opened to a bottom-up laterally networked community of ordinary voters”(17, Sifry). The role of blogs in politics had reached a new level, and the influence and significance of this communication device opened the doors to a whole new world of how the Internet would function in relation to political campaigning.

Since then, online politics has not only become increasingly prominent in the context of campaign, candidate and issue based websites but it has expanded into the field of consumer media, and networking and user- generated content. This new realm of politics has become increasingly popular as it allows any “cyber citizen” to participate in politics, voice opinions, form groups and dialogue over issues they feel passionate about. In addition, both new media specified in this research are parallel in that “what blogs did for the written word, YouTube is doing for visual media”(Wasserman). Websites remain a significant component of the online world; however, as technology continues to advance, politics will be pushing further in influencing and affecting political perspectives, opinions, and decisions.

Although YouTube was created in 2005, we still see content - advertisements, commercials and speeches from the 2004 Presidential campaign - posted on the site. Evidently, despite the popularity of blogs during the 2004 election, a picture is worth a thousand words. Therefore, regardless of the text generated by candidates and their

campaign team, through blogs, candidates and their constituents see value in being able to connect more intimately via web video.

The 2006 Election

According to the former general counsel of the Democratic National Committee, Carol Darr, “ Reality TV has come to politics” and with the increasing popularity of YouTube “political advertising has evolved from a game played by professional political operatives and journalists to one played by provocateurs with well-honed video production skills” (Sullivan). This became most apparent as uploaded YouTube content affected various candidates in the 2006 elections. These candidates included Senator Conrad Burns, Representative Sue Kelly, and Senator George Allen.

YouTube made its debut in politics during the 2006 Senate election, and had a significant impact on a number of the candidates and their elections. As a result, this election marked a transformation in political campaigning especially as some YouTube videos served as a “video press release” for 2006 (Jalonick). Two of the most notable YouTube-related events that year involved the Senate races in Virginia and Montana. In Montana, Conrad Burns had served as a Republican United States Senator since 1989 but was considered one of the most vulnerable senators facing re-election. In August 2006, the race between Burns and his opponent, State Senator and organic farmer Jon Tester, grew significantly close, with polls indicating in August 2006 that the two were tied at 47%. In August, the Montana Democratic Party allocated funds for Tester’s staff member, Kevin O’Brien, to follow Senator Burns and film him at all his public events, both meetings and public appearances. Consequently, the Democratic Party used the video content to create “gotcha” videos, “video press releases” and music videos to post on YouTube (www.epolitics.com). In posting the video content, as the election drew closer and with the increasing level of negative campaign content featuring Conrad Burns

on YouTube and other video sharing sites, Tester began to take the lead. The turning point occurred in mid August, when Burns was caught falling asleep at a farm bill hearing in Montana, and the video footage was posted on YouTube within hours This “gotcha” video, in addition to a number of other anti Burns videos, led to Senator Burns’ demise in a close vote, with only approximately 3,000 votes separating the candidates.

During this election, the incident that gained more public attention around YouTube and politics and marked the beginning of a shift in online politics, was between the incumbent Republican Senator George Allen and his opponent Jim Webb. Allen was featured in a YouTube video entitled “Allen’s Listening Tour” in which the Senator is seen delivering a speech at a campaign event in Virginia. The video content which starred Allen was captured by a volunteer or gaffe from the Webb campaign. In the video, Allen tells his audience that he plans to run his campaign on “positive, constructive ideas.” But in the middle of his talk, he points to the Tester volunteer, S.R. Sidarth, and refers to him as “Macaca” (Hurt). Allen tells the audience that “this fellow here, over here with the yellow shirt, Macaca, or whatever his name is, let’s give a welcome to macaca here. Welcome to America and the real world of Virginia” (Hurt). This video of the speech and the macaca reference was then posted on YouTube by the Webb campaign and had an immediate impact on both the election and the recognition that YouTube had become a powerful *political* medium. Viewed approximately 2,000 times in the first day it was posted, the fallout from the episode, which was soon picked up by the mainstream media, continued to grow. Before the video had been posted, polls showed Allen with a 47% to 42% lead over Webb (Hurt). After the video was posted, which was the subject of more than 400 additional online videos, the footage had made its way into national headlines

and to date has been viewed by over 300,000 people. Allen ultimately lost the election to Webb by approximately 9,000 votes (Hurt).

As the “macaca”/YouTube episode gained attention, Allen decided to appear on MSNBC’s “Meet the Press” where he apologized for the statement and admitted it was a mistake. Today, when you keyword search “George Allen” on YouTube, the results of the search present the user with the video clip from his campaign stop and his public apology on TV; both of which continue to be uploaded. As this incident indicated, with the popularity, accessibility, and increasing use of this feature, “opposition candidate trackers have gone from waiting for a candidate to make a gaffe [...] to provoking candidates with insults or accusations, all meant to be caught on video and instantly beamed to the Web via YouTube” (Sullivan).

YouTube Politics

The 2006 election marked a turning point in politics on the Internet. Not only is YouTube providing an arena for video content in a way not previously available but information is being uploaded immediately and disseminated to the public faster than ever before. Furthermore, the Internet, particularly YouTube, is offering constituents and campaigns the opportunity to release information that is transparent, effortless in its distribution, and allows for voter participation, unlike TV which has an element of control that online video lacks. The George Allen incident and Senator Burn's footage are examples of circumstances that display the power of politics online. The Allen content was uploaded immediately, required little effort in posting, spread rapidly, drew national attention, provided voters with candidate transparency, had a significant impact on the candidate, and will go down in history as the "Macaca moment," or what many know as the first major incident in politics in which a political candidate was largely affected (by the use of the Internet) not only in losing the election but also in being referred to as a racist.

In watching the YouTube effect unfold and gain momentum in the political arena political candidates, consultants, researchers, analysts and voters wonder and debate if there will be another "macaca moment" in the upcoming 2008 election, or whether the events in 2006 represent a one-time situation. According to Julie Barko Germany, Deputy Director of the Institute for Politics, Democracy and the Internet, in 2008, "we are and will continue to see content that will be incredibly partisan and polarizing to have an impact." Furthermore Barko Germany believes that we are moving away from the broadcast media environment, and therefore the Internet will play an increasing role in

political campaigns as it provides people with what they want to see. In addition, YouTube provides a medium for content that is partisan and polarizing and its impact is highlighted as it is quick, spreads fast and provides an instant community. As a result, she anticipates that things will become very heated in 2008, and that the question in 2008 will be “will future macaca moments affect how people vote [the same way it did in 2006]?”

David Grossman of PoliticsTv, a news organization that produces Internet TV, original news shows and satirical videos, for politics, believes that there will be another “macaca” moment, not necessarily a candidate calling someone racist names, but as the quality of cameras, especially those on cell phones, get better and better, we will not even see someone in a crowd of people video taping via their cell phone. So, according to Grossman, there is the potential for another macaca moment but the difference will be that the candidates won’t know they are being filmed. Furthermore, he believes that even if the captured video footage is only seen by individuals covering the event it will still generate an impact like the “macaca” moment. The media has the power to influence public opinion and they will do everything in their power to bring the captured footage to the table, which has the potential to further the story line and/or change voter opinion sufficiently that a candidate would lose votes.

As we have reached a pivotal moment and a significant shift in politics and what influences candidates, voters and election results as first experienced in the 2006 Senate elections, it is important to address how YouTube fits in today’s campaign strategies, what role it will play, and how important it is, especially as the 2008 campaign has developed as early and as rapidly as it has. First, nearly every major candidate running for office has added a new team member called a “tracker.” The tracker is solely

responsible for following opponents and videotaping what they do and have to say as much as possible. The two Senate races in 2006 initiated this practice, associated in part with the new opportunities provide by YouTube.

In 2006, there was a large quantity of produced web-only video that appeared on the Internet. With the creation of YouTube, professional and produced content does not play as well as posted raw footage, especially with content that is intended to affect the political landscape. Instead, raw, real, and exposing footage has and will continue to make the greatest impact. People do not want to watch online video content where candidates are seen on news programs or at campaign stops reciting scripted material on political issues and debates. They want to see the candidate, in online video content, as a human being whether in a positive and negative light. The online videos that voters are watching, and/or that are gaining media attention is content that shows candidates doing or saying something that is unscripted and real, not staged.

Therefore, for candidates running in 2008, a tracker often represents the first hire as their goal is to get the opponent on tape as much as possible in an effort to expose the opponent. Then, once the tracker records and identifies a gaffe, embarrassing old news reports and debate performance bloopers, the campaign is notified. In addition, although the tracker is able to identify gaffes, the campaign research departments also search through the video footage in an effort to find “the gems,” as media consultant Matt Mcmillan put it, or the content that will expose the opponent in a negative light. Then, YouTube aids the campaign in taking the content viral (Matt McMillan). Finally, in an effort to manage the content being posted, or responded to, by the campaign itself, the

opponent's campaign, constituents and the like monitor YouTube, Blogs and even Wikipedia with the use of RSS feeds, Google and searches.

Furthermore, according to Matt McMillan, president of BuzzMaker a new media and online consulting firm, top down control is not always possible. With the large number of bloggers and independent actors, embarrassing and harsh footage will get out despite efforts by campaigns to control such content. Before the Internet and especially with its increasing use in politics, a campaign could lobby the press to destroy an embarrassing story. However, with the Internet it's nearly impossible to kill an embarrassing story. According to McMillan, the best way to deal with an embarrassing story is to 1) go on the attack and change the subject and 2) admit the mistake. Mcmillan believes that the public is aware of the fact that politicians are people who make mistakes and so the best way to kill the story is to own up to the mistake and apologize for it. Senator Allen and his staff followed the first part of McMillan's advice and failed to execute the second and thus ignored "macaca" at their peril. They tried to change the subject and attack Webb. Allen did not own up to his mistake and therefore lacked a real response to the controversy. Furthermore, while Allen had an Internet team and blog advisor, Jon Henke, his campaign team, in the end, could only do so much before they turned the incident into a bigger disaster than just choosing to ignore it. Just like John Kerry should have immediately responded to the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth in 2004, George Allen should have acknowledged his mistake. Mcmillan said that he would have advised Senator Allen to make a "2-3 minute YouTube response video to the macaca phenomenon – making a heartfelt apology for his remarks and then moving on to his agenda."

YouTube offers politics a new medium in which candidates are able to provide constituents with information, disseminated via video, about the life of the candidate, issue platforms and campaign news. This new medium provides candidates and voters alike with the opportunity to address one another in a more intimate manner. In navigating this forum, voters hope to find a view of candidates that is rare, unscripted, and/or supplies a revealing moment in order to glimpse that less scripted view of the candidate. However, to date, many YouTube users, voters and critics of YouTube content feel that candidates are not using the medium to their advantage. Candidates do not use the forum to talk with constituents; instead they talk at them. In addition, YouTube, according to voters, should provide voters with elements (specific candidate video content) that they do not see in other places, or through a personal connection with the candidate. Furthermore, YouTube should easily allow voters to see a candidate's real personality. However, to date, the candidate is missing the benefits that YouTube provides as a new, distinguished and progressive forum – one that's both very human and intimate (Jarvis).

Therefore, if a voter comes across posted candidate content, and clicks, the candidate should talk to that voter and look at them in the eye. Instead, with a few exceptions, the candidate is looking sideways and not talking directly to the camera. Also, the language is often scripted. Unfortunately, in terms of taking advantage of this new medium, candidates don't yet understand the difference between video online and video on TV. Video online provides candidates with an opportunity to expose and display authentic content in a world of abundance. On TV, candidates are required to act formally, and, through their predetermined scripted material appear professional.

However, online video and sites such as YouTube, offer a forum that encourages real, unscripted, engaging, provoking and honest content. Therefore, in an effort to continue to truly take advantage of this medium, candidates and their campaign teams need to shift their focus, video development and posted content choices. Voters have and will continue to express the value in honest and intimate content from candidates in the cyber world. Thus, if a candidate continues to post scripted, common and unoriginal content, the power of the online video will lose its significance in the political world and in influencing candidates and election results.

Campaign 2008

The 2008 Presidential campaign erupted early and in full force with candidates Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Barack Obama, and John Edwards all announcing their candidacy via online video or video podcast. With the considerable changes and growth of the Internet and its technologies, we are seeing change in the dissemination of general information and more importantly, in this case, in political content, especially in an effort to reach a mass audience. According to *The Washington Post*, “the already-underway 2008 presidential campaign is likely to be remembered as the point where web video became central to the communications strategy of every serious presidential candidate” (Cilliza and Balz). Thus far, candidates have been utilizing web video to create virtual townhalls, conduct dialogue and answer voter questions, post significant speeches and, in the past but not to date, to expose their opponents in a public forum. In 2006, we saw the discovery and rise of web video as a primary campaign tool and candidates testing and utilizing the tool by creating dialogue and exposing their opponents. As we enter the 2008 campaign, we are seeing much of the same online video strategies and tools used to reach and inform constituents. However, the difference and challenge in this campaign will be how to expand the use of online video and even more so, how to use the video content to gather and rally voters around the candidates and/or various policy issues, to create an online community in which candidates are able to talk to people online.

John Edwards was the first democratic presidential nominee to announce his candidacy, which was staged in New Orleans’ Ninth Ward, an area that was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. The announcement was unique to 2008 as it signified and confirmed the changing direction, methods and role of communication in politics. Edwards

delivered his announcement speech outlining the themes of his campaign without scripted text, was brief in his presentation and answered questions from reporters. Furthermore, before the public announcement was made on TV and in New Orleans, he declared his candidacy with the use of a video cast that was posted on YouTube by his campaign staff. In order to draw attention to the posted video, the campaign bought advertising on a variety of political blogs (Cilliza and Balz). In addition, Edwards included an email sent to political bloggers and his supporters with information on his morning TV interviews. According to Mathew Gross, Chief Internet strategist for the Edwards campaign, their goal was for constituents to watch the announcement video to hear directly from Edwards what his campaign was about (Cilliza and Balz). Within the first 48 hours after the video was posted, approximately 50,000 voters had watched the video (Cilliza and Balz). Evidently, not only was his announcement unique and epitomized the changing nature of politics and the tool(s) used to conduct dialogue and inform a mass audience, but Edwards was the first to take the initiative in 2008.

Following Edwards' announcement, on January 16, 2007, Barack Obama announced his potential candidacy first by an uploaded video to his website declaring that he was formally launching an exploratory committee for a presidential run. In the video, Obama laid out his theme that in politics we have been unable to tackle big problems that require solutions as politics has become harsh and partisan. The video, done in flash, includes embed code and a web address so that voters are able to send and circulate the video easily. In addition, Obama's campaign sent an email to all his supporters with a link to the video of Obama describing why he was preparing to run for president. Then, on January 20, 2007, the same day that the next president of the United States will be

inaugurated two years from now, Clinton announced her candidacy saying she was not only starting a campaign but a conversation with voters. In posting the video on her website, though, the Clinton campaign failed to include embed code, a clear and direct web address, or an “email” button to circulate the video, proving less beneficial for not only the voters but the candidate as well. In addition, Senator Clinton informed voters that she would be holding a number of live online video conferences’ in which constituents could send questions prior to the broadcast in an effort to begin to foster dialogue.

In addition to posting their video announcements of their presidential candidacy online, each candidate developed their own extravagant website. Obama’s website looks like a hybrid version of myspace and thefacebook with a political spin. The site attempts to create an Obama style social network in which voters are asked to create a public profile (including a photo), establish a personal blog on the site, and an individual on-site network of friends and groups. Furthermore, Obama uses the site to conduct online chats and feature current podcasts. According to Mike Dorning of *The Washington Bureau*, Obama’s website is an “unabashed attempt to use the power of Web-based social networking to channel a surge of enthusiasm”(Dorning). Furthermore, Joe Rospars, the new media director of the Obama campaign, believes that the site is about “building those relationships and providing the glue that will bind people together”(Dorning).

Senator Clinton’s website features all the basic campaign features, including a candidate bio, news and top stories. However, her campaign team created a new and progressive online function – a series of live video web chats in which voters are encouraged to email questions and comments that they want answered or discussed by

the candidate. Furthermore, the site has what the campaign refers to as “Hilcasts” which are online video blogs where Senator Clinton appears discussing various topics in an attempt to create an online dialogue with her constituents. In addition, the site features a blog for voters in which they are able to discuss various political issues surrounding Senator Clinton. Also, the site, like all campaigns, allows individuals to contribute funds to the campaign, but is presented as “HilRaisers” where voters can volunteer to help the campaign fundraise or plan an event on behalf of the Clinton campaign. Senator Clinton’s site, like Obama’s, is unique in that it attempts to create an interactive space for voters to engage in dialogue and gather around the candidate.

All the candidates’ sites are similar, although each has their own “touch.” They all resemble one another as they are offering the voters information and resources, virtually, that they anticipate will rally voters, enhance the success of the campaign and potentially their election results. John Edwards’ website, like Obama’s and Clinton’s, has a social network feel with capabilities that allow and encourage individuals to create profiles and blogs on the site and participate in a real time chat. Edwards’ site is different, though, in that it features a multimedia section that includes video, audio, podcasts, downloads (banners for your email, badges to put on a website and wallpapers for your computer), and photos of the candidate. Also, the site displays upcoming events, news and links to other popular sites (social networks: thefacebook.com, myspace.com, essembly.com and media sites: youtube.com, flickr.com) that have groups and or information about John Edwards. According to online strategists, Edwards “has taken his presence a step further, fully exploiting the unknown possibilities of the social web” as the former senator is signed up in over 23 different social networks (Vargas, March 30). Furthermore,

according to the Washington Post, Edwards has the most dynamic Web presence- he's everywhere, doing everything" (Vargas, March 30).

Evidently, campaigns are taking advantage of every aspect, feature and resource that the web has to offer both on the websites and in communicating with constituents. As campaigns have been doing since 2000, each candidate develops their own website as a resource for voters to go and gather the latest information and news on the candidate. The candidate websites, though, have evolved since 2000 by presenting new features, such as online video and blogs. Yet the goal of the site remains the same – inform the voter and win their vote. While there is still emphasis on designing an effective and useful website, candidates are beginning to focus on other online resources as well. For example, many of the campaigns, with the changing media, have hired full time bloggers and videographers. With the evolution of technology and the increasing popularity and use of media sites such as social networks and online video hubs especially, campaigns are working to spread their candidate's message through all media and to reach a larger audience while keeping their audience engaged for the next year and a half.

YouChoose08

At the beginning of March 2006, Google created a new feature on YouTube entitled YouChoose 2008. This microsite described by YouTube as a “voter education initiative,” is a compellation of all the candidates YouTube profiles and official Web videos gathered on one page (Vargas, March 2). This is beneficial for individuals looking for political content on YouTube, particularly for the 2008 campaign, because all the content lives in one place. However, the site fails to include unofficial candidate content which is often what voters are more interested in seeing. Prior to this development, You Choose 08, each (presidential) candidate was developing its own channel on the video sharing and social networking site to house their content. In addition, on this new site, designed with a social networking feel to engage constituents, users are encouraged to watch the videos, rate the candidate videos, post comments and create video responses.

David Grossman of Politics TV believes that the site is not something new, complicated or original. According to YouTube’s director of content partnerships Jordan Offer, “the more videos the candidates put up, the more effort they put into each video, the more they’re going to get out of it” (Vargas, March 2). However, Adam Paul, an online strategist at ID Society Inc, would beg to differ as he warns candidates to remember that the “more content they put out there, the more content there is for people to change and try to control” (Vargas, March 2). Despite the warning, the presidential candidates continue to maintain their YouTube channels, and the You Choose ’08 site by uploading multiple clips from their own Web sites.

Grossman also feels that the average user on YouTube is not going on there for political content, they are going to watch Justin Timberlake. The most popular politically

affiliated video on YouTube, recently, was the hanging of Saddam Hussein. However, Grossman did not think that was for its political affiliation – “it was less for Saddam and more for a guy being hanged” and the shock factor associated with that type of content.

YouTube: Copyright Issues and Lawsuits

On March 14, 2007, Viacom, the entertainment corporation that owns MTV, VH1 and Comedy Central among other entities, filed a lawsuit against YouTube for “massive intentional copyright infringements” and \$1 billion in damages (Siklos). In October, Viacom met with YouTube asking that they remove a number of Viacom’s proprietary content that had been posted by YouTube users, for example, clips from shows such as *The Colbert Report* and *The Daily Show*. Viacom claimed that they wanted to broadcast their professionally created content on the web; however, they wanted the content to be distributed legally and in a way that still protected its featured artists, customers and audiences (Klaassen). As result, months later and with a billion dollar lawsuit, the incident marks the “biggest confrontation to date between a major media company and the hugely popular site which Google bought in November for \$1.76 billion”(Sutel).

Viacom demanded, in early February, that YouTube remove over 100,000 unauthorized video clips from the site. Moreover, since the request, Viacom has found over 50,000 additional authorized video clips posted on the site. Viacom is disturbed by the featured content as they feel they are especially at risk, as the group of networks they own appeal to a younger audience, many of whom are big Internet users. American technology research analyst Rob Sanderson believes “Viacom filed the lawsuit to pressure Google into setting clear ground rules and fees for the usage of copyrighted content”(Sutel).

The lawsuit has been long awaited as a large percentage of the footage featured on YouTube and its huge success is due to its easy access to copyrighted clips posted by the site’s users. However, YouTube says that it services all copyright holders and thus

removes programming immediately following its notification. However, YouTube is protected under the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which grants online service providers protection from copyright lawsuits as long as they cooperate with requests filed by content owners to remove unauthorized material (Sutel).

As YouTube has been working to resolve issues with Viacom, on March 22, 2007, two of the most powerful entertainment corporations joined forces with three of the most powerful Internet companies to create an online video site like YouTube. This new development will avoid the YouTube/Viacom conflict since the companies will feature their own approved content and thus avoid facing copyright infringements. The site will feature TV and movie clips and music video, all of which has been posted and often removed from YouTube because it is unauthorized. Furthermore, the site will have a wide array of videos that will be free but many, particularly movies and TV shows, will be available for a fee. With this new development, YouTube will be forced to consider an alternative way in which to keep traffic on its site even as it is obligated to pull copyrighted content as it is being posted. Therefore YouTube must take advantage of the fact that while their site features video, music, TV and original video content, they have created an environment much like a social network. Individuals are gathering around the featured content but not sitting at their computer to watch hours of TV and video, “people go on YouTube to be seen and to see other people and to be a part of this community environment” (Diaz). As a result, YouTube is further obligated to embrace and promote this unique aspect.

While YouTube has been the engine of choice, as it was one of the first sites to allow individuals to upload video content for free with very few restrictions and worked

to create a social network environment, in the past year there have been a number of sites constructed to disseminate video content as well. However, of these sites, which are many, this study evaluated those that are unique in that they solely broadcast political online video content. This includes Capitol Hill Broadcasting Network, which was founded by Lobbyist David Livingston in an effort to create the first video sharing and social networking site devoted exclusively to politics. Capital Hill Broadcasting Network (CHBN), now in partnership with The Hill Newspaper, created this new political medium as a communication tool for political candidates, elected officials, advocacy groups and government to share and disseminate information for those engaged in or closely monitor politics. This site is unique in that Reality Digital, the company and industry leader in developing media sharing sites and social community tools for business, helped to create a site that allowed CHBN to manage and control the featured content in an effort to avoid copyright infringements. Furthermore, along with the site's mission to build a non-partisan platform solely for political media, CHBN has the administrative control, on the site, to monitor and screen all content. For users, the site allows one to upload, share, email, vote and comment on each other's video content, similar to YouTube, except strictly for political content. Thus members are able to upload video features to inform, educate, advocate or seek to influence other users. Furthermore, according to the site, the "mission is to promote the First Amendment and broadcast Democracy throughout Capitol Hill and around the world" (www.chbn.com).

Case Study: ParkRidge47 aka Paul De Vellis

On March 30, 2007, YouTube again demonstrated the power it holds as it featured a video spoof of the famous 1984 Superbowl Apple ad. The video, entitled “Vote Different” posted a user by the name of “ParkRidge47,” who described the video as a “ mash-up of the famous Apple 1984 Super Bowl ad” in which a Barack Obama supporter is seen throwing a sledgehammer into a video image of Senator Clinton who is depicted as a “totalitarian monster in the mold of George Orwell’s ‘Big Brother’” (Crouch). Senator Clinton, seen on the large TV screen, says she wants to have a “conversation” which is her tagline; thus depicting ironically (and cleverly) given the Big Brother type image. The end of the spot features the sentence, “On January 14th, the Democratic primary will begin. And you’ll see why 2008 won’t be like ‘1984,’” which is then followed by an image of the old Macintosh apple in the shape of an “O” for Obama and barackobama.com (ParkRidge47, Online Posting).

The individual who posted this video chose to post anonymously and claimed that the only way he would admit to creating the video, which he put together on his personal apple computer, was if someone approached him and asked. He said that he posted the video anonymously because not only does he work in politics (for Blue State Digital) an internet company that provides technology to Presidential campaigns, and didn’t want his employers to know, but also because he was protecting the American tradition of anonymous speech. When Arianna Huffington, of thehuffingtonpost.com approached Paul De Vellis, the creator of this political spoof, he accepted responsibility and posted an announcement on her blog site.

This video was successful in generating attention by constituents (and bloggers), the candidates and the media, as it epitomized the essence and unique aspects of user generated content. It is fluid, authentic, and it went viral, spreading like wildfire through the current political landscape. De Vellis believes that the “game has changed” in that “politics is now in the hands of ordinary citizens, the old political machine is over” (De Vellis). Furthermore he says that “2008 will be for video and media on the Internet what 2004 was for fundraising” (De Vellis, PoliticsTV). De Vellis explains that he made the ad because he “wanted to express [his] feelings about the Democratic primary, and because [he] wanted to show that an individual citizen can affect the process.” He also argues that the point of the ad is that “Obama represents a new kind of politics, and that Senator Clinton’s ‘conversation’ is disingenuous” (De Vellis).

The “Vote Different” ad is the first video of the 2008 Presidential campaign to generate a significant amount of attention by constituents and the media. The campaign has just begun and already candidates have to respond and deal with both spoofs and negative video features. With this early appearance of negative content in cyberspace, and the high level of media attention it has received, both YouTube and PoliticsTV decided to develop something unique to the current online video world. The two different companies created separate videos in which they interviewed De Vellis, asking what, when, how and why he created the ad. De Vellis’ video interview with PoliticsTV solely features De Vellis answering pre-arranged questions yet the video doesn’t feature anyone asking him the questions, so that De Vellis seems to be delivering a speech. However, De Vellis’ interview with YouTube, an idea that is both new and original for the YouTube site, actually shows Steve Grove, YouTube’s news and politics editor, asking multiple

questions and De Vellis responding. Both videos are posted on YouTube, various other video sites, and on blogs.

As we continue through the 2008 Presidential campaign, we will continue to see more and more of these types of videos, both user generated and video dialogues. In this new technology era, voters will spend more time generating unique content in an effort to express their beliefs and opinions about the candidates and the political process.

However, in terms of the videos actually influencing votes, and forcing people to “vote different,” it’s not clear at this point the videos will actually cause anyone to change their views on the candidate(s) they currently feel is best suited to be the next President of the United States (Kotecki). However, video such as these will allow, and could inevitably determine, long term, which candidate and campaign will have a significant advantage over the others. This will be determined by the candidate and his or her campaign’s response to specific videos and the way in which they learn to incorporate voter generated content onto their personal site, networks, and YouTube, while also defending themselves against future user generated video attacks such as the “Vote Different” ad (Rasiej and Flatow).

Case Study: PoliticsTV

After the 2004 election, Dan Mannatt started PoliticsTV. He began this project by gathering all his friends, who were Democrats and progressives (and also disappointed because of the election results of 2004) to develop a show called DemsTV. The goal of the show was to discuss politics in a roundtable in an attempt to see who could create the best political jokes. Before the development of YouTube and the rising popularity of web video, the group decided to develop something progressive, useful and innovative when they established PoliticsTV.com. However, according to David Grossman, producer at PoliticsTV, PoliticsTV came out almost too early, especially since the company and individuals trying to watch the video were running into computer related issues (for example, plug-ins, windows media player vs. quicktime issues). Despite complications, PoliticsTV continued to post video content and saw its first project materialize in 2006. Dan Mannatt was at the location where Al Gore delivered a speech in which he blasted George Bush. In catching this footage on video, Dan posted the historic speech online. A few hours later, a quarter of a million people had watched the video, none of whom had any connections to the new PoliticsTV. This video, that PoliticsTV deemed important and thus decided to post online, forced local TV networks to address Al Gore's speech, its content and its potential effects.

PoliticsTV.com describes itself as a "free form media studio" whose goal is to provide original coverage where coverage is lacking while disseminating information in an effort to force candidates and voters to rethink how they cover and view issues, campaigns and individuals (Grossman). In working towards these goals, PoliticsTV develops a variety of original programming, from newsmaker interviews, candidate and

political figure speeches (ie: John Kerry's "I'm not running for President ever again" speech), event coverage (ie: moveon.org events) and blogger video footage (ie: developing video blogs of bloggers from the recent Libby trial) (Grossman). It is with this new video blogging feature provided by PoliticsTV that the landscape for their company has started to shift (Grossman). PoliticsTV had used this new video blog feature to cover the Libby Trial closely, going to the courtroom every day in order to provide video coverage on the net. In attending the trial, PoliticsTV came into contact with individuals who were also attending the trial and blogging about it on the net. As a result, PoliticsTV linked up with the bloggers asking if they would be interested in creating daily video updates, putting a voice and face to their blogs, something no one had done before on YouTube— creating video content of bloggers who wanted to give a face and a voice to their observations and opinions on a current political event (Grossman). This video footage of the bloggers discussing the course of events that occurred in court was posted on the PoliticsTV.com and on YouTube, and has become one of the most popular viewed videos on the site since. On YouTube, there are approximately twenty videos posted by PoliticsTV of the Libby Trial Vlogs (or video blogs). The videos posted have generated a range of page views (between 5,000 and 17,000 hits) depending on the significance of the content. For example, the Vlog entitled "The Libby Trial – The Defense Rests," was posted on February 14, 2007 and features Jane Hamsher, Jeralyn Memitt, and Marcy Wheeler. This video, approximately a month and a half later (March 30, 2007) had generated 17, 791 page views and shows the three women discussing their thoughts on the verdict. However, a majority of the other Vlogs posted by PoliticsTV on YouTube about the Libby trail, have only generated about 5,000 page views.

Blogging provides the Internet generation and individuals interested in debating, discussing and holding conversations, in this case about politics, with a forum for dialogue. However, PoliticsTV pushed the blogging resource and its popularity, combined with the intimacy of video content, steps further by created a video weblog. Political coverage has shifted with the help of PoliticsTV from computer bloggers to everyday individuals, who appeared in live video, covering a trial first hand. Random citizens, voters and constituents like any other, were identified at the Libby Trial and provided the best coverage to the general public of the first big trial of a member of the Bush administration. According to Grossman, the bloggers were excited by the idea as it “gave them an intimate connection with their audience. They felt others could feel and understand them, [the bloggers], in a way text could not. Plus, like they say, a picture is worth a thousand words.” Furthermore, Grossman and everyone at PoliticsTV believes that this group of bloggers, just a couple of dedicated individuals, could provide more superior news coverage than the actual mainstream news broadcast.

When YouTube was created it was developed as one standard form for video online. The prediction was that with a rising popularity and desire for a service provider with such unique features, everyone else would follow in terms of delivering content online. According to Grossman, YouTube is the “AOL of 1999.” As a result, for PoliticsTV, their strategy for disseminating video and in choosing where to post video varies from week to week. However, they begin by determining the audience for their footage. They compile a list of all video sharing sites and chose which site to upload their content to, based on the featured video. For example, videos that tend to have longer form are not posted on YouTube but in other places such as on the new video-sharing site

Capital Hill Broadcasting Network. However, often, regardless of the type of content, PoliticsTv posts to multiple places so they are able to hit multiple different audiences. Overall, they aim to post content quickly and take their new endeavors one week at a time (Grossman).

In terms of their target audience, the average PoliticsTv visitor watches their posted content via other video sites (Grossman). They alone do not have a built in audience and therefore do not data crunch in an effort to determine how many page views they are receiving and the demographic they are targeting. Instead, employees at PoliticsTV go to the capital, or wherever the location may be to cover the story and record video, then upload the content to various sites, including their own, and then inform blogs who promote the posted video. Evidently, they work in tandem with others to notify the public and disseminate their video broadcasts. In doing so, Grossman says that while PoliticsTV is interested in the medium overall, they also strive to help shape the current (political) debates. Furthermore, in terms of PoliticsTV and the future of Internet politics, Grossman believes that the future of politics online depends on the company and media that succeeds in discovering how to improve the already powerful tools that exist today to influence campaigns and elections results.

The most pressing issue surrounding YouTube itself, especially in the press, involve copyright issues. For example in doing work a content analysis, of the most popular sites among Presidential candidates, I followed video footage posted by a user named “votehillary” who saturated the site with Hillary Clinton content. The user

appeared to be a member of the campaign, whose job it was to do this¹. The next week, though, when I went to look at the content the user had posted and see if there was anything new, the user, when I clicked on the name, has been suspended. All campaigns, and users in general on YouTube, politically affiliated or not, are posting copyrighted content on YouTube, except in this instance “votehillary” was being singled out with copyright infringements. In mid-February, YouTube decided to take an initiative to monitor and take down posted copyrighted content as many networks began to complain and threaten to sue Google, including but not limited to Viacom.

After this big push, PoliticsTV, as a user on YouTube, was also suspended for posting copyrighted content on the site. Google and YouTube did not send any notification to PoliticsTV informing them of the suspension; instead they learned of it while attempting to post the content. Grossman explains that he was in Springfield, Illinois when he discovered that their account was suspended. As he went to post some video footage he had taken at Barack Obama’s candidacy announcement, he found out that the account was down. Grossman did not think YouTube was targeting them directly in taking down their posted content. He explained that it was an automatic thing done by YouTube employees searching for copyright infringements. As a result, Grossman and other employees at PoliticsTV contacted a number of individuals at YouTube in an effort to reinstate their account. After hours of discussion and connecting with the right people, they were able to reestablish the use of their account. However, Grossman believes the

¹ The user “votehillary” is assumed to be a member of the campaign because the user name expresses obvious support for the candidate and the campaign, which is what many of the YouTube campaign user names tend to be. Also, the user posted content on YouTube featuring Senator Clinton in an informative context - news clips, at press conferences and TV interviews, which would lead to the assumption that they are affiliated with the campaign.

average users would not take the time, as he did, to reinstate their account. After the suspension, PoliticsTV has changed the way in which they view YouTube – “now we upload footage to multiple sites so if YouTube shuts down, you can easily change links around and your footage doesn’t get lost in the Internet world” says Grossman.

Introduction: Content Analysis

(For Data and Reference See Charts and Graphs in Appendix)

The content analysis conducted for this study examined the featured videos from the 2004 Presidential Election, the 2006 Congressional election and the upcoming 2008 elections. The report will begin with the upcoming 2008 election by analyzing the featured content posted for the top three Democratic candidates - John Edwards, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. In monitoring the overall content, the study will identify the top five videos posted per week on YouTube for those top three Democratic candidates. Then, in determining the top five videos per candidate per week between February 1, 2007 and March 30, 2007, this study identifies the top five videos recorded each week, how that did or did not change over time and the top five videos overall, per candidate. The top videos were identified by searching through the content results for each candidate to determine which, of the videos posted, generated the most page views, as those were the videos deemed most popular. Furthermore, at the conclusion of this content analysis, there will be a video content analysis from the videos posted during the 2004 Presidential election, before YouTube had even been launched, and during the 2006 Congressional election, the first time we see video play a major role in an election.

Republican Factor²

In conducting a content analysis for the upcoming 2008 Presidential election, this study solely explores the top three Democratic candidates, John Edwards, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. The study does not include those Republican candidates running because, at the time the analysis began, there was more substantial and active use of the YouTube video site by the Democratic candidates. For example, on February 14, 2007 when the analysis began, there were 264 videos posted under John McCain yet there were 1,141 posted under Hillary Clinton, 578 for Barack Obama and 702 for Edwards. However, in an effort to not yet rule out the republican candidate(s), chosen for the analysis to begin with since at the time McCain was the candidate that had received the most attention for his announcement, on February 22, 2007, during the analysis, the content posted under McCain was re-evaluated. At this time, the number of postings under McCain had only increased by 23 videos to a total of 287 video results, whereas Hillary Clinton now had 1270, Barack Obama had 994 and John Edwards had 841. Evidently, the Democratic candidates were generating more YouTube content than the Republicans and, as a result, the content analysis focuses specifically on the three key Democratic presidential candidates.

² See Appendix for further explanation.

Methods for Content Analysis

In seeking to determine how candidates and constituents are using YouTube as a political forum to disseminate online video, and how, or if, the content being posted has shifted between the 2006 congressional election and the upcoming 2008 presidential election, a content analysis was conducted. The content analysis was conducted over the first several weeks of the 2008 presidential campaign, beginning on February 14, 2007 and completed on April 1, 2007. I chose to follow the content being posted for the 2008 Presidential candidates, under the search results, “Hillary Clinton,” “Barack Obama,” and “John Edwards,” the videos being uploaded for, and from, the 2006 campaign under the search results “Conrad Burns,” “Jon Tester,” “George Allen” and “Jim Webb” and then for content subsequently posted on YouTube for, and from, the 2004 Presidential election, before YouTube had even been created, under the search results, “George Bush,” “George Bush, campaign 2004,” “John Kerry, and “John Kerry, campaign 2004.”

Each week I logged into YouTube and ran the above searches in an effort to determine how many search results there were per candidate, what type of video content was being posted, what the content featured, how many views the videos received, when the video was posted, who posted it, and how many subscribers the posted user had on their “channel,” or profile. I also sought to determine if any new video content had been uploaded to the site over the week, under the candidates search results. If no new content had been posted, or if the new content posted was not generating a high level of viewership, I worked to identify what content remained from the previous weeks, and what level of page views it was still generating from the YouTube users. For the candidates that ran in the 2004 Presidential election and the 2006 Congressional Election, I selected the top

two video posts each week that were generating the highest number of page views. However, for the upcoming 2008 Presidential election, as the campaigns are acting in full force, I decided I would select the top five videos, with the highest number of page views, per candidate per week. Also, I decided I would determine what video on the entire YouTube site was generating the most page views, as a basis for comparison of popular political content and overall content on the site.

John Edwards

This analysis will be conducted in the order of which each candidate announced his or her presidential candidacy. As a result, we will begin the study with John Edwards. During the analysis process, a majority of the videos that were featured each week, as the top five videos among the plethora of video results under John Edwards remained relatively consistent over the two-month period. Generally, the video content featured in searching for Edwards on YouTube range from satire and parodies to news clips and speeches. A majority of the content posted include interviews, such as appearances on MSNBC and “The Situation Room,” speeches, content from the 2004 presidential campaign, his presidential candidacy announcement, interviews with bloggers, footages from a number of different rallies and coverage of a speech given at the Democratic National Convention in the Winter of 2007

Within this array of content, two of the videos featured that have been generating a significantly large number of page views, were posted by the John Edwards campaign. In addition, two of the five videos that ranked among the top five during the week of February 22, 2007, were satirical videos that commented on John Edwards’ campaign bloggers. The first video, which generated 19, 551 views when it was featured in the top five videos on February 22, 2007, was posted by blogger, columnist and political commentator Michelle Malkin entitled, “Vent Hot Air Theater presents Amanda Marcotte,³” in which Malkin is seen performing a dramatic reading from Amanda Marcotte, lead blogger for Democratic candidate John Edwards’ campaign. Malkin sits in front of the camera reciting some commentary, in different tones of voice, posted by

³ “Vent Hot Air Theater Presents Amanda Marcotte.” February 6, 2007. Michellemalkin. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcNbv-7sNLw>

blogger Amanda Marcotte on various political and newsworthy issues, such as the Duke Lacrosse rap case and Marcotte's first official post as "blogmaster" for the John Edwards campaign.

The second video, which ranked among the top five for five consecutive weeks, with 83,314 views on February 22, 2007 (the first week it was featured in the top five) and 86,101 on March 19, 2007 (the last week it ranked among the top five), after being posted on February 22, 2007, is a clip from Fox News. The video, "O'Reilly- John Edwards Hires Fanatical Extremist Staffers"⁴ features an interview with blogger Amanda Marcotte, although different from the above video, as the above video features Michelle Malkin mocking Ms. Marcotte, whereas this video is a news feature with the former Edwards blogger. In early February, Edwards had an issue with two of the bloggers on his campaign staff that were posting content that offended the candidate. They were composing responses that were not representative of how Edwards would talk to people or how he expects members of his team to conduct conversation with his constituents. Edwards said, "Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but that kind of intolerant language will not be permitted from anyone on my campaign, whether it's intended as satire, humor or anything else." In addition, he said that he believed that it was never Marcotte and McEwan's intention to malign anyone's faith"(Foxnews.com). This story generated a great deal of media attention as the bloggers on the Edwards campaign team were making insulting religious comments, specifically anti-Catholic remarks. As a result, people flocked to YouTube, after reading and hearing about the story in the media, in order to review the interview that was posted from the O'Reilly show. Subsequently, the video

⁴ "O'Reilly – John Edwards Hires Fanatical Extremist Staffers." February 12, 2007. boobtuber46. unavailable (removed from the site).

clip was removed from YouTube for copyright infringements.

Evidently there is a wide range of content on YouTube featuring John Edwards that has generated a great deal of attention, although campaign posted content represents the largest volume of page views. The John Edwards campaign posted a number of videos on YouTube featuring the candidate in different scenarios. However, one of the top viewed videos, for five consecutive weeks, is a feature entitled “Realizing the Dream⁵.” This video received 24,536 page views on March 5, 2007 and increased to 25,532 hits by March 30, 2007. The video is an excerpt from a speech Edwards delivered about “being the change” and the fact that Edwards believes it is “betrayal” if we do not speak out against the escalation of the war in Iraq, the gap between the rich and the poor, and people having to fight every day for their lives. In addition, he admits to once supporting the war in Iraq but now proposes that we leave Iraq, and speaks out to demand change, since silence, he says, is betrayal. Edwards delivers this speech at the Riverside Church in New York City, the same Church that Dr. Martin Luther King delivered a sermon about the revolution of values a year before he died. The video was posted by the campaign, received a large number of views, and featured Edwards discussing issues about the war and the desire and hope for change in America. As many Democrats see the war as something negative and a circumstance they hope to resolve in the upcoming election, seeing Edwards deliver a speech in which he admits to having supported the war but now wants to fight to remove troops and create change in the United States, is content that not only makes him more “human” as he admits to having made a mistake in supporting the war. It is also a political issue that many Americans have deemed

⁵ “Realizing the Dream.” January 15, 2007. JohnEdwards.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fq1iSit7K60>

important and agree with Edwards in wanting to remove troops from Iraq. In addition, now that Edwards is reconciling his past stance (pro-war), it is hoped that people would be able to relate to his opinion and thoughts on the issues on a more personal level. Furthermore, the speech also allows Edwards to deliver something formal and scripted but, from a viewer's perspective, on YouTube, it becomes a feature that shows character, personality and Edwards' active attempt to generate change without seeming to just placate the voters.

Of the content featured under John Edwards, the top five videos, cumulative over the two-month period, expose Edwards within a variety of circumstances and affairs. The top five videos range from campaign posted content, parody, news features and abusive remarks on behalf of Edwards opponents. The number one video (the video which received the most page views over the analysis process) is entitled "Ann Coulter Uses Slurs to Describe John Edwards⁶." The video, posted on March 2, 2007 by a YouTube user known as Fniazi, received 656, 616 page views in its first three days on YouTube. The video features Ann Coulter concluding a speech and, in her final remarks describes John Edwards in derogatory terms, referring to the 2008 presidential candidate as a "faggot" at CPAC. This video received a significant number of hits as individuals interested in politics, especially those frequently using the popular video sharing site, like to keep up with these kinds of political episodes, particularly when the candidates become victims of insulting remarks. Although this video generated a large number of hits in only three days, and grew to 763, 098 views by March 19, 2007, by March 25, 2007 this video feature, posted by the user Fniazi, was removed from the YouTube site.

⁶ "Ann Coulter Uses Slurs to Describe John Edwards." March 2, 2007. Fniazi. Unavailable.

However, on March 25, 2007, a new user, referred to as “Thesilencedpatriot⁷,” posted the same video clip of Ann Coulter at CPAC after the previous clip was removed. Still, despite the fact that the same video was reposted, only by a different user, it did not generate nearly as many page views as the previously posted video. It is likely to not have generated the same, or higher number of views, as many had already seen the video clip in the previous weeks either on the news or on YouTube, as it was no longer an active, news-generating episode.

The last video to make the list of the top five videos over time, and ranked at number five with 118, 646 views, was also posted by the Edwards campaign and is entitled “Tomorrow Begins Today.” This is important to note because the candidate’s relatively informal speech (and very YouTube-esque demeanor in that it seems relative unscripted and more personable) has received a large number of pages views and was posted by the campaign. Unlike any other candidate, Edwards is unique in that apparently what the campaign believes the voters want to see, in terms of video content, has tended to be on target, especially as this speech video is one of his top five cumulative videos under the name John Edwards. In addition to seeking to determine what the constituents want to see, the campaign posted this video as they felt it was an important feature that helped portray Edwards in a new and positive light. Also, the video posted by the campaign provides voters with information on Edwards’ perspective on issues that the campaign believes are important to the American people, such as the War in Iraq. In

⁷ “Ann Coulter Calls John Edwards ‘Faggot’ at CPAC.” March 2, 2007. Thesilencedpatriot. Unavailable.

“Tomorrow Begins Today”⁸,” Edwards is seen announcing that he is in New Orleans in the Upper 9th Ward working with kids to restore a home devastated by the hurricane and that tomorrow, from that same place, he plans to announce his presidential candidacy in the 2008 election. In addition, he discusses issues such as the War in Iraq, poverty, and health care and asks that we, as Americans, begin to take action, not wait around for others to foster change. Evidently, as the video received a large number of page views, constituents have deemed the footage significant both in hearing what Edwards has to say and in getting to know the candidate in a different setting.

The number two-ranked video over time featuring John Edwards was posted on November 8, 2006, before John Edwards even announced his presidential candidacy. The video, “Feeling Pretty”⁹,” is a 2 minute comedic satire that features Edwards combing and fixing his hair, with the assistance of a campaign aid, to the tune of “I feel pretty, oh so pretty” before an interview. On February 14, 2007, when this study began, the video had 74, 727 views, and on March 30, 2007, the last day of this analysis, the video views increased by an additional 191, 657 views to a cumulative number of views at 266, 384. In less than sixty days, the video’s hits had grown by almost 200,000 page views. The video not only generated a lot of attention on YouTube, as one of two of the consistently top viewed video features under John Edwards during the past two months, but has also received media attention. On February 26, 2007, John Edwards appeared on WNYC Radio’s Brian Lehrer Show where the discussion topic was the impact of YouTube on campaigning and democracy. During the show, Lehrer describes that individuals who

⁸ “Tomorrow Begins Today.” December 27, 2006. JohnEdwards.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1etlZaf6zUw>.

⁹ “Feeling Pretty.” November 8, 2006. RogerRmjjet.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1etlZaf6zUw>.

post political content, particularly on sites like YouTube, provide an arena that allow voters to foster attacks on candidates that are not bedded and are “low blows.” Lehrer continues in saying that a YouTube user currently has a video posted on YouTube of Edwards fixing his hair. As a result Lehrer asks Edwards if he believes that demeans his candidacy. Edwards says in response that, “they are entitled to do that. What’s wrong with that? I’m running for president of the United States. My fans can put up video of me doing something that’s extraordinary, you know walking through Uganda villages and people who are not my fans or just want to poke fun...listen it comes with the territory...I’m human like anybody else.” Evidently, based on the number of views and the interview with Edwards, the content posted is not only something that constituents use to understand and get a sense of who the candidate is, on a more informal level, but the candidates are now beginning to use the site as a means to understand the perspectives of their supporters and their adversaries, potentially revealing what additional content to post and who to target in terms of their voters.

As might be anticipated in relation to viewer interest, John and Elizabeth Edwards appeared on *60 Minutes* with Katie Couric¹⁰ to discuss their joint decision to support John, as he remains a candidate in the 2008 presidential election, despite the news of Elizabeth’s reoccurrence of cancer. Also, the interviews addressed the state of Elizabeth’s cancer to date, and John Edwards’ ability to continue in the race and potentially lead this country while caring for his wife and supporting her through the treatment process. The video, posted on March 26, 2007, by a YouTube user named TheBlueStateDOTcom, received 180, 522 views in four days. However, after being posted for four days,

¹⁰ “John and Elizabeth Edwards.” March 26, 2007. TheBlueStateDOTcom. URL Unavailable.

YouTube removed the video due to copyright claims by CBS Broadcasting. In the interview, which was held days after the Edwards' held a press conference to announce Elizabeth's cancer, Couric asks the Edwards' difficult questions that force them to become defensive about their situation. The summary of this video, written by the user who posted the content, describes Katie Couric as "second guessing" the Edwards family (TheBlueStateDOTcom).

As a result, John and Elizabeth are forced to answer difficult and challenging questions not only about her health, but their family, goals, priorities and choices and especially their decision to stay on the campaign. For this reason, the video generated a significant number of views in a short period of time. The video displays the candidate during an interview, in a formal setting, but in a more personal state as he is forced to grapple with and answer questions, in front of millions of viewers, about personal and difficult issues. Often times, we never see or hear politicians, or individuals in that type of setting where they have to face difficult situations and decisions, specifically health problems in public. Here though, we see John and Elizabeth Edwards, days after they have discovered the re-occurrence of Elizabeth's cancer, having to explain their choices, thoughts and emotions to the American people. This video humanizes Edwards, makes him appear less "super-human," impersonal and unaffected, and more genuine, emotional and devoted, as an individual who is just like everyone else, facing a battle that many Americans understand and also have to confront.

Barack Obama

Although a significant amount of new content was being posted each week, a majority of Barack Obama's YouTube video content, much like John Edwards, remained relatively consistent. The content was consistent in that the videos posted, which generated the most page views per week, continued to hold their top ranking as they consistently received an increasing number of hits per week. Obama's featured content included news clips, interviews, footage, biography video and campaign related content. The videos consisted of features and appearances on CNN, "The Situation Room," and MSNBC, his keynote address at the Democratic National Convention, ads, rally footage, CNN and Fox news content, speeches, Obama's presidential candidacy announcement, his "plans for 2008," and a short biography video. Of the candidates evaluated during this content analysis Obama has the least amount of negative, comedic, and satirical content posted by YouTube users, and his campaign. During the study two videos featuring Senator Obama - a presidential ad and CNN news clips - received a large number of views and therefore became part of the top five. However, over time, the videos were not able to compete, in terms of popularity and user interest in relation to the other videos posted and thus eventually fell off the radar and out of the top five. These two videos are likely to have dissipated as both are formal campaign related content that do not offer users an opportunity to get to know Obama in a new and more personal light, which is what YouTube users are begging for within the online video-scape. The one-minute campaign ad¹¹, generated 109,234 views by February 14, 2007, during the first week on the content analysis, and 115,263 views by March 5, 2007, the last week it ranked among

¹¹ "First Obama Presidential Ad." February 20, 2007. oo7jeep.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPy7RnHwvmA>

the top five videos. The ad, posted on December 14, 2006, was created by draftobama.org and is the first ad posted for Obama for president. The video delivers Obama's message as "we believe," followed by a list of goals, aspirations and desires that Senator Obama wants to change, ensure and accomplish if he were to become President. The end of the ad features a slogan "Believe Again" and the website for the creator(s) of the feature (www.draftobama.org). This video was one of the first videos posted around Barack Obama and remained within the top five for the first three weeks of the content analysis before it was surpassed in numbers of viewers by other features. In the three-week period, though, when it did generate significant numbers, it went from 109, 234 views on February 14, 2007 to 115, 263 views on March 5, 2007. With a candidate like Obama, relatively new to the political scene, and not as experienced or well known as his Democratic opponents (John Edwards and Hillary Clinton) at the time of his announcement, the video was of interest to constituents using YouTube because it provided users with an opportunity to get to know Obama, in the cyber world, and find out what he stands for and what his initial goals are in a formal campaign-driven style of content.

The other video, entitled "CNN links Barack Obama to axis of evil¹²," was aired on CNN as the video appears as if it could be mistaken, shockingly, in that a respected news station would feature tabloid style clips, for Tabloid TV content. The video features Obama dressed in a suit coat without a tie to which the creator of the clip claims that this attire links Barack Obama to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The video claims that the outfit reminds people who see the

¹² "CNN Links Barack Obama to Axis of Evil." December 13, 2006. MIKEHUNTdotTV. Unavailable.

attire to associate Obama with a charter member of the axis of evil and thus puts Obama in the same league as the Iranian President. This video was posted by CNN staffers Jeff Greenfield and Wolf Blitzer on December 13, 2006 and generated 107, 062 views.

However, to date, the video, like many others posted on YouTube, have been removed as a result of copyright claims. Regardless, though, when the video was featured on the site, people flocked to it, as it provided negative content, exposed the candidate in a way in which others probably had not thought of (even though the statement is untrue) and, after, discussion of Obama's middle name being "Hussein" and growing up in the Middle East, this video just added to the fabricated and false story stirring in the media.

The five top videos that were posted under Barack Obama (which did not include the two posts described above) offer a wide variety of content and style, ranging from satire and humor to attacks, speeches and dialogue between Obama and his constituents. The top rated video, a feature from Joel Surnow's "The Half Hour News Hour"¹³, the right wing John Stewart counterpart, generated 518,946 page views since it was posted on February 13, 2007. The video that generated the highest number of page views is a comedic feature that mocks the excitement, popularity, interest and attention around the Senator's candidacy. This video ranked in the top five since it was posted in mid February and for five consecutive weeks that followed during which the content analysis was conducted. The video is a clip from Joel Surnow's news show that airs on Fox News Channel. The clip begins with a faux news report – two news anchors are sitting at a desk, discussing news and gossip recently released on Senator Obama. They discuss the fact that Obama admitted to using cocaine as a teenager, that his Democratic approval

¹³ "Joel Surnow's "The Half Hour News Hour." February 13, 2007. dk7dr7.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjIfaMwIFxU>.

rating has plummeted to 99%, the fact that he was endorsed by former Washington D.C Mayor Marion Barry, and that only 8% of Americans are bothered by Senator Obama's middle name, "Hussein". After the short faux news clip, the sequence shifts to a faux infomercial about a new magazine entitled "BO," which features and celebrates the latest cutting edge information and profiles on Senator Obama. The entire clip is comedic and satirical and makes a mockery of the Senator and all the built up gossip and discussion around the Senator. The magazine portion of the video clip not only pokes fun at the Senator but also at Oprah's Magazine "O" which is what Obama's faux-magazine is crafted after. This video has clearly generated a significant number of views because it features gossip being discussed about the candidate, it is humorous, light hearted, entertaining, and requires very little thought or attention when viewing. In this instance, it does not require knowledge of the candidate, or political issues or politics. And anyone can watch it, whether at full attention or while multi-tasking.

The second top rated video feature, entitled "Fox Attacks Obama"¹⁴ was created by a YouTube user named bravenewfilms who is associated with a campaign that is working to stop Fox, as they have deemed the network a biased news outlet that needs to be challenged. The video feature is a montage of news clips that have aired on Fox news and feature stories, rumors, discussions and debates about the candidate. The clips featured in the montage cover the following issues that have been discussed in the media surrounding Senator Obama: Barack Obama in a bathing suit, Barack Obama is considered a "big deal" as a candidate because he is "black" yet no one can point to something he has done for the black community, his middle name is "Hussein", his father

¹⁴ "Fox Attacks Obama." February 21, 2007. bravenewfilms.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouKJixL--ms>.

is Muslim, he attended a Muslim school referred to as a “Madrassa,” he is a cigarette smoker, and as a result, Fox News wonders, “what do we really know about Barack Obama? And, what else do we not know about Barack Obama?”

This video clip displays the array of negative content and press that Senator Obama is receiving as a result of various rumors and deceptive statements that have been circulating in the press. However, the purposes of this video is not designed to destroy Obama and feature the candidate in a negative light but instead, the intention of the user who posted the video is to show the unfair and biased coverage that Fox News features on their TV channel. This video was posted on February 21st and had received over 400,000 page views over the time period of this study (in less than two and half months). The video became popular because, it not only compiled the kind of negative press coverage, to date that Senator Obama had received in the first months of his 2008 presidential campaign but, it also served as an attack against Fox News which many Democratic constituents tend to resent for its (Fox News) conservative right wing political perspectives and commentary.

“Barack Obama Monday Night Football¹⁵” is the third top rated video featuring Senator Obama. The video was posted on December 11, 2006, and ranked in the top five for the entire six-week period from mid February to the end of March, when the analysis was conducted. Over the six-week period, the video generated 22, 091 more page views (209,143 on February 14, 2007 to 228, 234 on March 30, 2007). The video, posted by a YouTube user, has received a great deal of attention, remaining in the top five over the analysis process because, while the video could be considered formal at first glance, the

¹⁵ “Barack Obama Monday Night Football.” December 11, 2006. airborne99.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WJsuM19-8c>.

end offers the viewer a taste of Obama's informal character in which he appears like any other mainstream average middle aged adult male interested in football. The video clips displays Senator Obama sitting at a desk in an office wearing a black suit, white dress shirt and a red tie. In the one minute long video, Obama, in an aggressive and confident tone of voice, discusses politics, yet never actually mentions the word politics or any key issues associated. As the video comes to a close, at which time the video viewer would think the Senator would announce his presidential candidacy, Obama says, "So tonight I would like to put all the doubts to rest. I would like to announce to my home town of Chicago, and all of America that I am ready...for the Bears to go all the way, Baby." Then, following this statement, the Senator grabs a Chicago Bears hat and puts it on his head while making some drum noises and letting out a big laugh. This video became popular and generated a significant number of views because it features Obama as the typical middle-aged male who is interested in sports. It allows constituents, who take an interest in sports to identify with the Senator on a more personal level, on a level in which they share camaraderie, passion and potentially a hobby. The video features Obama in an accessible light as he makes eye contact with the viewers and tricks them into believing the video is serious when in fact he is making a joke and showing his support and interest in football and the Chicago Bears.

Another top ranked video was directly posted by the Obama on January 16, 2007, in which the Senator announces that he is forming a presidential exploratory committee¹⁶. The video feature, which cumulatively obtained over 175,000 page views on March 30, 2007 (the endpoint of the content analysis), showed Senator Obama, sitting down,

¹⁶ "My Plans for 2008." January 16, 2007. Barakobamadotcom.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5h95s0OuEg>

wearing a blue dress shirt (top button unbuttoned) and a suit jacket. Yet Obama appeared informal and relaxed in the feature. In the video, he discusses his “profound decision” to run for president and political issues such as health care, the economy, oil dependence and the tragic and costly War in Iraq as problems that must be addressed in politics. He says that it is not the “magnitude of the problems that concerns me the most but the smallness of the politics” making it difficult to tackle the big problems that demand solutions (Obama, My Plans for 2008 Video). In this video, although Senator Obama appears in a formal setting delivering a scripted message, the way in which he conveys the issues, problems and goals he wants to achieve and tackle allows him to present himself as an average motivated citizen craving to achieve larger goals. The video portrays Obama up close, working to engage with the viewer, using hand motions to explain his thoughts and ideas and telling stories, about himself and constituents he has conversed with, in order to convey and put his goals into a more general and understandable context for the viewer.

The last video of the top five videos featured for Barack Obama is a video clip from the first part of the keynote address the Senator gave at the Democratic National convention. The video, entitled “Barack Obama 2004 Democratic National Convention Part I¹⁷,” was posted on September 16, 2006, and features Senator Obama addressing the convention. In this ten-minute video, Senator Obama begins by saying that his presence at the convention is an honor because one would think it to be very unlikely based on his family history. He continues by narrating his family history, describing where his parents grew up, met and started a family. He then shifts his discussion by saying that his story

¹⁷ “Barack Obama 2004 Democratic National Convention Part I.” September 16, 2006. INVITROblossoms. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNCLomrqIN8>

(family history) is part of a greater American story as the constituents gather at the convention to “affirm the greatness of our nation.” He expresses that we should all be grateful to have the opportunity, as Americans, to participate in the political process without fear of retribution, knowing that our votes will be counted. He then begins to explain that this year, in this election, “we are called to reaffirm our values, and our commitment to hold them against a hard reality, and see how we are measuring up to the legacy of our forbearers, and to the promise of future generations”. From this he says, “We have more work to do” and thus begins to outline his political goals. As the first part of the video concludes, Senator Obama goes on to express his, and the Democratic Party’s, support for John Kerry and the devotion, strong values, and success the candidate will bring to the United States. He says, about John Kerry, that he is the individual that will “never sacrifice our liberties” and who “believes, in a dangerous world where war is an option but never the first option”(Obama, DNC Part I Video). This formal video content generated a large number of page views, 115,786 on March 30, 2007, as it shows the Senator in a political space, delivering a formal speech and expressing his political goals and opinions. In addition, the video features the candidate in a setting and position that he is currently competing to hold, as President of the United States, even though at the time he was not a candidate. Thus, this video became of interest to constituents as it provides voters with an opportunity to see Senator Obama in a position of power, providing a plan, supporting the Democratic Party, and discussing his own political goals for the United States.

Hillary Clinton

Hillary Clinton, like the other candidates, has a wide variety of content posted both by users and constituents. The content varies from TV appearances (such as *The View*), news clips (CNN), speeches (Presidential Announcement and the DNC winter meeting), her State of the Union response, and some user generated content (“VoteDifferent”). Since Hillary Clinton is currently the Senator of New York and the former First Lady, the type of content featured on YouTube not only pertains to her current presidential candidacy but it also features clips from her past. In addition, there are videos posted that were created in an effort to either promote or bash her candidacy that use issues, clips and decisions she has made in the past to create the new content, which is particularly unique to Senator Clinton’s YouTube postings. Furthermore, in terms of the content posted and its existence on the site, there are a number of videos featured for Senator Clinton that did not generate page views consistently over the two-month analysis period. Of all the candidates, Hillary Clinton had the most varied number of viewers over time. A number of the videos remained in the top five for one or two weeks at a time, but unlike the other candidates that had video features that held constant over time, generating an increasing number of hits per day and remaining in the top five for much or all of the two month period, Senator Clinton’s highest viewed videos were unpredictable.

“Hillary goes nuts¹⁸” is one of four videos that received a high number of page views and then was replaced by new content after two weeks in the top five. This feature is a video clip from Fox News that was posted on February 22, 2007 and ranked among

¹⁸ “Hillary Goes Nuts.” February 22, 2007. Maviglio.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Su3JIS9VbtY>.

Senator Clinton's top five video features for two consecutive weeks, with 48,916 views in the second week since posting. This new clip shows Senator Clinton discussing the issue of school vouchers and the problems our government encounters when offering tax dollars for a child's education to some parents and not to others, especially in regard to discrimination against parents who are asking for vouchers yet sending their children to schools that the government may not provide support. For example, Clinton gives an example in which a meeting was held for parents to ask for school vouchers. She states that a parent asks for school vouchers to send their child to a secular private school, and another parent asks for funding to send their child to a Jewish school, and another to a Catholic institution. Then though, two other parents ask the government for school vouchers, one to send their children to the School of the Church of the White Supremacists and the other to the School of the Jihad. Both offer justifications for why they want to send their children to these schools. They then assert that if they are not offered vouchers, as was done for the catholic school, the Jewish school, and the secular private school parents it would constitute an act of discrimination. Thus, in this video, we see Senator Clinton grappling with the issue of school vouchers and discrimination, asking at the end of the video, "tell me how we are going to make those choices?" This video generated a large number of hits as Senator Clinton is discussing and feeling conflicted on an issue that many find controversial in terms of determining how to allocate resources. Also this video displays the Senator attempting to figure out how to deal with school vouchers and potential discrimination, and, as a candidate for the 2008 election, it offers constituents the opportunity to see the candidate in a state of uncertainty and confusion over a difficult issue.

Another feature that ranked among Clinton's top video features, but not within the top five overall, is entitled "Senator Clinton and the Seventh-Day Adventists."¹⁹ This video was posted on January 10, 2007 by a user named LonchitoKL and received 41,153 pages viewed on February 22, 2007, the week it was featured among the top five videos. This video features Senator Clinton addressing the Seventh-Day Adventist Church by delivering a message in which she expresses her admiration for the group's faith, and its efforts to preach, teach and heal. Furthermore, she states that the church is a model for teaching, especially as they have developed health care facilities, which exemplifies their desire to turn their beliefs into action. Lastly, Senator Clinton announced her support for workplace religious freedom and to make sure that government does not hinder faith. One would assume this video to be popular as Senator Clinton is discussing an issue that is both important and relatively controversial in politics. It is important because individuals want to sustain their liberty to worship while also understanding where a candidate stands on issues of religion, both in what they observe and how they feel others should practice. Furthermore, this video attracted multiple users as it displays Senator Clinton looking directly into the camera, close-up, talking at the viewer as if she were engaged in a conversation, although her communication and attire are more formal.

A comedic video clip, entitled "Hillary Clinton: All Pantsuited Up!, a feature from *The Late Show with David Letterman*²⁰ was posted on January 17, 2007, by CBS Broadcasting, in which David Letterman discusses Barack Obama's announcement of his intention to run for president, and then poses the question, "how will Hillary Clinton

¹⁹ "Senator Clinton and the Seventh-Day Adventists." January 10, 2007. LonchitoKL. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIrugadxBpE>

²⁰ "Hillary Clinton: All Pantsuited Up!" January 17, 2007. CBS. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CCxyMuPOUA.

respond to the challenge?” The video clip then features a montage of photos of Barack Obama, with a narration of Obama’s political claims and goals. After a few seconds, the narrator of the video clip says, “answer this question Senator Obama can you do it all while looking fabulous in a pants-suit?” While, simultaneously, the voice over is accompanied by a photo of Senator Obama’s head on a female body that is dressed in a pants suit. While displaying the picture, the voice over then says, “Hillary Clinton pantsuited up and ready to go.” This video received a high number of page views because it is funny and creative and something most would not think of, or create. It provides some humor and juxtaposes the two candidates, at first in what is assumed will provide political content, but then shifts to a play on gender roles.

The final video that was featured during the analysis that did not generate a significant number of page views after its first two-weeks is the video clip of Senator Clinton announcing her presidential candidacy for the 2008 election. The user, Hillaryclintondotcom, who is a member of the Clinton campaign, posted this video. This video, “I’m in²¹,” was originally posted by the user Votehillary, but when this user, also a campaign member, was suspended, most likely for posting a high volume of copyrighted content, the campaign created a new user name and reposted a number of the videos they had originally featured, one of which is the video of Senator Clinton’s announcement. As a result, while the original video posting generated a high number of page views, when the campaign reposted the feature, there was far less interest, possibly since those most interested had already seen the feature.

²¹ “I’m in.” January 22, 2007. Hillaryclintondotcom.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJuRQZ2ZGTs>

The top five videos, when navigating the content featured for Hillary Clinton, are comedic, news oriented, speeches and announcements, and opinion based negative campaign content. The number one video and previously discussed feature, entitled “Vote Different – Hillary Clinton²²” was posted on March 5, 2007. On March 19, 2007, the video had received 1,055,627 and the following week, just six days later, the video had generated 1,592,946 new page views. This video clip, the spin off of the famous 1984 Apple Superbowl ad, was the first video of the 2008 election in which a user put together a unique feature that made a political statement about the candidate. It is original and well made, professional and creative especially as it uses an ad that has been popular in the past to make a political statement. As a result, the video received a significant amount of media attention, driving constituents to the YouTube site and generating a large number of page views in a short period of time. In addition, this video fostered attention, in that not only was the political statement somewhat controversial in bashing Senator Clinton, but also in that the user who posted the feature remained anonymous until approached and accused of developing the video.

With all the media attention and response that the “Vote Different- Hillary Clinton” video received, a YouTube user, RUBBERGASH, decided to use the “Vote Different- Hillary Clinton” video to create a response in which Barack Obama was featured as the “higher being” on the screen speaking to constituents. The video, entitled “Barack 1984²³” was posted on YouTube on March 18, 2007, approximately two weeks after the “Vote Different- Hillary Clinton” video was posted. To date, the Barack Obama

²² “Vote Different-Hillary Clinton.” March 5, 2007. ParkRidge47.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6h3G-IMZxjo>

²³ “Barack 1984.” March 18, 2007. RUBBERGASH.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dycbAsB9-ps>

version has generated 459, 263 page views. In creating the Obama version of “Vote Different,” RUBBERGASH removed the video footage of Senator Clinton speaking and replaced it with the video clip of Barack Obama’s from the “Obama at Monday Night Football” video on YouTube, In addition, instead of the end of the video clip reading support for Senator Obama, the tagline at the end of the video reads, “The Bears Lost, So Will Obama...Clinton for President.” Evidently, not only is YouTube a forum to post original video content to make a political or personal statement about a candidate, but it has also proved a successful forum to create response or dialogue videos to already posted content.

The second of five top rated videos is “Hillary Clinton sings the National Anthem²⁴,” which was posted on January 27, 2007 and has generated 1, 206, 338 page views and ranked among the top five during the analysis process. The video features Senator Clinton singing the national anthem. The video is comedic and received a high number of hits because her voice is out of tune and she does not appear to be a very talented singer. People find this funny, though, because we all expect individuals running for President of the United States to be “perfect.” This video exposes one of the Senator’s imperfections – her inability to carry a tune. Viewers may well enjoy watching YouTube videos that are comedic and show the candidates in a different light, portraying a part of their character that one would not expect to see.

“VoteSmart: A Warning to All Women About Hillary Clinton²⁵,” the number three ranked video over time, is a response to ParkRidge47’s video, “Vote Different.”

²⁴ “Hillary Clinton Signs the National Anthem.” January 27, 2007. breitbart.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfZ_gXCHaMw

²⁵ VOTE SMART: a warning to all women about Hillary Clinton.” March 11, 2007.
Miat1111. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QViJwZwXTl0>

This feature uses clips from “Vote Different” to develop a response and make a larger political statement against Hillary Clinton, as a Presidential candidate, deeming the Clinton’s presidency “American biggest blunder” (deletehillary.com). The anti-Hillary video was posted on March 11, 2007 and generated 71,591 page views in one week (by March 19, 2007). Between March 19, 2007 and the termination of the content analysis, on March 30, 2007, the video received 229,546 additional page views. This video is a video-montage that features clips from “VoteDifferent,” news shows, and interviews. The user who posted the content, miat1111, writes on her website, www.deletehillary.com, that American is not ready for a female president, especially post 9/11. The user believes we are not living in “ordinary times” especially with the War on Terror against a “brutal, subhuman enemy”. Miat1111 writes on her website that Hillary Clinton is not historically anti military and in times like these, Mrs. Clinton would have issues leading this country as President and Commander-in-Chief. Furthermore, this video is meant to express that not only is Hillary Clinton unable, as a woman especially, to perform the duty of President of the United States, but with her husband’s past decisions, such as not finding Bin Laden, miat1111 asks and wonders, “who will safeguard our people? Is Hillary Clinton ‘Stalinist rising?’”Miat1111 declares. This video feature is negative, radical and explosive, and, as a response to “VoteDifferent,” deems Hillary Clinton incapable of running this country both because she is female and based on her stance on political issues and past perspectives.

“Hillary on Oil Profits²⁶,” posted by Dayinnews on February 2, 2007, is a video clip from the Democratic National Convention winter meeting, featured on CSPAN, in

²⁶ “Hillary on Oil Profits.” February 2, 2007. Dayinnews.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1PfE9K8j0g>

which Senator Clinton discusses energy dependence and alternative smart energy resources. She states that the oil companies have reported the highest profits in the history of the world. As a result, the Senator proposes to take those profits and use them to create a strategic energy fund in an effort to develop alternative smart energy, consisting of alternatives and technologies, that will move our nation toward the direction of independence from outside oil resources. Like the other featured news clips, this video has fostered interest among constituents as the Senator is discussing an issue of high importance to the American people especially in regard to gas prices and alternative natural energy resources.

The last and most recent of the top five videos is a 14 second video clip posted by teamhillary2008, entitled “Join the Hillary Clinton 2008 MySpace²⁷.” The video clip features Senator Clinton introducing herself and announcing her candidacy by stating, “I’m in and I’m in to win because we have to take our country back.” The description of the video reads, “Add this video to your MySpace profile and show your support.” Evidently, this video was created by the campaign in hopes that viewers, especially those that supported Senator Clinton for President in 2008, would post the video clip on their MySpace profiles for others to view as a means of disseminating information, virally, through an extremely popular and highly trafficked site. With the high number of page views, it is clear that people found the concept of posting short informative campaign clips interesting enough to view the video, potentially posting the clip on their profiles although tracking that information is not yet available.

²⁷ “Join the Hillary Clinton 2008 MySpace.” February 19, 2007. Teamhillary2008. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFRb9o5DRAQ>

YouTube 2004

The content featured on YouTube from the 2004 Presidential election ranges from campaign ads (both negative and positive), campaign videos, speeches, and interviews. It is important to note that when searching for the video content from the 2004 Presidential election, the search words used were “John Kerry, campaign 2004” and “George Bush, campaign 2004.” These key words were used because not only was YouTube created in 2005 after the 2004 election but there are also video features on the site, especially of George Bush, that do not apply to the 2004 campaign. For example, when searching “John Kerry, campaign 2004” there were approximately 150 video results found, versus almost 900 videos when searching using the words “John Kerry.” For George Bush, there were about 375 videos when searching “George Bush, campaign 2004” (by March 30, 2007) and approximately 11,000 when searching solely “George Bush.” Thus in an effort to distinguish 2004 campaign content from other YouTube features on these two politicians, “campaign 2004” was added to the search words.

In navigating through the featured content, two videos, per candidate, were analyzed as those videos generated the highest number of pages views. The two videos featured for John Kerry are entitled, “Kerry Reporting for Duty” and “Kerry is a Flip Flopper.” “Kerry Reporting for Duty²⁸” is a video montage featuring Kerry in 1971 and 2004. Essentially, the video clip is a juxtaposition of Kerry discussing the issue of war in two different eras, as someone involved at the time and looking back on the crisis. The video begins with Kerry delivering a speech on ABC in 2004 in which he explains that he defended the United States as a young man. Then the video clip changes to Kerry, in

²⁸ “Kerry Reporting for Duty.” July 25, 2006. Zaphod2001.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vYU-tW37Dc>

1971, in which he describes his time in South East Asia, in which he defended his country. Furthermore, he explains in the video clip from 1971 that he committed the same kind of atrocities as thousands of other soldiers by partaking in shootings and free fire zones, destroy missions and burning down villages. This video was posted on July 25, 2006, by a YouTube user named Zaphod2001 and generated over 13,000 page views. This video, a news clips montage, was popular because when Kerry was running for President there were a number of controversies stimulated by a pro-Bush group called Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, who challenged Kerry's characterizations of his involvement in the Vietnam War.

The second video, to note, on John Kerry is entitled "John Kerry is a Flip Flopper"²⁹. This video, a 30 second TV ad, was posted on August 26, 2006, by clubforgrowth.net, a group, according to the summary next the video feature that worked with David Zucker to produce this influential TV ad. This feature, which received almost 8,000 hits, highlights both visually and verbally, the accusations that Kerry changed his mind on a variety of political issues, was never sure where he stood, and thus flip flopped. The punch line of the commercial says, "if you are thinking of voting for him [Kerry] you might want to change your mind too." This campaign ad generated a large number of page views as it displayed one of Kerry's weaknesses, and an issue that many, especially in the media, were discussing about his character at the time of the election.

²⁹ "John Kerry is a Flip Flopper." August 26 2006. Club4growth.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9RljvoWlao>

The two videos to note from the 2004 campaign featuring George Bush are entitled “Safer Stronger” and “Will Ferrell as Bush.” “Safer Stronger³⁰” is a campaign ad from the 2004 election in which Bush is featured in a number of clips that describe the change that occurred over the four-year term prior to the 2004 election. According to George W. Bush, and his campaign, the changes to note were an economy in recession, a stock market in decline, a dot come boom... gone bust, and a day of tragedy which was a test for all Americans (9/11). The end of the ad features the words, “Safer, Stronger” and “steady leadership in times of change.” Evidently this video clip was meant was to show the American people that, despite times of change, fluctuation and crisis, George Bush is able to lead the people of the United States and work through the change and the potential issues that arise along the way.

The second video, “Will Ferrell as Bush³¹” is a comedic video of Will Ferrell impersonating George Bush. This video, posted by YouTube user Meghans007, on December 23, 2005, has generated over 700,00 page views. This video does not provide any real political news or information on Bush. However, it does provide a humorous perspective on the candidate. This video received a high number of page views for its humor, mockery and comedy of and about the President.

The content posted from the 2004 election constitutes in some ways an historical archive of a pre-YouTube election and dos not have some of the more innovative features of current YouTube content. As a retrospective, there is not nearly as much content posted from the 2004 campaign as the 2008 election. This goes to show how significant

³⁰ “Safer Stronger.” July 13, 2006. GriperBlade.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s67qaViGNBU>

³¹ “Will Ferrell as Bush.” December 23, 2005. Meghans007.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkqrI3IibYI>

this new medium has become in the political-sphere, not only in the type of content being posted but the amount of interest as well.

YouTube 2006

However, beginning in 2006, voter and campaign based content was posted on the YouTube site, and for the first time, we see authentic political content, both serious and comedic, generating not only increased viewer-ship but media attention, blogger debate and discussion and potentially impacted election results. The type of video content featured for the 2006 campaign ranges from comedy and satire, to campaign ads, news clips, interviews, videos that expose the candidate(s) in an unexpected light, and campaign footage. The congressional race in Montana, between Conrad Burns and Jon Tester, had significant videos to note that affected the election and constituent sentiments about the candidates. During the campaign, Conrad Burns was caught in a number of “off-guard” situations, during which the Tester campaign was able to catch footage of the candidate to post on YouTube. The video clip that the Tester campaign caught that led to Burns’ demise is entitled “Conrad Burns’ naptime.” This video clip, which has generated over 120,000 page views, was posted on August 17, 2006 by arrowhead77, and features Burns falling asleep (taking a nap) in the middle of a Senate meeting to discuss the Farm Bill. The video, after being posted on YouTube, also received a great deal of media attention.

YouTube 2006: Significant Users

“Arrowhead77,” who posted the video of Conrad Burns’ nap at a Senator hearing, also posted multiple different videos on YouTube of Conrad Burns. It included one of Burns warning constituents about people “who drive taxicabs in the daytime and kill at night” and another which showed Burns joking about the immigration status of a “nice little Guatemalan man who works at his Virginia house” (Schatz). All of the above statements, and then some, were caught on a video camera by “Arrowhead77.” In running a content analysis on all the video clips - gaffe moments, parodies, and news shows to name a few- “Arrowhead77” could have been assumed to be an average YouTube user; an individual interested in producing and sharing video footage, in this case particularly though political content. The user name, moreover, appeared normal and average like any other user name on the site, and generated no suspicion or question that the user had a relationship to a political campaign. “Arrowhead77,” however, was 23 year old Andy Tweeten, a staff member on the Tester campaign (Schatz). Tweeten received his video footage from Kevin O’Brien, a tracker from the Tester campaign, and then mixed the footage with music or added titles and then posted the video clip from his personal laptop (Schatz). As a result, individuals like Tweeten and O’Brien experienced significant attention from the media as they are the ones catching and posting the footage in an attempt to influence voters and, potentially, election results.

According to the Tester campaign, a posting is successful if the video is mentioned in Montana newspapers, on the radio or on Television (Schatz). The Tester campaign considered themselves successful in posting the Burns content as the nap video received acknowledgement from newspapers in Great Falls and Missoula, and appeared

on CNN and on CNBC's "Hardball." Also, the Burns comments about the "nice little Guatemalan man that works on his farm" received attention from a number of national media outlets such as the Associated Press in Washington (Schatz). Unfortunately for Burns, his campaign spent less time taking advantage of technology and the new YouTube medium. The content that the Burns campaign chose to post were primarily ads from his campaign as the campaign team generally decided against posting any video clips it had of John Tester. One clip though, that the campaign did post of Mr. Tester, featured a short clip of Tester used in a TV commercial. Ultimately, the Tester campaign pointed to a crucial new political phenomenon – young, tech-savvy staffers using YouTube as an extension of an overall political strategy to undermine one's opponent.

Graphs: See Appendix

Graph Analysis

According to the graphs below, entitled “John Edwards,” “Barack Obama” and “Hillary Clinton,” the top five videos, over the period researched for this study, are featured. The graphs per candidate, display the time in which the video ranked among the top five, how long it remained within the top five videos (based on the number of points on the graph it holds) and how many page views it received during that time. John Edwards’ video features contained the most steadily increasing number of page views per video, with hits ranging within the same vicinity of one another over time. Unlike John Edwards, Senator Obama’s video features, while they appear to have been featured for a consistent amount of time, the number of hits each video received are not within close proximity, as some videos generated pages views of up to 100,000 hits and others 500,000 views. On the other hand, Senator Clinton’s video features fluctuated most dramatically in comparison to the other presidential candidates. Senator Clinton’s video features generated a significantly different number of hits depending on the video, and those videos that appeared within the top five over the analysis process did not remain consistent throughout the six week period. Two of the five videos remained consistent over the time frame while, the outstanding three were all posted at the end of the analysis process, and generated a high number of pages views during that period of time (of the three, the “Vote Different” video displayed the most substantial change in number of page views of all Senator Clinton’s videos and among all the other candidates video features as well).

Summary of Analysis

In conducting a content analysis of the political content featured on YouTube for the primary Democratic candidates of the 2008 presidential election, John Edwards, Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama, George Allen, Jim Webb, John Tester and Conrad Burns from the 2006 congressional election, and the retrospective content of John Kerry and George W. Bush from the 2004 presidential election, it can be concluded that the content featured on YouTube, which portrays the candidates in an offensive and opinionated manner, by YouTube users, and puts the candidates reputation on the line, generates the most page views. For example, Hillary Clinton's "Vote Different" video portrays the candidate in a negative light mocking the insistence she displays in her "I'm in" presidential candidacy announcement video to begin a dialogue and conversation with her constituents. In addition, the video features a member or supporter of Senator Obama's campaign throwing a sledgehammer at the over-sized video feature of Senator Clinton. This video clearly expresses a voter, particularly YouTube user ParkRidge47's, opinion on Hillary Clinton, as a candidate for the 2008 presidential election. The video is offensive, although done subtly, as it portrays Senator Clinton in a negative light, does not show any support or enthusiasm for the candidate, displays a strong voter opinion against the candidate and also attacks the candidate and what she has expressed. Furthermore, another video posted, right after Senator Clinton announced her candidacy in January, features the Senator singing the national anthem loud and out of tune. This video in no way highlights the positive aspects or qualities of the Senator. It rather embarrasses the Senator, attacking her for her inability to sing well and in tune. Thus, the

content puts the candidates reputation on the line as it is humiliating, insulting and makes a mockery of Hillary Clinton.

Senator Clinton is not the only candidate that is featured on YouTube in an offensive and damaging manner. John Edwards' top rated video entitled "Ann Coulter Uses Slur to Describe John Edwards at CPAC" is a speech delivered by Ann Coulter in which she refers to John Edwards as a "faggot." This statement is not only insulting to the candidate but it harms his reputation, as it indirectly forces constituents to question the validity behind the statements. In addition, the video is offensive and demeaning not only to the voters that support the candidate but the candidate himself as well.

Furthermore, it is important to note that there is a percentage of voters watching this video that support Ann Coulter and her remarks and do not believe the video to be negative. However, other viewers might well disagree with Coulter, think she is a lunatic, and are offended by her outrageous comments, especially those seen in this video, and may have decided to view the video due to the controversy it generated.

Another video feature that harms the reputation and profile of the candidate, John Edwards, is a video clip posted from the *60 Minutes* interview Edwards and his wife, Elizabeth, had with Katie Couric. The interview, featured in the YouTube clip, shows the Edwards forced to be defensive about Elizabeth's cancer and their decision for him to stay in the race. Katie Couric asks the candidate and his wife a number of difficult questions and statements in which she expresses harsh judgment about their decision. While the video may be informative, and Couric may have asked important questions that the American people wanted Edwards to answer, the way in which they were formulated and targeted at the candidate and his wife were cruel and unsympathetic. As a result, this

video in no way praises or extols the candidate, his persona or his campaign. Instead it proves offensive, critical, and damaging. Moreover, the idea that people prefer to view negative political and/or campaign content on YouTube is further solidified by the fact that this post of Katie Couric's interview with the Edwards', which is obviously negative content generated 180,522 page views by March 30, 2007, while the press conference held in which the Edwards' announce Elizabeth's cancer and their decision to remain in the race, a feature that is both informative and genuine, generated only 14,651 page views by March 30, 2007. Evidently, the above highlights the fact that constituents use YouTube, more often, as a resource to view negative campaign content, despite whether or not the feature fosters media attention.

Similar to Edwards and Clinton, Senator Obama's video content also features negative, demeaning, and harsh content. The two videos of note, Joel Surnow's "1/2 Hour News Hour" and "Fox Attacks Obama," both display the Senator in a negative light as the features, video montages of all the negative campaign content, highlight the inferences and racist remarks that have been placed on Senator Obama. The statements featured in the video content range from his middle name being "Hussein," to attending a Muslim school called a "Madrassa", to linking the candidate with an overall loaded and false image. Both videos, comedic and/or news montage, attack the candidate based on false assumptions and portray the candidates in a negative light so as to offend the candidate and potentially harm their reputation. Evidently, the above videos, posted on YouTube, all contribute to the public's attempt at ruining the reputation of the different Democratic presidential candidates. However, because the featured content is posted so early in the race, the likelihood that it will affect an individual's vote is unlikely.

In general, the political content featured on YouTube that has generated a high number of page views is negative content. YouTube users, potential voters, are attracted to the video content that shows the candidate in a negative light. However, the degree to which the content featured is negative ranges from video to video. For example, some video clips are negative but subtle and provocative, while others are blatantly negative and thus harsh, nasty, vicious, and cruel.

As a result, while the videos featured on YouTube generating the highest number of pages views, as portrayed in the above examples, are negative, there is a gradation of negativity that exists within the content. For example, John Edwards' number two video feature entitled "Feeling Pretty," shows the candidate combing his hair to the tune of "I feel pretty, oh so pretty." While this video is not blatantly negative, as it does not appear malicious or cruel, the video mocks the candidate. However, in comparison to Senator Clinton's "Vote Smart" video, developed by a constituency of anti-Hillary radicals, in which Hillary is portrayed as a violent and malicious individual, this "Feeling Pretty" video seems lighthearted and somewhat humorous. Evidently, the video features on YouTube allow the voter to explore an array of content, particularly in this case, with a varying degree of negativity, from harsh, nasty and negative features to those that are more subtle.

Moreover, even though, generally, a majority of the content that generates page views and media attention on YouTube is negative, YouTube also provides an informative context for political content. The informative political content on YouTube ranges from important speeches, elaborated positions, and news clips. Each candidate has a video feature among their top five videos overall that shows the candidate discussing or

addressing important issues and is therefore informative for constituents. In John Edwards' video, "Realizing the Dream," which received over 25,000 page views, Edwards expresses his vision for change, particularly against the War in Iraq. In Senator Obama's video clip (holding 115,786 page views on March 30, 2007) from the Democratic National Convention in 2004, Obama is featured delivering a speech, that catapulted him as a prominent political figure. And, finally, Senator Clinton's video feature, entitled "Hillary on Oil Profits," portrays the candidate discussing an issue of great importance - oil resources and alternative smart energy - not only for her campaign but also to voters and the United States, especially during a time of war. It is important to note that of the three videos discussed above that are considered "informative content," only one of the three videos was posted by a member of the candidate's campaign. However, even though the user name of the posted feature is not a member of the campaign, for example "JohnEdwards or "teamhillary2008," but instead "AirBorne99" or "Dayinnews," does not mean that the campaign did not create an alias and post the content anonymously.

Presidential Announcements

Furthermore, during the analysis process, each candidate's presidential candidacy announcement video generated a large number of page views and thus ranked among their top five videos overall. All these videos, with the help of the media, received a significant amount of attention especially since this was the first time in the history of a political campaign that candidates chose to announce their candidacy via online video that was apt to be disseminated virally throughout the web. Many of the candidates though, not only posted their features online but also added a specific section to their personal websites in which to stream video content. As a result, a number of constituents chose to visit the candidate's webpage to view the posted video content as opposed to the online video hub, YouTube.

Senator Clinton's campaign, for example, posted her "I'm in" announcement video both on her webpage and on the YouTube site. However, the video that was posted on YouTube was taken down along with a number of other Clinton featured content as a result of a push by Google to remove copyrighted content. The original "I'm in" video generated a significant number of page views, over approximately 100,000 hits. Despite the removal of the content, the campaign created a new user name and reposted the announcement video, which while it did not generate as much attention, still received enough hits to make it within the top five videos, but for just one week of the analysis. This video received a high number of page views because it was her announcement video. Besides that though, the video of Senator Clinton appears impersonal, stiff, and formal even though she is delivering an informal speech or lecture. While it might appear as though she is making an attempt to engage in dialogue with the viewer of the video

content, she fails and as a result the feature seems staged and she seems uncomfortable. While the video and the campaign makes an attempt to make her appear casual as they zoom close and she looks friendly, her voice tone and body language appears both forced and directed. Senator Clinton makes no attempt to hide the fact that the dialogue is scripted and that her actions (hand motions, body position and facial expressions) are carefully planned and rehearsed.

Senator Obama's announcement video, entitled "My Plans for 2008," ranked among his top five videos overall during the time period reviewed with 176, 396 page views on the final day of the analysis, and while it was undoubtedly scripted, he portrays himself with confidence and ease. His voice, tone and mannerisms are settled. He does not appear nervous or overly animated. He seems causal, comfortable, and having a dialogue with the video camera, which features the Senator very close up and at one angle throughout the entire clip. In the video feature, he discusses issues and concerns addressed by constituents and not just what his goals are and his desires. In addition, he does not begin the video dialogue by announcing his candidacy; instead he takes the time to discuss other issues of importance. While Obama does not appear fully "natural," for a formal video clip, and something that was scripted and rehearsed prior to being captured on video, the Senator nevertheless comes across as more confident and comfortable and not overly robotic in his mannerism, voice and facial expressions and in reciting his thoughts.

John Edwards presidential announcement video, which ranked among his top five videos cumulatively with 118, 646 hits on the final day of the analysis, is unique in that, unlike the other candidates, he does not directly address the fact that he is announcing his

candidacy as he does not appear in a formal setting or in formal attire. Instead, he uses a video feature in which he discusses and explains a project he is working on to announce his candidacy at the final segment of the video. Edwards is seen in the middle of the 9th ward in New Orleans working on a housing project, dressed in casual clothing and appearing comfortable and confident with himself. He does not seem nervous or as if the feature was scripted both in terms of the words he uses to express himself and the body language he demonstrates. Of all the announcement videos, this feature of John Edwards most successfully displays a candidate as casual, easy-going, more like an ordinary person, secure, unscripted, poised, passionate, and informal. As a result, in terms of choosing which video feature takes advantage of the YouTube resource, as a personal observation, John Edwards conceivably best succeeds in his candidacy announcement. This video epitomizes the values of the YouTube phenomenon, as it allows for a more informal setting, John Edwards running as a 2008 Democratic presidential candidate, the ability to connect with his constituents through a viral video, in a casual manner, so that voters feel they are able to get to know and see the candidate in a different and more personal light, in comparison to how he is normally featured in other videos and in the media.

Conclusion

With the introduction of user-generated video content to the web, but more importantly into the political sphere, and the development of YouTube in 2005, the face of Internet politics has become less about what is being said and increasingly focused on how it is being said. For example, in 2004, Howard Dean showed the political world how important blogs, or back and forth written dialogue on the Internet, could be for discussing campaign issues and more generally political issues. It provided a space in which anyone was able to contribute to a political discussion despite the voter's location, political affiliation, opinions and/or thoughts. However, in 2005, and more so in 2006, we see the rise of user and campaign generated video content disseminated through the web. YouTube, like the blogs, provided a space for voters and campaign members to upload video clips, regardless of the length, to the site, as a housing location for web videos and a place for all constituents to view the posted content.

The congressional election of 2006 paved the way for the future of web video. This is the first time, in the history of political campaigns, that we saw online video influence a campaign, both during the campaigning process and within the election results. In Montana, the election between Jon Tester and Conrad Burns and in Virginia, the election between George Allen and Jim Webb, video footage was captured by the opponent's campaign team, specifically their tracker, the individual from the opposing campaign team following the opponent around to various campaign stops filming and gathering video footage. In both cases, the opponent and underdog of the election, caught video footage of the opponent and election frontrunner, posted the video on the web, generating thousands of page views, received media attention and caused bloggers to

discuss the video content. As a result, the underdog in both these elections, Jon Tester from Montana and Jim Webb from Virginia, won their state elections. The captured video footage, which was disseminated virally throughout the Internet led to the demise of their opponent and their own victory. These examples, from the 2006 congressional election, demonstrated the early power of online video content and the potential it has to influence constituent opinion and election results.

Since day one of the 2008 election, candidates have seen and used web video as a primary resource to communicate with voters. Now, less than four months into the election race, candidates have already posted numerous web videos— such as their candidacy announcement videos, speeches, interviews, and news clips – both on their own websites, YouTube, and other popular video sharing websites, to immediately inform voters. In addition, constituents are using web video to create content or post already featured clips highlighting and/or exposing the candidates in both negative and positive ways. In conducting a content analysis, during the first three months of the 2008 election, of the posted, top five rated features, it can be concluded that the videos that generate the most page views, and media and blogger attention, are those that feature and expose the candidate in a negative light.

Thus far, in the 2008 election, candidates are pushing the envelope with online video features. They are creating campaign accounts and posting them on YouTube, holding virtual town halls, conducting discussion via online chats and working to use the video resource to engage in dialogue with their constituents in any, and all, possible way(s). Their video postings, posted both by the campaign itself and constituents, are generating thousands of pages views. Voters are constantly navigating the site for new

web video, the latest candidate satire or parody, updated speeches and news clips and hoping for video clips, in which the candidate is featured, actually having a virtual conversation, via YouTube video, with the voter by making a connection, appearing ordinary and relatable, talking to and with the voter, (as opposed to at the voter) and engaging in body language.

Currently, we are witnessing, with the 2008 election already underway and in full swing, the importance of YouTube, and web-video, as a new and unique feature to the online and political world and as a central political tool in campaigns. The question now is, is online video going to open up the democratic process and if so, how? The use of web video opens up the campaign trail. It offers those individuals that are not at a specific location or event to view campaign coverage from other locations, online, potentially both in real time and after the fact. Web video is a means of direct communication, both for the campaign and constituents, as it allows them to record and engage in dialogue via posted video features. As posted web features can be both positive and negative, constituents and the campaign can use online video to post positive or negative features about themselves or their opponents, and have the ability, if necessary, to create a video to contest any content that requires a response on behalf of the candidate and their campaign. In addition, for local campaigns, YouTube and online video offers local politicians the opportunity to create viral video as it requires little funding.

Most importantly, online video and YouTube opens up the democratic process as it provides a forum and means for two-way communication, not solely the traditional form of one-way communication. Furthermore, right now, the candidate that can use online political tools, specifically video content, to mobilize their users by getting them to

act offline, will be deemed most successful as constituents still value traditional forms of campaigning. In addition, the next “YouTube candidate” will be the candidate that not only humanizes himself or herself but uses YouTube as a social networking tool to talk to constituents, conducting a two way conversation, via video in an open public forum. It, hopefully, also has the potential to expand participation and access to the political process, without, as the ParkRidge47 case study identified, such access being defined solely as access to funding and to power.

Appendix:

Charts

In evaluating and analyzing the content posted on YouTube, this report will begin by identifying each candidate's most popular videos (the top five, per candidate, per week and overall, with the highest number of page views)

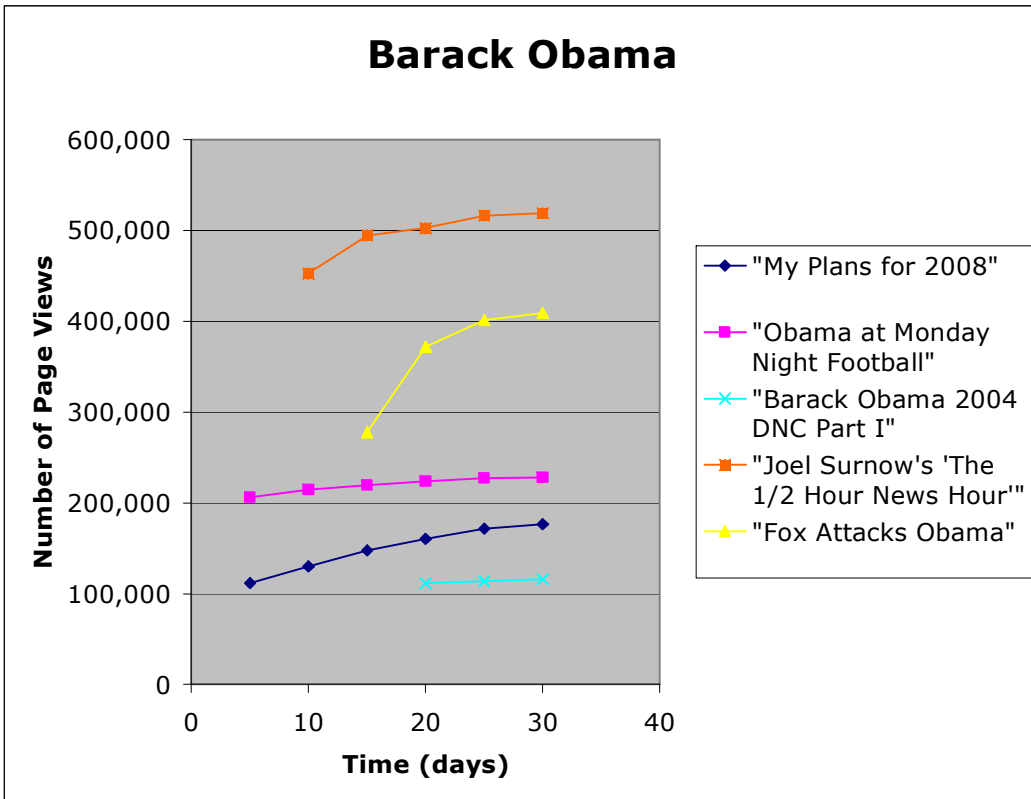
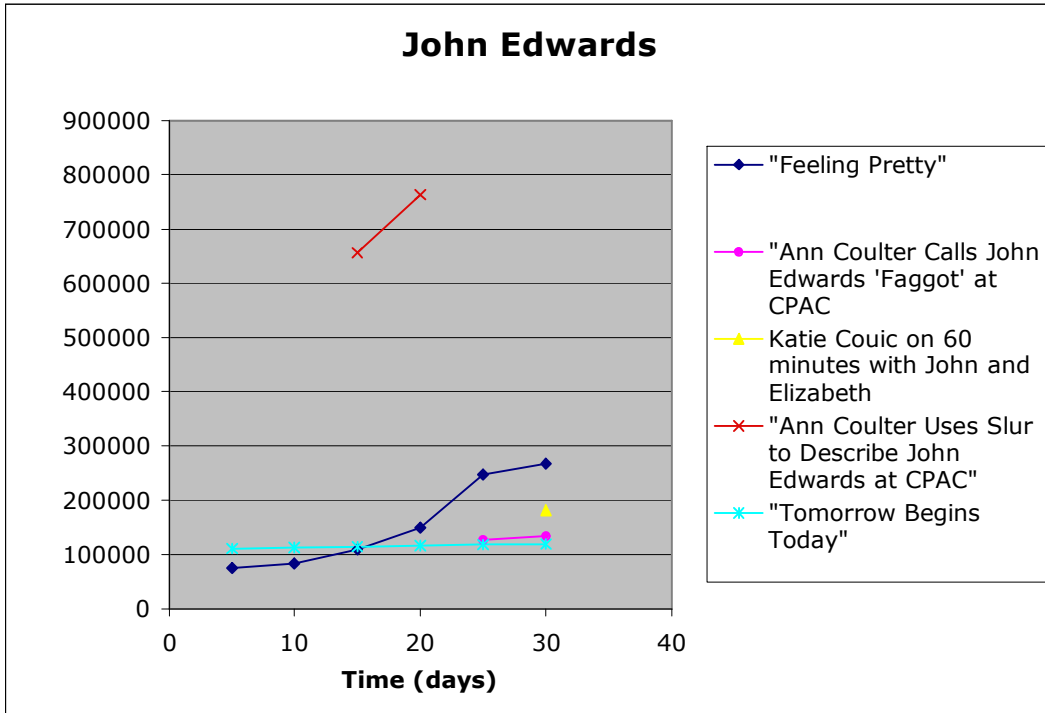
Date	Name of Video	# of hits (pageviews)	Who Posted the Video
John Edwards			
February 14, 2007	"Tomorrow Begins Today"	110,964	JohnEdwards
	"Feeling Pretty"	74,727	RogerRmjet
February 22, 2007	"Tomorrow Begins Today"	112,376	JohnEdwards
	"Feeling Pretty"	82,931	RogerRmjet
	"Realizing the Dream"	24,008	JohnEdwards
	"O'Reilly – John Edwards Hires Fanatical Extremist Staffers"	83,314	boobtuber46
	"Vent Hot Air Theater Presents Amanda Marcotte"	19,551	michellemalkin
March 5, 2007	"Tomorrow Begins Today"	114,204	JohnEdwards
	"Feeling Pretty"	108,605	RogerRmjet
	"Realizing the Dream"	24,536	JohnEdwards
	"O'Reilly – John Edwards Hires Fanatical Extremist Staffers"	85,664	boobtuber46
	"Ann Coulter Uses Slur to Describe John Edwards at CPAC"	656,616	fniazi
March 19, 2007	"Tomorrow Begins Today"	116,419	JohnEdwards
	"Feeling Pretty"	149,422	RogerRmjet
	"Realizing the Dream"	24,958	JohnEdwards
	"O'Reilly – John Edwards Hires Fanatical Extremist Staffers"	86,101	boobtuber46
	"Ann Coulter Uses Slur to Describe John Edwards at CPAC"	763,098	Fniazi (taken down)
March 25, 2007	"Tomorrow Begins Today"	118,052	JohnEdwards
	"Feeling Pretty"	247,457	RogerRmjet
	"Realizing the Dream"	24,958	JohnEdwards
	"Ann Coulter Calls John Edwards 'Faggot' at CPAC"	126,739	Thesilencedpatriot
March 30, 2007	"Tomorrow Begins Today"	118,646	JohnEdwards
	"Feeling Pretty"	266,384	RogerRmjet

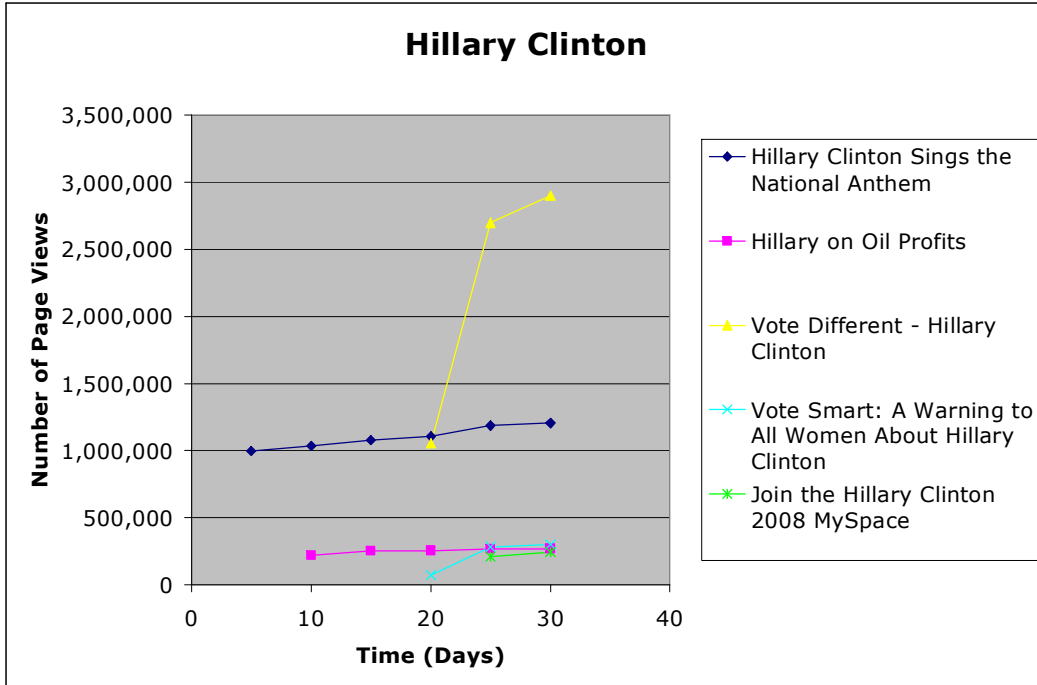
	“Realizing the Dream”	25, 532	JohnEdwards
	“Ann Coulter Calls John Edwards ‘Faggot’ at CPAC”	134,015	Thesilencedpatriot
	“Katie Couric on 60Minutes with John and Elizabeth”	180, 522	TheBlueStateDOTcom
	Barack Obama		
February 14, 2007	“My Plans for 2008	111,829	Barakobamadotcom
	“Obama at Monday Night Football”	206,143	Airborne99
	“First Obama Presidential Ad”	109,234	oo7jeep
February 22, 2007	“My Plans for 2008”	130,027	Barakobamadotcom
	“Obama at Monday Night Football”	214,448	Airborne99
	“First Obama Presidential Ad”	110,083	oo7jeep
	“Joel Surnow's ‘The 1/2 Hour News Hour’”	452,498	dk7dr7
	“CNN links Barack Obama to axis of evil”	107,062	MIKEHUNTdotTV
March 5, 2007	“My Plans for 2008”	147, 456	Barakobamadotcom
	“Obama at Monday Night Football”	219, 448	Airborne99
	“First Obama Presidential Ad”	115, 263	oo7jeep
	“Joel Surnow's ‘The 1/2 Hour News Hour’”	494, 545	dk7dr7
	“Fox Attacks Obama”	277, 715	Bravenewfilms
March 19, 2007	“My Plans for 2008”	160, 145	Barakobamadotcom
	“Obama at Monday Night Football”	223, 664	Airborne99
	“Fox Attacks Obama”	371, 490	Bravenewfilms
	“Barack Obama 2004 DNC Part 1”	111, 231	INVITROblossoms
	“Joel Surnow's ‘The 1/2 Hour News Hour’”	502, 567	dk7dr7
March 25, 2007	“My Plans for 2008”	171, 632	Barakobamadotcom
	“Obama at Monday Night Football”	227, 110	Airborne99
	“Fox Attacks Obama”	401, 430	Bravenewfilms
	“Barack Obama 2004 DNC Part 1”	113, 757	INVITROblossoms
	“Joel Surnow's ‘The 1/2 Hour News Hour’”	516, 266	dk7dr7
March 30, 2007	“My Plans for 2008”	176, 386	Barakobamadotcom
	“Obama at Monday Night Football”	228, 234	Airborne99
	“Fox Attacks Obama”	409, 160	Bravenewfilms
	“Barack Obama 2004 DNC	115, 786	INVITROblossoms

	Part 1”		
	“Joel Surnow’s ‘The 1/2 Hour News Hour’”	518, 946	dk7dr7
	Hillary Clinton		
February 14, 2007	“I’m in”	674	Hillaryclintondotcom
	“Hillary Clinton Sings the National Anthem”	999,277	Breitbart
February 22, 2007	“I’m in”		Hillaryclintondotcom
	“Hillary Clinton Sings the National Anthem”	1,038,253	Breitbart
	“Senator Clinton and Seventh-Day Adventist”	41,153	LonchitoKL
	“Hillary Goes Nuts”	43,558	Maviglio
	“Hillary on Oil Profits”	220,747	Dayinnews
March 5, 2007	“Hillary Clinton Sings the National Anthem”	1, 079, 666	Breitbart
	“Hillary Goes Nuts”	48, 916	Maviglio
	“Hillary on Oil Profits”	251, 887	Dayinnews
	“Hillary Clinton: all Painsuited Up!”	58,305	CBS
	“Dick Cheney’s Lipitor and Hillary Clintons Smirk”	192, 569	CBS
March 19, 2007			
	“Hillary Clinton Sings the National Anthem”	1, 105, 887	Breitbart
	“Hillary on Oil Profits”	256, 556	Dayinnews
	“Hillary Clinton: all Painsuited Up!”	59, 287	CBS
	“Vote Different – Hillary Clinton”	1, 055, 627	ParkRidge47
	“Votsmart: A Warning to All Women about Hillary Clinton”	71, 591	miatl111
March 25, 2007			
	“Hillary Clinton Sings the National Anthem”	1, 187, 392	Breitbart
	“Hillary on Oil Profits”	268, 406	Dayinnews
	“Vote Different – Hillary Clinton”	2, 698, 833	ParkRidge47
	“Votsmart: A Warning to All Women about Hillary Clinton”	284, 961	miatl111
	“Join the Hilary Clinton 2008 MySpace”	210, 045	teamhillary2008
March 30, 2007			
	“Hillary Clinton Sings the National Anthem”	1, 206, 338	Breitbart
	“Hillary on Oil Profits”	270, 338	Dayinnews
	“Vote Different – Hillary Clinton”	2, 900, 155	ParkRidge47
	“Votsmart: A Warning to All Women about Hillary Clinton”	301, 137	miatl111

	"Join the Hilary Clinton 2008 MySpace"	245, 621	teamhillary2008
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Graphs





APPENDIX: Republicans on YouTube

In examining the content posted on YouTube featuring the top two Republican candidates running for President in 2008, Rudolf Giuliani and John McCain, similar to the Democratic candidates, both Republican candidates top (2) features, in terms of number of page views, present both negative (a comedic video feature) and informative video clips. There are 640 video results when searching “Rudolf Giuliani” on YouTube, in comparison, there are 1,620 video features when searching for content on John McCain, using search words, “John McCain.” The Republican candidates, especially Giuliani, not only have fewer video features on YouTube, but among those videos that appear on the site, few could be deemed “popular” as a majority are not generating a high number of pages views, in comparison to their Democratic counterparts.

Giuliani’s top two video features on YouTube are entitled “Rudy Giuliani in drag smooching Donald Trump” and “Giuliani on Public Funding of Abortion,” the former being satirical and the later informative. Giuliani’s video, “Rudy Giuliani in drag smooching Donald Trump,” was posted on April 12, 2006 by the user, itsgiulianitime, and has generated 259,000 page views. The video features the former New York City Mayor dressed in drag and having his “breasts” blatantly violated by millionaire Donald Trump. Furthermore, according to the YouTube video description, posted by the user, the video is a clip from the new documentary by Kevin Keating, which opens in New York in May. This video attracted a large number of views since it pokes fun at both high profile men – Giuliani and Trump.

Giuliani’s second top rated video clip on YouTube, entitled “Giuliani on Public Funding of Abortion,” features the Mayor in an informative context. The video footage

was taken in November 1989 and shows the candidate discussing his perspective on public funding for abortion. In the clip, Giuliani states that he supports public funding for abortion for poor women because he feels that women should not be denied the right to make their own decision on abortion just because they may lack the resources needed to have the procedure. Furthermore, Giuliani asserts his disagreement with Bush in vetoing public funding for abortion. This video generated a high number of page views as it features the Mayor in an informative context, offering his perspective on an issue that is both controversial and important to a majority of United States citizens. Furthermore, the clip became popular as the Mayor publicly proclaims his disagreement with Bush on this controversial issue, which would attract a large number of constituents who would want to witness a public disagreement. Moreover, the video contrasts with Giuliani's more recent efforts to distance himself from that earlier position; presumably the user who posted this clip could well be a Giuliani critic bringing to light his shifting positions.

John McCain, like Giuliani, has both an informative video feature and one which is negative (read humorous) among his top videos ranked on YouTube. McCain's number one video clip is entitled, "" Bomb bomb bomb, bomb bomb Iran." The video was posted on April 19, 2007 by the user mckathomas, and has generated 669,629 page views in less than one week. The video is informative as it features McCain's perspective on the Middle East yet is also somewhat humorous since he uses a Beach Boy song at the end of the video to express his thoughts further. The forty two second video clip begins with McCain stating that we have known for quite a while, based on documentation, where the problem in the Middle East rests. He says that President Bush accurately describes the problem as "the axis of evil." McCain goes on to state that he questions how many times

we, in the United States, have to prove that people in the Middle East are blowing up people. He suggests that instead of a nuclear weapon, we should send an airmail message to Teheran. At the end of this clip, after his discussion of the Middle East, he says, “you know that old Beach Boys song, bomb bomb bomb, bomb bomb Iran.” This video generated a high number of page views in a very short period of time because McCain is seen discussing the War in Iraq, his perspective on the issue and his thoughts about how to address the problem. Furthermore, he uses the conclusion of the video to be somewhat humorous about the matter by singing a Beach Boys song.

The second top rated video feature of John McCain is entitled, “Sleep Senator John McCain.” This video was posted on January 23, 2007 by user monzsca and has received 242,111 page views. The video features McCain sleeping during President Bush’s State of the Union address. This video generated a high number of page views because not only is it shocking to see a Senator falling asleep during such an important speech but it also received a significant amount of media attention.

The content featured for both Republican candidates thus included both informative and satirical video clips, similar to their Democratic counterparts. It also included material posted by independent users as well as (in McCain’s case, especially, from the campaign itself. Furthermore, Senator McCain, unlike Giuliani, has a larger number of video features posted on the YouTube site and his video clips have generated a higher number of page views in comparison to Giuliani. However, unlike the Democratic candidates, a majority of the videos featured was posted recently (within the last few months), possibly a result of their entering the race later than their Democratic counterparts.

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