

Political Science 146 – Public Opinion and Mass Media: Citizens' Democratic Basics

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May 21, 2015

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- ▶ Back then though, websites were more like brochures: talking points, rarely updated, not dynamic

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- ▶ These changes have largely been aided and facilitated by social media: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, others

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- ▶ Since then, Facebook has moved towards candidate pages (as opposed to profiles), that give more control to campaigns in terms of what they post
- ▶ The Facebook “news feed” also facilitates interaction between candidate and voters/supporters
- ▶ Important for candidate to generate “likes” (obviously) – engagement with supporters therefore becomes a critical part of any political campaign

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 - ▶ **Twitter allows for direct communication between candidates (and/or their staffs) and voters**

Digital Media Age

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- ▶ In a sense, social media audiences are a new audience – even though Twitter users skew younger
- ▶ Potential of internet can connect urban and suburban communities in various forms of social activism/volunteerism coincides with growth of political blogs
- ▶ Four developments: 1. Micro-targeting, 2. Personalization, 3. Interactivity, 4. Sustained engagement

New Practices: Microtargeting

- ▶ Microtargeting – Fueled by advances in communication and database technology, campaigns can now target certain voters (groups) with specific information – beyond party, gender, to include items such as race/ethnicity, neighborhood characteristics, Census information, magazine subscriptions, and other consumer data

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- ▶ **Believed marketing companies have profiles (based on average of 1500 pieces of data) for about 96% of Americans!**

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- ▶ **Obama on *Between Two Ferns***

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- ▶ Supporters often become friends with other supports, developing a growing network

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 - ▶ 4. **Become active in offline activities**

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 - ▶ Posts concerning campaign events, Dean's response to campaign topics, links to news stories about campaign
 - ▶ These are all things that are done today, sort of common-sense things. All started with Dean campaign

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- ▶ Blog was used to ask for suggestions about speeches or campaign events
- ▶ “We didn’t just monitor these blogs. We listened. We took the feedback seriously. There were times that we altered Dean’s stump speech based on a suggestion from a blog, or improved our campaign strategy.” – Joe Trippi, Dean campaign manager

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- ▶ You could enter your zipcode and see what was going on close by
- ▶ This linked individual supporters together created a deeper connection among supporters and campaign – now people had a greater investment in how Dean did

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- ▶ While Dean lost, other campaigns adopted his techniques, resulting in new organizational and communication structures

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- ▶ Created portraits of issue priorities for different voters and devised unique communication strategies for each one