New Media and Political Marketing in the United States: 2012 and Beyond

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Technology is an ever-evolving aspect of political campaigns in the United States. Even before the days when sophisticated survey research or television advertising burst on the scene, campaigners were seeking ways to campaign more efficiently and effectively. The Internet has provided a wealth of opportunities for candidates and their campaigns to use technology in creative and innovative ways. The 2008 U.S. presidential campaign clearly illustrated this. But the question becomes: What is next? Where does new media go from here, and, more importantly for scholars, what kind of research questions will be central when studying these new uses of technology? This article begins with a discussion of where new media, and the study of it, go in 2012 and beyond. We briefly take a look back at the 2008 election in which campaigns made great strides in the use of new media, breaking new ground by using tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other online video sharing sites and many others in ways that had not been seen before. We also look ahead and discuss what we expect in the 2012 U.S. elections and beyond. We do this from the perspective of campaigns—how candidates and their advisors as well as voters will use new media—and from the perspective of scholars: What are the directions for future research in these areas?

KEYWORDS campaigns, elections, Facebook, Internet, new media, online, social networks, Twitter, YouTube

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INTRODUCTION

Campaigns are fundamentally about contrasts. Contrasts are what candidates strive to create between themselves and their opponents because these help frame the choices voters have on Election Day. In the 2008 U.S. elections, many voters perceived a clear contrast between Barack Obama and John McCain. It was the Obama campaign that exploited and used new media in ways that utilized technology like no one had seen, while John McCain's campaign lagged far behind. The Obama campaign utilized its own Web site, Facebook, YouTube, as well as other tools and it even created its own social networking site (SNS), My.BarackObama.com (MyBO). As one analyst notes, the contrast was stark: Obama was the fresh face with the sophisticated digital media plan, while "McCain was the wrinkly guy who could barely check his e-mail" (Kaye 2009, 1). Actions of the campaigns reinforced this notion. Some estimates have nearly 100 staffers working on Obama's Web presence while McCain had barely a dozen (Kaye 2009). The McCain campaign also was criticized for gaffes in its Web strategy—having, for example, an online ad that declared he had won a debate with Obama *before* the debate had even taken place—and not having it seamlessly integrated into its messaging. The irony here is that McCain's presidential primary bid in 2000 broke new ground for using the Web. His campaign used the Web to set fundraising records and to rally supporters. Indeed, it helped him earn early primary victories against George W. Bush.

New technology that would make campaigning more effective and efficient has always been a sought-after commodity by those in the trenches of campaigns. One can look to the great technological innovations during the mid-1900s as a precursor to the changes that are taking place with the Internet today. When campaigns found that they could use the airwaves to spread campaign messages, the electoral landscape was changed forever. First with radio and then television, candidates were able to engage in campaign activities like never before. With television, all of a sudden, a candidate could talk to nearly all of the voters in his or her district in 30 or 60 seconds rather than having to spend all day traveling around town. It should be noted that this technological innovation did not create a new goal for campaigns; it simply created a more effective and efficient way to accomplish those goals. Campaigns always have been, and always will be, fundamentally about contacting voters, communicating with them, trying to persuade them to vote a certain way, and getting those voters to the polls. Technology has made this easier over the years, and the great shift toward new media, which can be defined as any interactive form of communication on the Internet, such as e-mail, blogs, RSS feeds, microblogs, social networks, video-sharing sites, and online newspapers, is the latest advancement to influence campaigning.

Just as television allowed campaigns to reach more voters with new and different types of messages (namely visual), the Internet allows campaigns to engage in the traditional activities of campaigns with new tools. For instance, campaigns now can target voters with messages tailored to individual preferences through SNSs and microtargeted e-mail; they also can target voters they know are their supporters with individualized reminders to vote on Election Day via text message or e-mail.

We should be careful to note, however, that new media are unlikely to overtake or replace traditional media or tactics in campaigns. This is seen in the attention that the U.S. presidential candidates paid to traditional and new media in 2008. For instance, during the entire presidential race, the Obama campaign spent roughly $16 million on Web ads and $250 million on television. The cost of buying television airtime compared to buying Web ads certainly accounts for much of this difference, but the difference remains striking. In addition, the Web remains uncharted territory for many Americans. Whether there is an age, race, or education divide, the fact is that some population segments simply do not turn to the Internet (yet) for their information (see Pew Research Center 2008a). Campaigns understand that they need to reach and convince a certain number of voters to vote for their candidate if they are going to win on Election Day. Many of those voters are not the typical new media user and must be contacted through more traditional means (e.g., television, mail, or radio). The new media unleashed in the 2008 presidential campaign were a complement to the traditional types of communication we have seen in campaigns for more than half a century. How soon or whether this changes remains to be seen.

NEW MEDIA IN THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The 2008 campaign saw more technological innovation in new media than any other before it. The same can be said about previous presidential elections. For example, in 2000, candidates such as John McCain and Howard Dean used campaign Websites to raise money (see Bimber and Davis 2003). In 2004, Dean famously used blogs and social networks to organize supporters and raise funds (see Hindman 2008; Trippi 2004). Activities in each campaign cycle built upon the successes of those that came before and in 2008, we saw more online activity from more sources with more outlets than ever before.

Tools and Tactics in 2008

The 2008 campaign saw an increase in online activity by all campaign actors—candidates and their campaigns, political parties, interest groups,

the press, bloggers, and most notably, citizens (see Smith 2009; Smith and Rainie 2008). For example, many campaign actors, such as candidates and parties, had a larger Web presence than in the past as they utilized more of the varied tools that had been available as well as new opportunities. More familiar Web tools such as email, blogs, candidate- or party-specific sites, and sites similar to Meetup.com were utilized as they had been in the past, but campaign actors began to get even more out of these tools by applying them in different ways. For example, Internet banner advertising[1] strategies were taken to new heights by the Obama campaign, as was the use of Internet search advertising.[2] Both campaigns localized their Web advertising, placing ads on news sites in important cities or states. For instance, during the primary battle with Hillary Clinton, the Obama campaign targeted Web ads on local news sites in states like Texas and Ohio. In general, both campaigns targeted specific Websites in battleground states with ads (see Kaye 2009). Both campaigns also used the Web to target voters based on their characteristics or hobbies; for example, certain groups, such as Hispanics, African Americans, those who watch the Food Network, and those who drove a specific car, were targeted. The Obama campaign also relied heavily on text messaging; roughly 1 million people signed up for this service from the campaign (Vargas 2008). They even went so far as to advertise in Xbox 360 online video games, including Guitar Hero III, NHL 09, and Burnout Paradise (see Otenyo 2010). Of course, this kind of ad strategy is not new to those in commercial marketing, but it was a step forward in political marketing.

While both candidates looked for the opportunities afforded by new media, the Obama team invested more and found greater success. Illustrating the contrast noted above, "The Obama campaign committed to the Internet early. In 2007, it spent $2 million on software and hardware" (Clayton 2010, 137). In addition, the campaign spent more than $2.5 million on Internet advertising early in the primary season (Frantzich 2009); it also paid a Chicago media firm $1 million for placing Web ads (Kaye 2009). What is more, the Obama campaign devoted great amounts of staff resources to the Web. It had several teams of staffers dedicated to online operations (Clayton 2010).

Newer tools such as YouTube (which did not exist in 2004) and SNSs, such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter, also were used extensively by the presidential campaigns (as well as candidates in other races). The Obama team's concentration on social networking paid off. Their follower counts far outpaced those of the McCain campaign on Facebook and MySpace throughout the campaign (TechPresident 2008). There was also a contrast with respect to how much the candidates used YouTube. Obama's campaign had posted more than 1,800 videos on their YouTube "channel" by the end of the campaign, while McCain's had only 330 (Heffernan 2008).

While the campaigns used this new outlet to post information about themselves as well as their opponent, both campaigns also had YouTube

used against them. This particular medium can be dangerous for campaigns as it is driven by "user-generated" or unmediated content. The campaigns are certainly users, but so is anyone else with a video camera. These other users posted videos that the campaigns would not have wanted potential voters to see, including McCain's remarks at an event where he sang "bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb Iran" to the tune of the Beach Boys hit "Barbara Ann" and the video of controversial sermons by Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Obama's former pastor, or about his former associate William Ayers.

The most publicized and lauded use of new media in 2008, however, was the Obama campaign's creation of its own SNS, MyBO. The Obama team made news early on in this endeavor when it hired Chris Hughes, the cofounder of Facebook, to be their director of online organizing and to create MyBO. The McCain campaign followed some time after with its version of MySpace: McCainSpace. Both MyBO and McCainSpace allowed individuals to create their own profiles, interact with others, and donate funds, among other things. The Obama campaign took things even further and used their site to target voters and to organize its get-out-the-vote efforts (Germany 2009).

If campaigns are about contrast, the campaign's message is the way this contrast is articulated to voters. In a way, the Obama campaign went beyond simple messaging with one additional advancement in 2008: the building of the Obama "brand" (see Harfoush 2009; Kaye 2009). Not only did the Obama campaign communicate with voters about why they should choose Barack Obama over John McCain on Election Day, they used the Web to reinforce the message and the candidate with a strategy that rivaled many corporate marketing campaigns.

Included here was a disciplined marketing effort that included consistency across all aspects of the campaign including fonts, logos, and Web design. The Obama campaign logo, familiar to nearly everyone (which is a testament to how well this plan was executed), featured a circle to represent the "O" in Obama using the colors of the American flag with a sun rising in the center, and was found everywhere. More important was what the campaign did with the Web to individualize the logo to particular groups of voters. For example, the campaign created images for different ethnic groups—the Irish, Ukrainians, Croats, and Italians, for example—that created a distinctive image for that nationality, but still incorporated the original Obama logo. The Obama team also used myriad outlets to spread the brand and coupled this with a large team to help deliver his brand message. Their integrated marketing approach used every form of media available (TV and Internet). Again, this was done with the idea of targeting specific voting blocks in mind.

Effects of the New Media

An important question after the 2008 election was: Did any of this matter? In other words, were these strategies effective in delivering votes for the

campaigns? Recent academic research suggests mixed results. On one hand, studies have found that individuals, even when visiting candidate Web sites, are often looking only for entertainment purposes (Bimber and Davis 2003). In addition, users of social networks and online videos are more likely pay attention to news that covers entertainment (Baumgartner and Morris 2010). On the other hand, younger Americans who get political information from SNSs and video-sharing sites are more likely to participate in online political activities, such as forwarding a political e-mail or signing a Web petition (Baumgartner and Morris 2010; also see Castells 2001; Shah, McLeod, and Yoon 2001; Sweetser and Kaid 2008). And while some find that use of Web 2.0 sources significantly increases offline civic engagement and participation (Pasek, more, and Romer 2009; Steger and Williams 2011; Towner and Dulio 2011a; Zhang et al. 2010), others find that those who use social networks for news are not more likely to vote, sign a written petition, or boycott (Baumgartner and Morris 2010; Zhang et al. 2010; see also Bimber and Davis 2003; Katz and Rice 2002; Scheufele and Nisbit 2002). Moreover, several studies have revealed that younger Americans who get news and information from social networks learn very little information about politics and the candidates (Baumgartner and Morris 2010; Pasek et al. 2009; Towner and Dulio 2010; but see Bode 2008; Teresi 2010).

Scholars also have found that different types of Web sources affect voters differently. For example, those who got information about the presidential candidates from YouTube were more likely to illustrate cynicism than those getting information from the candidates' sites, online newspapers, or Facebook (Towner and Dulio 2011a, 2011b; but see Hanson et al. 2010). Yet, those getting information on Facebook and YouTube reported a greater likelihood of voting (Towner and Dulio 2011a). Moreover, ratings of the 2008 presidential candidates among young adults were not influenced after using YouTube (Towner and Dulio 2011b), while use of candidate sites does have an effect. In short, the work that has been done on new media tools used during the 2008 campaign illustrates that the medium can produce results that interest campaigns.

It's Still About Fundamentals

In the end, during 2008, the Web was still all about the fundamentals of campaigning: fundraising and voter contact. In fact, "In addition to using social tools and engaging communities on SNSs, candidates' Web ads [we]re almost entirely geared toward getting people to click through and donate or provide contact information (Kaye 2009, 11). Fundraising was central to every activity on the Web in which the presidential campaigns engaged. Whether it was the candidate's own site, their Facebook page, an ad on a specific Web site, or an e-mail sent to supporters, campaigns were using the Web to try to raise money. While one candidate stood out, both presidential campaigns were

very successful in this endeavor. In addition, the use of SNSs proved to be a great advancement in campaign organization, allowing candidates to communicate, mobilize, and fundraise with very little time and cost. More important, SNSs gave supporters themselves the resources, such as training, tips, and downloadable material, to host events, canvass, and fundraise. Although the Obama campaign was more successful than McCain's, both represent an improvement over what others like Howard Dean had done in the past.

NEW MEDIA IN 2012 AND BEYOND

Predicting what the landscape of campaigning with new media will look like in 2012 is probably a futile proposition; recall that YouTube only launched in 2005 and was a major player in 2008. Moreover, Twitter was developed in 2006 and was a relatively new tool in the 2010 midterm elections. There are, however, some things that are likely to happen. First, Web use in 2012 will be head and shoulders above past campaigns, even 2008. There are new technologies waiting to burst onto the scene that will be advantageous for campaigns and voters that few people know about at this point. Moreover, growth by leaps and bounds has been the standard after each election cycle to date.

Although Web sites were no more than digital yard signs in 1996 (Casey 1996), the 1998 campaign saw innovation few foresaw as a result of secure online fundraising. In 2000, John McCain showed just how powerful this could be when he raised nearly $3 million within three days of winning the New Hampshire primary (Price 2004). Of course, the largest jump in Internet use to date was between the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, with Howard Dean's successful use of the Web as an organizational and fundraising tool for his primary campaign. Dean was raising $4 million per day at one point (Price 2004) and raised $27 million in total online contributions during the campaign (Vargas 2008). The most important innovation, of course, was Dean's use of Meetup.com to organize thousands of offline gatherings, bringing together nearly 200,000 supporters (Price 2004). The Obama campaign built on this and greatly surpassed the successes of Dean's campaign in the areas of fundraising and organization with the roughly $500 million raised online and the hundreds of thousands of events organized through MyBO (Vargas 2008). Who really knows how campaigns will be able to better what was accomplished in 2008?

There are other aspects of new media usage that are fairly predictable, however. The examples above are entirely about presidential races. This is how new technology typically disseminates in campaigns. Presidential campaigns are the ones who can afford—in terms of people power and funds—to devote the appropriate amount of resources to the effort. It was like this with regard to television advertising and survey research in the mid-1900s, so it is not a surprise to see that the most comprehensive and extensive

new media campaigns are developed in races at the top of the ticket. Campaign Web sites and the use of some additional platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others, are certainly featured in races at all levels (see Herrnson, Stokes-Brown, and Hindman 2007; Miller 2011; Rackaway 2009). However, the ability to put these together into a coordinated effort that has each outlet complementing the other really only has been seen at the federal level. As we progress, we will see this technology, and sophisticated strategies for using it, spread down the ballot. Just like state legislative candidates all over the country now use survey research offered by the top polling firms, we should see a similar spreading of the integrated use of new media. Much of this depends on how campaigns at lower levels can make these efforts fit into what are often very small budgets.

In terms of how these campaigns will proceed, candidates will, of course, have their own Web site and use Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and MySpace as well as newer tools such as Ning, Friendfeed, LinkedIn,[3] and Google+[4]. They will try to duplicate the successes of past campaigns in the areas of fundraising and organization. These functions will remain the foundation for campaigns as we head into the next decade, just as they were fundamental for the Obama and McCain campaigns. However, we expect campaigns not only to utilize these online tools more effectively (as technology experts find even better ways to make the most of them) but possibly use them for different purposes. To this point, empirical evidence has not shown much, if any, evidence that new media tools influence voter learning or beliefs. As discussed previously, there is some initial evidence that they can influence voter efficacy as well as the likelihood of certain types of political participation. If campaigns' technology experts can find a way to enhance the value of existing Web tools in these areas, they will have made a valuable, influential, and potentially game-changing discovery.

We also expect campaigns to turn to a larger number and more varied types of new media tools. As we get to 2012 and beyond, candidates will likely have a presence beyond their Web site, YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter accounts. There will be other opportunities, even if we do not quite know what they are at the moment, that will allow candidates to reach out to even more potential voters. How many possibilities there will be is difficult to predict, but campaigners will face at least two challenges in this regard. First, they will have to figure out how to create enough content to keep each site fresh and informative. It can be a challenge to provide enough new material for readers of all the different outlets on a daily basis (see, for example, Williams and Gulati 2011). Another challenge will be to learn how to string together these various online tools into a seamless communication plan that integrates with their more traditional media communications. Colin Delany, founder and editor of epolitics.com, notes that, "Done correctly, the various parts of your online outreach will reinforce each other and the rest of your old-world communications work" (Delany 2009).

While we do not know exactly what the landscape of new media tools and applications will be in 2012 and beyond, one can make an educated guess about what will appear. For example, we can expect more activity involving smartphones and other mobile devices. Messaging and video available on cell phones is likely an area that will be exploited with short message service (SMS) text messaging, voicemails, mobile Internet (i.e., real Internet on mobile devices), iPhone apps, multimedia message service, and video games. It is possible that SMS text messaging will allow candidates to reach a wider audience—far more than e-mail and Facebook. Advantages of SMS are that it is faster and cheaper than e-mail and it is private. In addition, more and more Americans are using non-voice data applications, such as text messaging and accessing the Internet, on their cell phones (Smith 2010). Moreover, it is easy to see the benefits that campaigns might derive by adopting a tactic employed by the Red Cross and other charities after the earthquake in Haiti, which allows mobile phone users to be able to send donations via text messaging and the donation is charged to the user's phone bill.

No matter what the landscape of new media looks like in the future, we expect that campaigns will try to become much more personalized in their appeals to potential voters, donors, and volunteers. We should expect to see continuing growth of market hybrid segmentation, where candidates target specific groups based on age, geography, race, and their policy interests. In their Web advertising, e-mails, text messages, videos, and other types of appeals, the Web user can expect to be targeted by campaigns with a personal and direct appeal.

The possibilities for personalization are wide ranging. Candidate Web sites can be tailored to a specific user based on his or her profile. Certainly advancements in microblogging can lead to targeted messages to certain groups. Much can be done with e-mail as well as mobile phone and SMS text. Personal e-mails and text messages that are tailored toward the user, based on factors such as a recipient's ZIP code or the recipient's main issue concerns, are possible. Specifically, new media tools will allow for continued advancements in microtargeting. Using new technology called attitudinal targeting, campaigns are "able to identify voters not just by the most obvious data points (Republican vs. Democrat vs. Independent, demographics and geographics), but by the subtle shadings and variations on voting behavior, degree of engagement in campaign politics, ideology, and an array of issue positions" (Gernert 2010).

With tools like Twitter, campaigns may be able to move toward more interaction or dialogue with potential voters. Campaigns that have the resources and people power to be able to respond to potential voters who want to use this technology will be able to take communication one step further than one-way communication. As Michael Turk, a founder and partner of CRAFT|Media/Digital, notes about those using Twitter now: "They're not engaging people. They're still trying to use it as a one-way, top-down

message dissemination vehicle. When candidates start to understand that they can use this to communicate one-on-one with people, they can really achieve some interesting things" (quoted in *Politics* 2009).

As we have noted, the use of new Web tools to this point has been focused mainly on two fundamentals of campaigning—organization and fundraising—although empirical evidence shows it is not as effective for persuading voters. Other bedrock functions in campaigns—voter contact and get-out-the-vote efforts—could be influenced more so than they currently are by these new tools. To some extent, the seeds of this new development were planted in 2009 and 2010. New smartphone applications allow for a campaign's volunteers who are canvassing a neighborhood or district to use a GPS to easily find a targeted potential voter, deliver an in-person message to that individual, record their attitudes on issues for a separate communication later, and record their willingness to volunteer or donate. This technology was used by Scott Brown (R-MA) in his upset victory in Massachusetts, as well as by Rick Snyder (R-MI) in his bid for governor of Michigan. This technology also can be used when voting is taking place. As people go to the polls, it can be used to mark off known supporters as having voted, which yields the campaign a digital list of supporters who have not voted merged with contact information for a quick phone call. A more important application would be in an election that features early voting or a heavy absentee ballot vote. Campaigns can record who has voted and know whom they need to target with additional reminders to vote or even specific individualized messages on issues.

In addition, new media tools can be an effective way of researching the opponent. As George Allen (R-VA) found out in 2006 during his "macaca moment," rival campaigns can use new tools to catch a candidate in a gaffe or other unflattering moment (John McCain and Barack Obama found this out, too). But with the expansion of Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, which allow for much more information to be shared, it is not difficult to see campaigns signing up for an opponent's Twitter feed or to be their friend on Facebook to see what is going on in those online communities. Campaigns will be able to use this material, like Allen's opponent Jim Webb (D-VA) did, to create other opportunities such as earned media coverage. As Isaac Wright, CEO of Wright Strategies, notes: "By making new media its own focus as an earned media tool and message development tool, it could more effectively interplay with other forms of paid media, political outreach, organizing[,] and even fundraising efforts, maximizing the potential for success" (Wright 2009).

Thus far, we have focused on how new media might be utilized by campaigns. There are also considerations about how new tools might influence voters as we move into 2012 and beyond. Certainly, the popularity of new media sites like Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube will likely continue to grow. This will attract new users and therefore new consumers of information presented by campaigns on these platforms. New users are also likely

to be generated by the creation of new media tools and applications that have yet to be developed. Moreover, it is difficult to see the trend in media, where the use of traditional sources—like newspapers—is declining and new media outlets are becoming more popular. As there continue to be fewer and fewer reporters, more and more bloggers and other new media outlets will appear. The effect of this trend will only continue the expansion of new media consumers. Whether these new users are demographically similar to those who dominate the use of the Web today remains to be seen, but the power of these tools will only grow more if the "digital divides" between segments of the population along racial, age, and other lines are narrowed (see Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal 2008).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

During the past half century, the traditional research questions focusing on the media's role in election campaigns have remained largely unchanged: What type of media do candidates, political parties, and interest groups use during an election campaign? How do these actors use media? What are the goals of media during election campaigns—networking, fundraising, and informing voters—and how have these goals changed? How have audiences changed? What type of media—television versus newspapers—do audiences use and why? How do media influence political attitudes and behaviors? By pursuing these questions, scholars studied the link between traditional media and levels of political knowledge and participation (e.g., Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Fallows 1996; Patterson 1993; Patterson and McClure 1976; Robinson and Sheehan 1983). As media evolved and technology advanced, these foundational questions were applied to Internet use (e.g., Norris and Sanders 2003; Shah, Kwak, and Holbert 2001; Wilkins 2001) and then newer Internet-hosted tools, such as candidate Websites, blogs, and online newspapers (e.g., Bimber and Davis 2003; Dalrymple and Scheufle 2007; Kerbel and Bloom 2005). The 2008 election cycle saw an explosion in the use of new media tools, prompting media scholars to reevaluate the media's role in election campaigns.

As we noted above, new media proved to be instrumental in the 2008 presidential campaign and likely will take on an even larger role in future political campaigns. However, mainstream media, such as television, print newspapers, and radio, will remain central in elections. Yet, political campaigns have changed with the integration of new media. Specifically, new media have altered the relationships among reporters, candidates, office-holders, voters, and citizens (e.g., Bimber 2003; Howard 2006; Stanyer 2009). As new media continue to proliferate and alter the media environment, scholars must grapple with the new opportunities, directions, and challenges these changes bring to media research. Such concerns means that

traditional research questions may need to be retested, expanded, tweaked, or even discarded.

First, scholars should consider a wide range of important questions: How many candidates and campaigns use new media? Who is more likely to turn to new media tools and why? In the 2008 presidential elections, Obama used new media much more extensively than McCain, taking the lead on e-mails and texts (Clayton 2010; Kaye 2009; Vargas 2008). Answers to these seemingly simple questions are important for many reasons. First, they will let scholars track and understand the use of new technologies just like previous scholars did with television and other adaptations in electioneering. This knowledge will provide a glimpse of how our system of campaigning is evolving. These kinds of innovations and adaptations will be just as important to track as those involving radio and television were. Second, how are candidates, campaigns, and political parties employing new media, and are there differences in how they do so? For example, are state and local candidates using new media differently than presidential and congressional candidates? It is unclear how new media is being used and to what end. Are major and minor political parties using new media for different functions? Initial studies of new media tools found that to be the case. In 2006, Democratic congressional candidates were more likely to have a Facebook presence (Williams and Gulati 2009). In early 2010, Republican members of Congress were more apt to use Twitter (Lassen and Brown 2011; Williams and Gulati 2010). Next, do new media tools allow candidates to organize a campaign more rapidly? If so, what are the consequences for electoral recruitment? The Internet can allow relatively unknown candidates to become well known quickly and at a low cost; consider the Web-based fervor for Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul in 2007. This was something that was not possible in previous elections. That is, is the Web a great equalizer, allowing the underfunded and unknown to become viable candidates for office? By answering these questions, we will better understand how candidates, parties, interest groups and other actors are trying to engage with voters, which will give us a better picture of how the central piece of our democratic government—elections—are being contested. With this information, scholars will be able to evaluate how our system is working.

Beyond the how and why candidates, campaigns, and parties use new media, it is also important to assess the implications of its use for voters and citizens. What new media do citizens use to find campaign information and interact with politicians? What benefits do they expect and derive from these different outlets? Does an individual's age, gender, or party identification matter in the use of new media? As we noted above, it is well known that not all citizens are turning to new forms of media for campaign news. For example, a Pew survey shows that young adults (18–29 years) are more likely than older adults (50+ years) to visit or get online political information from candidate Web sites and SNSs (Pew Research Center 2008a). These questions

are also important for an assessment of how our democracy is functioning. As the work noted above on the "digital divide" makes clear, there are some in our democracy who do not have access to the Web. Should this technology turn into the preferred way of communication, serious questions about the health of our system of campaigning will have to be posed.

Recent evidence shows that an individual's partisan loyalty influences where one seeks campaign information online (e.g., Bimber and Davis 2003; Garrett 2009a, 2009b; Iyengar and Hahn 2009; Mutz and Martin 2001; see also Iyengar et al. 2007). A Pew Research Center (2008b) report shows that McCain voters were more likely to search for news on CNN.com (18%) and FoxNews.com (18%), whereas Obama voters overwhelmingly gravitated toward CNN.com (35%) and Yahoo! (20%), avoiding FoxNews.com (5%). This suggests that in an online environment, individuals easily can select information sources that are more supportive of their attitudes and beliefs over sources that are less supportive. What are the implications of voters selecting news with which they agree and avoiding exposure to political information that is inconsistent with their beliefs? If an individual's views are never challenged, then perhaps the media will simply reinforce what they already know and believe. As citizens gain more choice over media content and sources, does this suggest a return to a time of minimal effects? Will citizens become more polarized and fragmented (see Bennett and Iyengar 2008; Holbert, Garrett, and Gleason 2010; Sunstein 2007)? Moreover, as users become their own gatekeepers to media content, who's setting the political agenda now, the user or the journalist?

In addition, the impact of these technologies will be important to study. Does the use of new media in marketing a candidate result in more votes for the candidate? We understand new media tools as fundraising vehicles (Panagopoulos and Bergan 2009; Gueorguieva 2008), but we do not fully understand their ability to persuade or mobilize voters. Is there a correlation between what happens online and what happens in the political arena? In other words, will the candidate with the most Facebook friends/fans and YouTube subscribers win office? We noted the Obama campaign's dominance over the McCain campaign above, yet this and other candidates' use of Web tools has yet to convince scholars of its influence. For example, some scholars are not entirely convinced that Obama's online supporters contributed to his margin of victory (see Williams and Gulati 2009).

It is expected that millions more people will have access to broadband by 2012, suggesting that Internet will become more integrated into citizens' lives and candidates' campaigns. Will online and offline political participation rise as more people turn to online sources and Internet access becomes more pervasive? As the Internet becomes more decentralized, with user-generated content (or unmediated content) and open-source Web sites, will citizens engage more politically? Candidates can now reach voters in less mediated ways, whether this is online, such as YouTube, or offline, such as

late-night comedy shows. As unmediated communication between candidates and voters increases, does this encourage political participation, or can it backfire? As candidates become more visible, will citizens be able to recognize the credibility gap between mediated and unmediated content? How does campaign content from unmediated outlets, such as candidate-generated news and citizen-generated content (e.g., blogs, Facebook comments, or YouTube videos), influence political knowledge? Are citizens capable of selecting sources with more substantive information and ignoring less reliable or junk content?

This is not to say that scholars have ignored the above questions. Presently, many studies examining recent campaigns and new media, particularly Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and Twitter, focus on how these tools are being used by the public and political candidates (e.g., Golbeck, Grims, and Rogers 2010; Gueorguieva 2008; Gulati and Williams 2010; Lassen and Brown 2011; Powell 2010; Solop 2010; Williams and Gulati 2009, 2010, 2011). As discussed earlier, empirical studies have also begun to analyze causal links between these new tools and political knowledge, online and offline participation, candidate evaluations, government cynicism, and political efficacy (Baumgartner and Morris 2010; Bode 2008; Dale and Straus 2009; Hanson et al. 2010; Kushin and Yamamoto 2010; Nickerson 2009; Pasek et al. 2009; Steger and Williams 2011; Teresi 2010; Towner and Dulio 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Zhang et al. 2010). As noted, these studies offer a mix of findings as to whether SNSs increase offline political engagement and participation (Bode 2008; Pasek et al. 2009; Towner and Dulio 2011a), or not (Baumgartner and Morris 2010). Thus, the influence of new media tools on citizens remains unclear, suggesting that more systematic analyses are needed.

Furthermore, while the above research on politics and new media is important and stimulating, scholars must broaden their research scope to better understand the influence of these tools. First, many empirical studies focus on the influence of only one form of new media, such as social networks (Pasek et al. 2009), combine several online sources, such as video-sharing and SNSs, into one latent variable (Baumgartner and Morris 2010), or ignore the effects of important new media, such as Twitter and network news Web sites. (Regarding network news, a Pew Research Center (2008b) report shows that all voters listed CNN.com (27%) and MSNBC.com (13%) as their top Web sites for campaign information). These approaches fail to acknowledge that many online sources of campaign information, such as *The Huffington Post*, candidate Web sites, ABCNews.com, CNN.com, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and Twitter, have very distinctive features and tools that stem from the sites' unique purposes and services. For instance, YouTube allows users to share videos, Facebook connects people, and Twitter is a microblogging tool. Thus, each source can have different effects on political attitudes and behaviors. Even among SNSs, Pacek et al. (2009) find that Facebook and MySpace users have different levels of political

knowledge, civic engagement, and interpersonal trust, largely due to each sites' distinctive users and functions. But it is also important to examine the effects of new media in the context of both traditional and online media sources (for example, see Baumgartner and Morris 2010; Towner and Dulio 2010). The influence of new media's unique features and characteristics clearly merit more scholarly attention.

Second, much of the research on new media and campaigns focuses on the presidential and congressional levels, virtually ignoring local and state elections. Barack Obama's presidential campaign is not the best example of how most campaigns are conducted. Presidential candidates have a national following with thousands of supporters, millions of dollars in funds, and an army of staffers. Candidates at the local and state level do not have these resources to build their campaign. Several studies find that few state legislative candidates have a Web presence (Herrnson et al. 2007; Miller 2011; Rackaway 2009). Yet, many of these studies were conducted before the 2008 presidential campaign, suggesting that new media use may have increased among state and local candidates since 2008. In fact, Sternberg (2009) notes that state and local politicians are increasingly involved with social media: Governor Deval Patrick (D-MA) maintains a Twitter feed, YouTube channel, Flickr stream, blog, and Web site, and Secretary of State Trey Grayson (R-KY) frequently updates his Facebook page, Twitter profile, and YouTube channel. Following the precedent set by Obama in 2008, local and state candidates in the 2010 midterms also used Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, confirming that new media use is spreading down the ticket from governor, to mayor, to assembly member. This opens the door to several research questions: How common is the use of new media in nonfederal campaigns? Do the same factors—party, incumbency status, district demographics, and the like—predict new media use among state and local candidates? Do citizens now expect their local representatives for their state, town assembly, and local council to connect with them via new media? As we discussed above, the unique characteristics of state and local elections—particularly the varying rules and organization of elections, the different timing of elections, the smaller number of voters, and nonpartisan offices—lead us to expect that the use of new media at lower levels of government will differ from those at the presidential and congressional levels. Thus, examining the roles of social networks, Web sites, and video-sharing sites at all levels of government is essential to understanding the influence of new media on campaigns.

Third, an individual's selection of media content in general is largely understudied. Early research suggests that individuals prefer content that reinforces their opinions and avoid content that challenges their opinion. This is termed anticipated agreement theory, a form of selective exposure (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948; Schramm and Carter 1959; Sears and Freedman 1967; Sweeney and Gruber 1984). This is particularly relevant

to new media scholars, as Internet users gain more control over an online environment that contains increasingly diverse information. For example, in the 2000 and 2004 U.S. presidential elections, citizens who visited a presidential candidate's Web site were more likely to identify with that candidate's party (Bimber and Davis 2003; Garrett 2009b; see also Iyengar et al. 2007). Should we expect similar findings when citizens seek out campaign information on social networks, video-sharing sites, online newspapers, and blogs? Perhaps. Some scholars find evidence that those using social networks, video-sharing sites, blogs, and network news Websites seek out political information that is consistent with their preexisting views (Baumgartner and Morris 2010; Lawrence, Sides, and Farrell 2010; Towner and Dulio 2011b). Other scholars, however, do not totally accept the conventional view of selective exposure, arguing that individuals seek out information with which they agree but they do not completely avoid content with which they disagree (Garrett 2009a, 2009b; Webster 2007; see also Holbert et al. 2010). While the Internet is a sea of content, there are political ''news aggregators'' that allow citizens to easily organize and compare different political perspectives, such as PoliticalWire.com, memeorandum.com, and Google's "Power Readers in Politics."

Of the numerous theories that explain media's influence on society, such as the elaboration likelihood model,[5] reinforcement, minimal effects, agenda-setting, and uses and gratifications, several can easily be applied to new media research. For instance, uses and gratifications can shed light on an individual's selection of political content. According to this theory, media users play in active role in selecting and using media, where users seek out media content, from many alternatives, that best satisfies their needs (Blumler and Katz 1974). That is, individuals use media in many different ways for different purposes. While many scholars offer their own classification schemes, several list similar motivations for media use: (1) information seeking and learning, (2) personal identity and reinforcement of personal beliefs, (3) integration and social interaction, and (4) entertainment (see Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas 1973; McQuail 1983). Over the decades, the uses and gratification theory has been updated to include Internet usage (e.g., Eighmey and McCord 1998; LaRose and Eastin 2004; Papacharissi and Rubin 2000; Rafaeli 1986; Ruggiero 2000) and has recently been extended to include usage of social networks (e.g., Bumgarner 2007; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke 2008; Shao 2009; Urista, Dong, and Day 2009; Park, Kee, and Valenzuela 2009), video-sharing sites (Hanson and Haridakis 2008), and Twitter (Johnson and Yang 2009; Liu, Cheung, and Lee 2010) (see also, Baumgartner and Morris 2010). For those turning to these online sources, many are seeking information about candidates and policy issues, some want to observe the political scene, and others seek pure entertainment. Due to the changing media environment, it is necessary to reevaluate citizens' present needs, uses, and gratification from new media.

Fourth, to date, much of the recent empirical research examines the relationship between new media and political attitudes among college

students or young adults (e.g., Baumgartner and Morris 2010; Hanson et al. 2010; Kushin and Yamamoto 2010; Pasek et al. 2009; Teresi 2010; Towner and Dulio 2010, 2011a, 2011b; but see Zhang et al. 2010). This is a serious shortcoming, as we are unaware of how new media tools, particularly Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, Ning, FriendFeed, LinkedIn, Google+, and text messaging, influence political attitudes among adults. Indeed, during the 2008 elections, few older adults used SNSs for campaign information or watched campaign-related videos online (Pew Research Center, 2008a). Recently, this statistic has changed, however. Over the past year, social networking (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter) use has doubled among older adults (50+) (Madden 2010). Considering this, it is highly probable that both young *and* older voters will turn to new media with more frequency during the 2012 elections. Thus, scholars must broaden their survey sample to a point where it reflects all Americans. The latter has proven difficult, as few national surveys include questions on new media along with questions regarding respondents' political knowledge, efficacy, and participation. Oftentimes, several elections cycles go by before new questions are added to national surveys. (For example, despite the increasing presence of online newspapers during the 1990s, the National Election Study did not include a survey question on its use until 2004). Overall, as new media tools and technology continue to revolutionize the way in which we connect, interact, and share information, it is essential that scholars modernize their research questions, theories, and directions.

Fifth, a majority of the work discussed in this chapter examines new media in the United States, particularly new media and the 2008 presidential elections. But the revolutionary role of new media and Web 2.0 tools is not limited to the United States. Internet access and use has increased in countries around the globe, transforming election campaigning. Several scholars have examined new media in political campaigns in several countries, such as Israel (Lev-On 2011), France (Vaccari 2008), Germany (Schweitzer 2008), and the United Kingdom (Lilleker and Jackson 2010). Much of this literature, however, focuses on a single country (for a notable exception, see Lilleker and Jackson 2011). Thus, we, along with several other scholars (e.g., Anstead and Chadwick 2009; Lilleker and Jackson 2011), urge researchers to conduct comparative analyses of new media and campaigning, as we expect differences in the role of new media in campaigns in different political systems.

CONCLUSION

As we noted from the outset, predicting the future landscape of campaigns and new media is likely a futile proposition. In this article, we drew heavily on the 2008 election as a harbinger of what is to come, as the recent presidential campaign pushed the limits of online campaign strategy. Innovations in the

2008 election cycle included content specialization, grassroots organizing through social networks, targeted e-mails and text messaging, and online fundraising. We suspect that future candidates will build on the "Obama model," increasing their virtual and mobile presence 10-fold. As the preceding discussion indicates, in 2012 and beyond, candidates will likely be on 25 to 40 Web sites, posting daily messages to voters. It is noteworthy that social media or Web 2.0 tools are where television was in 1950 and where the Web was in 1996. That is, they are still in their infancy, with many opportunities and advancements ahead in future campaigns. With technological development, for instance, soon candidates may be able to interact with voters in virtual worlds and tailor *every* political message to each voter in the electorate. Even as new tools emerge, it is unlikely that citizens will turn away from television and print newspapers, continuing to supplement traditional sources with new media. Yet, even traditional media may require redefinition, as television and Internet converge and the print newspaper dies. Consequently, the distinction between traditional journalists and citizen journalists (i.e., bloggers) covering campaigns may become blurred or simply vanish. As the media landscape and its consumers evolve, it is necessary for scholars to keep pace.

These rapid changes in technology and new media require scholars to update the design and direction of future research. Clearly, new media are altering the process of campaigning for political office, changing the relationships among journalists, political candidates, and citizens. Scholars are just beginning to inquire into the empirical links between new media and political attitudes, leaving many questions unanswered and theories untested. As we discussed above, we contend that media research should broaden its focus to include all forms of new media, local and state elections, individual's selection of media content, and adults' use of new media. Challenges to pursuing such questions include overcoming data limitations, gaining access to seemingly inaccessible new media (e.g., e-mail and mobile technologies), managing a large volume and variety of data (as new media provide an infinite space for information), and learning to use data gathering tools to capture online content (e.g., Zotero, TextGrab, Wget). In a way, this article is a call to new media researchers to grasp some of these changes and develop innovative research that builds up our empirical evidence and expands our theoretical understanding. We hope that this prospective look at campaigns and new media serves as a starting point for further academic research and a greater understanding of the changing U.S. democratic system and possibly those of other countries.

NOTES

1. Banner ads or Web banners are advertisements embedded on a Web page consisting of graphic images or multimedia objects that contain a hyperlink to the advertised company or project.

2. Internet search advertising allows companies to place online advertisements in search engine results. It is sometimes referred to as CPC (cost-per-click) or PPC (pay-per-click) marketing.

3. LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site that shares a user's business profile with other professionals.

4. Google+ is a social networking platform offered by Google, Inc.

5. The elaboration likelihood model is a model about how attitudes are formed and changed. This model is based on the belief that in order for attitudes to change, one can engage in two routes of persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route (Petty and Cacioppo 1986).

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