





Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....4

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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 t

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

YouTube of the top t

## 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





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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 ot

to express their opinions freely, for the candidate the Internet offers an arena

## The Internet's Evolving Role

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 sit



## 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](http://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 by

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people are “spending an average of 17 minutes per session o



potential to play a significant and persuasi

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 additi



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 Sena

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).



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

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 es

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

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.









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 = = d

the candidate. Furthermore, the site has what the campaign refers to as “Hilcasts” which are online vi

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

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 materi



Case Study: ParkRidge47 aka Pau

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

questions and De Vellis responding. Both videos

## 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, f

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



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,



appeared to be a member of the campaign, whose job it was to do this<sup>1</sup>. 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 l



## 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 t

## Republican Factor<sup>2</sup>

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, th a

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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



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 Dream<sup>5</sup>.” 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

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However, on March 25, 2007, a new user, referred to

“Tomorrow Begins Today<sup>8</sup>,” Edwards is seen announcing that he is in New Orleans in the Upper 9<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>9</sup>,” 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 1, 500 views.

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 currentl

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 camp d by



## 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-n

the top

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 staffer

rating has plummeted to 99%, t

is Muslim, he attended a Muslim school referred to as a “Madrassa,” he is a c

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 p

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





## 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 DN

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 t h t e

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.<sup>19</sup>” 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 “Senator Clinton and the Seventh-Day Adventists” were

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

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 Clinton<sup>22</sup>” 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 mad

version has generated 459, 263 page view

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](http://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 Profits<sup>26</sup>,” posted by Dayinnews on February 2, 2007, is a video clip from the Democratic National Convention winter meeting, featured on CSPAN, in

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<sup>26</sup> “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 MySpace<sup>27</sup>.” 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.

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<sup>27</sup> “Join the Hillary Clinton 2008 MySpace.” February 19, 2008



## YouTube 2004

The content featured on YouTube from the 2004 Presidentia

1971, in which he describe

The two videos to note from the 2004 campaign featuring George Bush are entitled “Safer Stronger” and “Will Ferrel as Bush.” “Safer Stronger<sup>30</sup>” 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 Bush<sup>31</sup>” 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

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<sup>30</sup> “Safer Stronger.” July 13, 2006. GriperBlade.

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 con

## YouTube 2006: Significant Users

“Arrowhead77,” who posted the video of Co... also posted multiple different videos on YouTube of Burns warning constituents about people “who drive at night” and another which showed Burns joking about a 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 e t nce



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 research





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

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 "Madrasa", to linking the candidate with an overall lo

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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 examp

## 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 wit

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,"

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 9<sup>th</sup> ward in New Orleans working on a housing project, dressed in casual clothing and appearing comfortable and confident with himself. His 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

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 w

web video, the latest candidate satire or parody, updated speeches and news clips and hoping for video clips, in which the candidate is featur

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 can

	“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

February 14, 2007

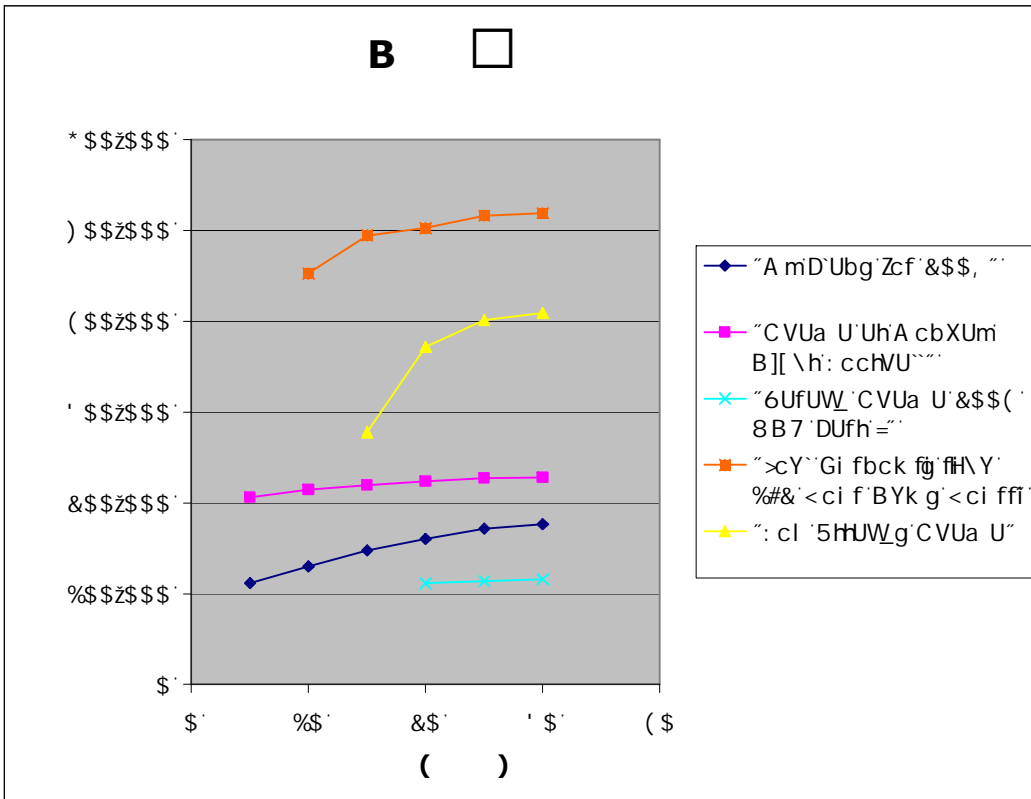
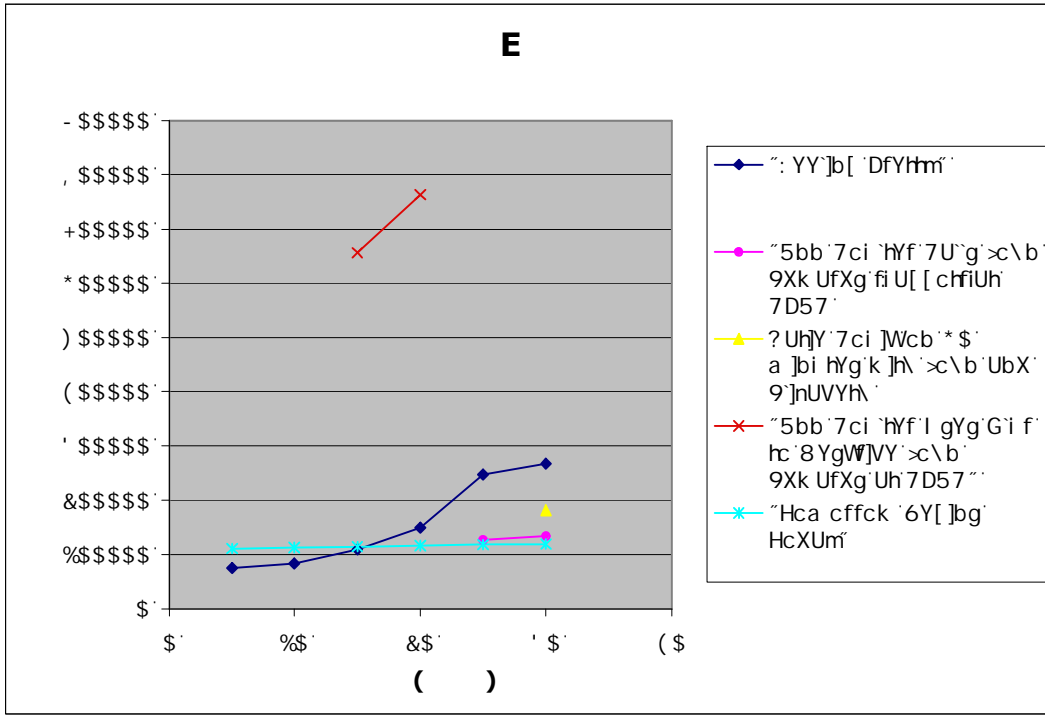
“My Plans for 2008

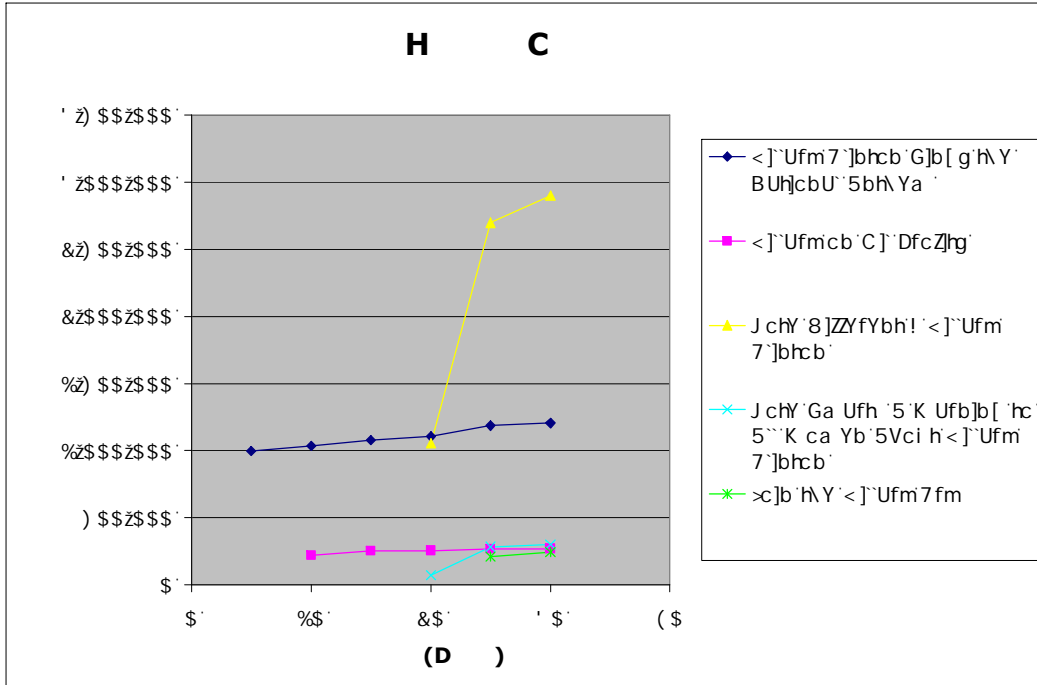
	Part 1”		
	“Joel Surnow's ‘The 1/2 Hour News Hour’”	518, 946	dk7dr7





Graphs







was taken in Novem

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 a w



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