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OBAMA AND THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

In early 2007, Barack Obama was a little-known senator running for president against Democratic nominee and household name, Hilary Clinton. But on November 4, 2008, Obama made history as the first African American to win the election against Republican candidate, John McCain, thus becoming the 44th president of the United States. Obama won by a margin of nearly 200 electoral votes and 8.5 million popular votes. Many factors contributed to his success, but a major one was the way Obama and his Chicago-based campaign team used social media and technology as an integral part of their campaign strategy, not only to raise money, but also more importantly, to develop a groundswell of empowered volunteers who felt that they could make a difference. Michael Malbin, executive director of the Campaign Finance Institute said: “No other candidate has ever integrated the full picture the way he [Obama] has, that’s what’s really new about his campaign.”¹ Edelman Research analysts said that Obama won by “...converting everyday people into engaged and empowered volunteers, donors and advocates through social networks, e-mail advocacy, text messaging and online video. The campaign’s proclivity to online advocacy is a major reason for his victory”² (**Exhibit 1**).

In terms of the numbers, externally, Obama’s campaign was able to garner 5 million supporters on 15 different social networks ranging from Facebook to MySpace. By November 2008, Obama had approximately 2.5 million (some sources say as much as 3.2 million³) Facebook

¹ Chris Lefkow, “Obama Has Huge Lead Over McCain—in Cyberspace,” *Agence France Presse*, October 5, 2008.

² Edelman Research, “The Social Pulpit,” 2009, p. 1.

³ www.happywookie.wordpress.com/2008/12/08/102/

Victoria Chang prepared this case under the supervision of Professor Jennifer Aaker as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation. Contributors included Joe Rospars, Chris Hughes, Sam Graham-Felsen, Kate Allbright-Hannah, Scott Goodstein, Steve Grove, Randi Zuckerberg, Chloe Sladden, and Brittany Bohnet.

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supporters, outperforming Republican opponent John McCain by nearly four times. In terms of Twitter, Obama had over 115,000 followers, more than 23 times those of John McCain. In terms of YouTube followers and clips, people spent 14 million hours watching campaign-related Obama videos on YouTube with 50 million viewers total. That was four times McCain's YouTube viewers.⁴ Beyond such new media, the Obama campaign fully leveraged other technologies such as e-mail and texts. The campaign sent out a total of 1 billion e-mails in-house. They sent 8,000 to 10,000 unique e-mail messages targeted to specific segments of their 13-million member strong e-mail list, with subjects ranging from state and residence to issues to donation history. The staff created content for the e-mails and tested that content by segmenting e-mail lists and trying different experiments. The campaign had garnered 3 million mobile and SMS subscribers too. On Election Day alone, supporters received three texts (**Exhibit 2**).⁵

The campaign's internally created online social network, www.my.barackobama.com (MyBO), allowed individuals to use technology and web tools to connect to one another and to activate themselves on behalf of the Obama campaign. Two million profiles were created on that site. Registered users and volunteers planned over 200,000 offline events, wrote 400,000 blog posts, and created 35,000 volunteer groups through the site. From a financial perspective, Obama raised \$639 million from 3 million donors. Although Obama did raise some money from well-connected fundraisers, the majority of the \$639 million was raised through the Internet.⁶ Volunteers on MyBO itself generated \$30 million on 70,000 personal fundraising pages.⁷ Obama's donors made 6.5 million donations online, totaling more than \$500 million. Of those 6.5 million online donations, 6 million were in increments of \$100 or less. In fact, the average online donation was \$80 and the average Obama donor gave more than once.

All the other candidates had the same access to these tools, but the Obama campaign not only used them more effectively to organize, communicate, and fundraise, but also leveraged the tools to support its bottoms-up grassroots campaign strategy that tapped into the hearts of the voters.⁸ What resulted was not only a victory for the Democrats and Obama, but also the legacy of what was widely regarded as one of the most effective Internet marketing plans in history—where social media and technology enabled the individual to activate and participate in a movement.

THE BEGINNING

Hiring Right

As early as January 2007, Obama hired 25-year-old Joe Rospars to work on the tool and systems for the Obama campaign that were not technology related. The campaign had also just hired

⁴ Edelman Research, op. cit.

⁵ David Talbot, "White House 2.0," *The Boston Globe*, January 11, 2009 and Edelman Research, "The Social Pulpit," 2009, p. 2.

⁶ Jose Antonio Vargas, "Obama Raised Half a Billion Online," *The Washington Post*, November 20, 2008.

⁷ www.happywookie.wordpress.com/2008/12/08/102/

⁸ Obama was not the first presidential candidate to raise a million dollars online (McCain did in 2000). Nor was he the first to use Internet grassroots efforts to mobilize online supporters to meet up in their local communities (Dean did in 2004). However, "McCain failed to convert his online donations into votes and Dean failed to channel the online fervor into effective ground support. Obama was the first to do both, by weaving technology and the Internet into the fabric of his campaign." Edelman Research, "The Social Pulpit," 2009, p. 2.

Kevin Malover as CTO, who was the founding CIO of travel site, Orbitz. Prior to Rospar joining the campaign, Malover and his predecessor had already decided to use Rospar's company (Blue State Digital)—the company that built Howard Dean's online presence in 2003 when he ran unsuccessfully for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination. Obama hired Blue State Digital to build much of his campaign's technology backbone, in particular the hub of all activities—www.barackobama.com, supported by www.my.barackobama.com (MyBO), the campaign's social network (**Exhibit 3**). And Rospars went on leave from Blue State to work on the campaign's content, organizing, and fundraising pieces.

Rospars started Blue State Digital due to his frustrations while working on the Dean campaign. "Things were crazy on the Howard Dean campaign," he said. "The problem was that the mechanics of the political process was disconnected from the passion and the sense of momentum of what was really happening. It was frustrating to see people want to get involved, but not be able to get involved—to see 100,000 people sign up for Meetup,⁹ but for us, only to be able to know who 50,000 of them were because it's a different database and there's a privacy policy. For Dean, we had no control over it. So we started Blue State because four of us from the campaign wanted to figure out how to leverage technology for more organizations and to do it better and to do it right. It turned out that the easiest way was to just start this company."

For Obama, Rospars headed the New Media Department, which "...was the first time that a new media department existed in the way that it did," according to Rospars. The group's set-up was informed by the establishment of the Democratic National Committee's New Media Department, after Howard Dean had taken over as chairman in 2005. The DNC was one of the first clients for which Blue State had staffed up the team and developed tools to manage communications, organizing, and fundraising for the Democratic Party. According to Rospars, "We had already started to explore innovative organizational structures a year or two before working on Obama's campaign. So we were able to hit the ground running."

Giving Respect to New Media

The New Media Department was responsible for everything related to the Internet beyond the technical areas, including all of the organizing, communications, and fundraising aspects of what was happening online. The technology was handled by a separate technology shop run by the CTO of the campaign. Because the New Media Department used external technical resources such as Blue State Digital, the campaign's internal technology group was a service organization that managed the campaign's internal technology for all departments, as well as external technology such as Blue State Digital technology. Rospars said: "This point is crucial because often in organizations—campaigns, companies, and nonprofits—the new media stuff gets lost, either becoming only a communications vehicle inside of a largely PR-oriented press shop or communication shop, or it winds up living under the technology group without a lot of creative side to it. This was part of the arrangement that we came to when I was first hired for the job—that we'd be responsible for all these different aspects of the campaign related to organizing, communications, and fundraising, but we would also integrate and coordinate with other parts of the campaign."

⁹ A site that helped groups of people with shared interests plan meetings and form offline clubs in local areas.

Rospars had the same “rank” as the communications director, the field director, the finance director, and the political director. All of these directors reported up to the campaign manager, David Plouffe, who along with David Axelrod, had run the Democratic consultancy AKP&D in Chicago before joining the campaign. Rospars added: “Obama is the kind of person who trusts the people who work for him. He was involved at the crucial points of the campaign, but expected people to do their jobs. I think the same goes for Plouffe. Obviously, if you screw up, that’s a different story.”

In terms of integration of the New Media Department with the rest of the campaign, Rospars felt that this was critical to the group’s success: “We didn’t really have our own kind of goals and metrics,” he said. “All of our goals and metrics were derivative of the larger campaign goals. You could track everything we did back to dollars or more volunteers. We worked really well with the field people and with the communications people. And that’s something that’s often a huge challenge for a campaign.”

Building a First-Class Team

Within the first few months of 2007, Rospars and the campaign hired a series of talented team leaders such as Chris Hughes, one of the cofounders of Facebook, as the director of internal organizing. Hughes joined in February 2007 as the third team member. Twenty-five-year-old Hughes was one of the key players behind MyBO. Plouffe said: “Technology has always been used as a net to capture people in a campaign or cause, but not to organize. Chris saw what was possible before anyone else.”¹⁰ Hughes had initially connected with Obama’s campaign in the fall of 2006 as midterm elections approached. At the time, Facebook had begun to allow political candidates to set up modified profile pages, and even though Obama was not a midterm candidate, he had wanted a Facebook profile anyway. After setting up the profile, Obama’s team began to see its potential for the presidential campaign. Hughes said: “The Internet was in a really different place in 2007 than it was in 2003. By 2007, we had seen the explosion of networking technologies in general, not just on social networks like Facebook and MySpace, but all across the web, people were sharing more and connecting to other people they knew or people they wanted to know more often.” Another hire in February 2007 was 33-year-old Scott Goodstein as the campaign’s external online director. Originally, external organizing and internal organizing (Hughes’ team) were separate. But by the time of the general election, the two teams were folded into one with Hughes as the head, so that the field people did not have to talk to two sets of people. Also under Hughes’ supervision was the text messaging program, the voter registration program, and the structural issues around integrating with the field program.

Another hire was 25-year-old Sam Graham-Felsen, the content team director, who focused on how to tell the emotional and human stories of Obama’s supporters. Graham-Felsen was a writer at *The Nation*, covering youth politics before he joined the New Media team. He focused on creating content for MyBO’s blog. Thirty-one-year-old Kate Albright-Hannah was hired as the video team director. Albright Hanna was an Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker who had worked at *CNN Presents*.¹¹ Her job consisted of telling the human stories of the campaign

¹⁰ Ellen McGirt, “How Chris Hughes Helped Launch Facebook and the Barack Obama Campaign,” *Fast Company*, March 17, 2009.

¹¹ A show on CNN.

through the video medium. The design and production team director was Michael Slaby (who later went on to become the CTO of the general election). Slaby's team managed the design and production of the website, as well as print design related to leaflets, door hangers, podium signs, etc. Other groups included the online advertising team and the e-mail team, headed by Stephen Geer. The analytics team, led by Dan Siroker, helped to measure the New Media Department's efforts. Siroker came from Google as a product manager of the Chrome browser and was the last of the team leads to join the campaign. Goodstein commented: "I think part of our success was that Joe [Rospars] made a bunch of very smart hires. Having guys like Chris Hughes, who came out of understanding the dynamics of Facebook, and myself, having come out of community organizing, was really important. We were a different type of New Media team than had ever been assembled in the past."

PRE-PRIMARY AND CAUCUS

Launching Websites to Empower People: "Tools Are Just Tools"

When Obama announced his candidacy in February 2007, the team launched its two sites—the main campaign site, www.BarackObama.com and www.My.BarackObama.com. Rospars said: "Although we had less than 10 days to launch the website around Obama's presidential campaign announcement, we were able to do so because the tools had already existed through Blue State Digital." Rospars stated that, in terms of core functionality, MyBO on launch day was essentially the same as it was on Election Day in 2008. He said: "MyBO certainly improved, but in terms of big, grand strokes—the core offline events planning or the people creating their own fundraising goals and raising money on their own—they were all launched on the first day."

Rospars emphasized that while the technological tools were not "super-complicated," what was unique to Obama was the "ethos that went into the tools." He said: "The relationship that Obama built with individual supporters and between the individual supporters themselves was the unique part. The tools are just tools. By the end of the campaign, even the McCain campaign had copied most of our tools. Our tools were sort of the glue for the relationships, but if you're not running a campaign where people understand that those relationships are central to winning, then they don't care about tools on your website."

Reversing Traditional Campaign Involvement: Engaging Supporters at All Levels

Traditional campaigns typically focused on getting two things from supporters: 1) votes and 2) money. The Obama team's grassroots efforts revolved around asking voters for a third element—time, which meant involvement and engagement. On the overall campaign strategy and New Media's strategy, Rospars said: "We established the notion of running a bottom-up campaign strategy and the idea that we needed to build a national grassroots movement to support Obama. This was not only part of Obama's political DNA as a community organizer, but also partly out of strategic necessity, because John Edwards had the left side of the field locked up and Hilary Clinton had the institutional Democratic Party locked up."

The Obama campaign understood that it needed to provide a variety of ways for people to be involved. On MyBO, registered users could create a profile, connect and chat with other registered users, create offline events in their local areas, raise funds, download tools, and find local events. MyBO housed a plethora of materials and user-generated content such as videos, speeches, photos, and how-to guides that allowed users to create their own content, similar to a digital toolbox.¹² According to Edelman Research: “As a supporter moves up the ladder, each rung requires more commitment, creates more value, and will tend to hold fewer people.”¹³ Edelman Research called the first level the “personal,” where users could “friend” Obama on a social network, then sign up for text messages and e-mails, then make a donation or register to vote. The next level was the “social” level where supporters could post a comment on a friend’s MyBO profile or even create their own profile, then possibly create a group. The third level was the “advocate” level where the supporter could try to drive interest to the group by posting pictures, writing blog posts, or creating video and posting it on YouTube. An advocate could be in touch with the campaign directly and host an event with the campaign’s materials (**Exhibit 4**).

In fact, the more active a registered user, the more empowered s/he was by the campaign. Each registered MyBO member was measured on an activity index based on events hosted, events attended, calls made, doors knocked, amounts raised, and groups joined. The higher the activity index, the more access that member was given to training tools and key campaign staff. Volunteers who signed up to do phone canvassing could access a database of potential supporters or nonvoters in their area by entering their zip codes.

Going Where the People Are: Social Networks

Goodstein focused on all of the external social networks, such as getting Obama’s MySpace, Facebook, Linked-In, Black Planet, Eons, AsianAve, Flickr, Digg, Eventful, FaithBase, GLEE, MiGente, My Batanga, and DNC PartyBuilder profiles up, as well as making sure the campaign’s YouTube channel was getting views. Obama was the first presidential candidate to have profiles on AsianAve.com, MiGente.com, and BlackPlanet.com. The campaign limited itself to 15 external social networks in order to focus. Goodstein said: “I was also trying to do interesting things within the hip-hop community blogs and figuring out where else to put our videos beyond YouTube, such as on MySpace Video.” He added: “These social networks are shopping malls that have millions of millions of people already hanging out in them. So the question becomes, how to find the people that are going to be your advocates and have them talk about your message? It’s no different than basic organizing and going door-to-door anywhere in the country.”

For example, Goodstein sought out the disabled American community social network, Disaboom, in order to talk to an audience in a very targeted way. “It was a great way to reach out to the disabled American community and have a real conversation about their issues and questions and pointing people in the right direction towards our policy papers,” said Goodstein. Another example was the business social network, Linked-In. Goodstein said: “This isn’t exactly the most progressive of the social networks, mostly comprised of CEOs and large businesses. Statistics showed that it was more Republican, but we went on the site. We asked a

¹² Edelman Research, “The Social Pulpit,” 2009, p. 6.

¹³ Ibid, p. 5.

question on the site, ‘What are your suggestions for helping small business?’ And we were actually able to hear from people that ran their own small business about what their real problems are. We got really well-thought-out answers and had a really interesting conversation and dialogue. Then we had President Obama address a couple of the really thought-out suggestions and just engaged in a conversation and dialogue with people that he wouldn’t have necessarily met any other way.” After establishing Obama’s presence on all of these external social networks, Goodstein’s team maintained the presence by answering questions on those sites and responding to people on those sites. On MyBO, the links of the various social networks were listed and accessible.

Even though external organizing on existing social networks was an important part of the New Media Department’s strategy, Rospars noted that “...The external social networks were never a driver of fundraising. They were really more about starting the relationships. We viewed them as sort of embassies where you go in and you speak the language and you’re respectful of the culture, but ultimately you’re about encouraging tourism and integration.”

On Obama’s Facebook presence (**Exhibit 5**), Randi Zuckerberg, who led marketing, political, and social change initiatives on Facebook said: “One thing that really strikes me about Obama’s Facebook page is how authentic he is. He has his favorite music up there, his interests, basketball, spending time with kids, Godfather I and II are his favorite movies, etc. I think that really sums up what Obama did on the web that was so effective is that you really felt like you were connecting to him and to his campaign. They were constantly updating their profile, telling people they were on the campaign trail or eating pizza or stuck in traffic. It was this kind of voice that made everyone feel like they were in one conversation together.”

Reversing Traditional Fundraising: Focus on the Number of Donors/Micro Giving

By March 2007, the New Media Department had grown to approximately 15 team members. After setting up the websites, the department developed a fundraising campaign that would shape the campaign’s entire fundraising strategy. Rospars said: “Our first fundraising push set the tone for the rest of the campaign—it wasn’t really about the money. We resisted the temptation to crush people with fundraising requests when they signed up on our site in February 2007. When we did our first set of fundraising, our goal was the number of people we wanted giving, not the dollar amount. That was something that became a tradition of the campaign—not doing things the same old way as before, or as the other campaigns were doing. We wanted to accentuate the relationship with our supporters, as opposed to detract from it.”

Being Authentic: Capturing Real Stories Through Blogs and Video

In March 2007, a key New Media hire, Sam Graham-Felsen joined the team as the lead blogger (eventually his title changed to content lead), to focus on telling stories and blogging as part of the campaign’s communications mission. Graham-Felsen reported to Rospars, but sat in on all of the communications meetings and the rapid response research meeting each morning. He said: “Joe [Rospars] told me he wanted someone with a writing background to tell the story of how the Obama campaign was bigger than just Obama, how it was a movement of ordinary

people around the country who wanted to get involved in the campaign, and how many of these people had never been active in a political campaign before.”

Graham-Felsen spent the first several months of the campaign calling grassroots supporters and profiling them by writing in-depth stories about who they were, what their struggles were, and what they were hoping Obama would do if elected. The campaign wove many of these stories into campaign materials, from e-mails to videos. “I think those profiles really helped shape the narrative that this was a bottom-up, grassroots effort,” said Graham-Felsen. “We didn’t want to do what a lot of other campaigns do, which is to regurgitate press releases. Instead of repeating what’s in the news, we wanted to report what wasn’t in the news—things that were happening at the grassroots level across the country.”

Working closely with Graham-Felsen was Kate Albright-Hanna, who joined as director of video in April 2007. She and her team put many of the human stories on video (**Exhibit 6**). She added: “Everything we did we carried in our hearts, and I think that’s different than being a political operative where you have focus groups and try to figure out how to target certain people. We approached it like we were part of a movement. I think a lot of other campaigns have missed opportunities where they think of the Internet as just another place to put their TV ads.”

The content and video teams were key players in supporting the campaign’s fundraising strategy. For example, the team showcased the 75,000th donor. Although the campaign eventually had over 3 million donors, at the time, 75,000 seemed like a large number. Graham-Felsen said: “We looked that donor up in the system and found out he was an African-American computer programmer in California. It was a powerful story where he told us that he wasn’t comfortable telling his daughter that she could be anything because he didn’t think she could be president. But Obama made him feel like he could be honest when he told her she could be anything she wanted to be.” The team posted the story on the blog, sent the story out by e-mail, and featured the story on the website. The team continued featuring donor milestones, such as the 250,000th donor and others (**Exhibit 7**).

“The people we profiled had a chain effect on other people and inspired them to donate too,” said Graham-Felsen. “We were taking ordinary people seriously and we were really listening to their stories.” Other stories, such as one about a woman whose husband had gotten cancer and the family went bankrupt, made its way into Obama’s major healthcare rollout speech. “We were autonomous from the communications department, but it was nice to be able to find stories and push them to the rest of the campaign if they were powerful, so that they could be woven into the larger message.” Steve Grove, head of YouTube politics said: “Early on, I don’t think the Obama campaign really differentiated themselves too much from other campaigns, but as the campaign progressed, they just got better and better and Kate really did some phenomenal video work. They were the one campaign that viewed video as an internal documentary window to what was taking place on the campaign trail.”

Graham-Felsen emphasized that authenticity and substance contributed to their success. “You have to spend time interviewing people and getting the real human stories. A lot of organizations just find a stock photo on the Internet of smiling people and put a fake quote

underneath it. Why do you need to do that when ordinary people have much more interesting, dynamic, and authentic things to say that can also help your organization? When we trained our interviewers, I would tell them to think of it as an opportunity to meet and get to know someone you never might have met otherwise, and then ask a million questions, not about Obama because everyone would say the same things, but about their lives.” Grove provided the YouTube perspective: “The Obama campaign’s video content made people feel like they were a part of the campaign. Their video strategy improved the inclusiveness of the campaign and brought people into the campaign because video has a natural tendency to provide transparency. By the end of the election, the Obama campaign had uploaded over 1,800 videos that had been viewed over 110 million times total. Tech President did a calculation that showed that YouTube was worth \$47 million to the Obama campaign if they had bought TV dollars and they didn’t even spend a penny on it.”

Launching a Sophisticated E-mail Program

Stephen Geer, the e-mail head, joined the team in early 2007, launching the e-mail program in May 2007. The e-mail team had three goals: 1) message, 2) mobilization, and 3) money.¹⁴ The team used the platform to support everything else the New Media team and the campaign were doing. In terms of messaging, the New Media team followed the overall campaign strategy and themes, using e-mail to drive the message.

In terms of mobilization, the e-mail team’s three-word mantra was respect, empower, and include.¹⁵ Prior to the primaries, the team focused on setting up e-mail lists in each state, communicating public events, enlisting volunteers, etc. Their strategy mirrored the New Media strategy of escalating and tiered involvement. If supporters signed up for an event, they were asked to volunteer [in an e-mail]. If they volunteered, they were asked to host a phone bank. The team also used the platform to steer supporters to MyBO to create events of their own and recruit friends if they hadn’t done so already. The e-mail team worked closely with the field to identify and leverage existing supporters who had registered on MyBO and perhaps hosted events and parties. They used these e-mail lists to identify supporters when they started working in a state. This allowed the campaign to have a prepared list and a level of support that was unprecedented. This was especially important during the primaries in 2008, as discussed below.¹⁶ The third e-mail team goal was money, and the strategy paralleled that of the New Media team and the overall campaign, focusing on micro giving and the number of donors. The e-mail team supported all of the New Media team’s grassroots fundraising efforts, described in more detail below.

Specifically, in terms of numbers and segmentation, the campaign developed more than 7,000 customized e-mails tailored to individual prospects, and made real-time improvements. According to Edelman Research, as the campaign progressed, the effectiveness of the e-mail campaigns improved and the conversion rates also improved.¹⁷ According to Greer, the e-mail

¹⁴ <http://www.banane.com/workblog/?p=527>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Edelman Research, op. cit., p. 9.

segmentation was based on commonsense categories such as demographic data, behavioral data, donor or not, how much donated, registered to vote or not, etc.

Going Where the People Are: Mobilizing Through Mobile Devices

The New Media Department launched the campaign's texting program in May 2007, and Goodstein developed, launched, and managed that program. "Like all of our programs, texting got a lot more sophisticated as the technology changed and as the campaign grew," said Goodstein. The texting program started with basic SMS (Short Message Service), which allowed mobile phone users to send each other short text messages. Over time, the texting program developed ring tones and wallpapers, as well as iPhone applications and video. In general, the campaign sent between 5 and 20 targeted text messages per month. Supporters could text "HOPE" to subscribe to text messages from the campaign.

Integrating the Old with the New: "Walk for Change" Canvass

A major organizing event during the initial months of the campaign was "Walk for Change," a large national grassroots canvassing¹⁸ program. On June 9, 2007, while Obama was campaigning in Iowa, Walk for Change held official major statewide canvasses in all the early states where the campaign had staff (Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina), as well as in all other 47 states including D.C., places where the campaign did not have staff. These other canvasses were planned by Obama supporters who had signed up on the campaign's e-mail list or had signed in on MyBO and organized an event using the event planning tool. "We had limited staff involvement in the other states, but we promoted the events that users had created and got people to show up for them," said Rospars.

In the non-staffed states, Obama supporters across the country planned 1,000 events, which any individual could find by entering a zip code on the MyBO site and seeing what Walk for Change events were happening nearby, without needing to know the person organizing the event. When three or more people RSVP'd to the event, the New Media team sent the host of the event a box that included hand-out literature, stickers, sign-in sheets, scripts, etc. The campaign sent out nearly 1,000 boxes, and those hosts who had not organized their events early enough to receive boxes could access materials online. The team also sent e-mails out to their contact list, encouraging everyone to "find an event near you," and asking whether they would be willing to pitch in and help the organizers. "We purposely made this a low threshold of three or more people for events," said Rospars. "This was a real special moment for people in states where they didn't expect to have a say in the primary¹⁹ or in general, but were still willing to go out and organize. It wasn't just about this single election. It was about building a broader movement and getting more people involved. We didn't want to take any votes for granted and we really believed in peoples' potential to impact the political process."

The team had conference calls with supporters who had planned events, and the experience of the hosts varied widely. "We tried to help them and also to get them to help each other," said

¹⁸ To solicit votes.

¹⁹ A primary is an election where voters in a jurisdiction select candidates for a subsequent election, the general election.

Rospars. New Media's video team also went out to shoot some of the supporter events and aired them on YouTube. "We tried to capture as much of the events as possible and show it back to everyone because even if you didn't participate on that day, we wanted you to feel like you were a part of this thing that happened and had some ownership over it," said Rospars.

Walk for Change was unique in that the other campaigns were not doing anything similar. Rospars added: "We had done some experiments with things like this at the DNC in 2005 and 2006, with the same basic premise of trying to get people involved everywhere. For too long, the Party had been ignoring people who lived in Texas because we weren't in Texas every four years in the presidential race. But Texas elects a governor, two senators, and a bunch of House members so we thought that we should get organized there and get our people connected with each other, trained, and reaching out to the people."

The Walk for Change event met the campaign's organizing mission and both of its components. The first was supporting the traditional field people in terms of generating new leads for volunteers to contact, as well as providing tools for them to make their work and their organizations more transparent (e.g., online events tool to post events online). The second was organizing people remotely in all the places where the campaign did not have staff. The Walk for Change event was one of the campaign's first efforts to integrate its traditional field program with a more distributed field program supported by volunteers. Rospars said: "It was one of the first big challenges of integrating the new way of organizing with the traditional way of organizing, and using both to make each other better."

Reversing Traditional Fundraising: E-mail Grassroots Matching Campaign

The traditional fundraising matching concept was one where organizations would contact donors and ask them to donate money and if they did, a "rich anonymous [or non-anonymous] donor would match your contribution," explained Rospars. "Having worked in direct marketing, I can tell you that this feels like a scam. And even if it doesn't feel like a scam, a person might be asking why he or she has to give money if this rich person is the one who has the money. It can feel disempowering."

In mid-2007, Rospars and his team invented a grassroots matching idea where they sent out two separate e-mails—the first to a group of prior donors, asking them to give a second time only if the campaign could find a new donor to donate the same amount; the second e-mail to non-donors who had only signed up on the e-mail list but had not given yet. These people were told that if they donated any amount, the campaign would find a match for them from someone who had already donated once before. "This was incredibly compelling to people," said Rospars.

The team built technology to match people, so that if a new donor decided to give \$20, the system would match that person with another person who was willing to donate \$20 too. The system also allowed the first-time donor to see the name and town of the other person and a note that they had written. The first-time donor could write a note back if s/he desired. Matched donors could even check a box and share e-mails to continue their conversation. "Over the course of the campaign, we implemented this program over and over and raised tens of millions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of people made connections with other grassroots

supporters,” said Rospars. “It really put a human face on the campaign and was consistent with the goal of getting a greater number of people involved and giving to the campaign.”

Reversing Traditional Fundraising: “Dinner with Barack”

By June and July of 2007, the New Media team had grown to approximately 15 people. An innovative event that the campaign planned during that time was the “Dinner with Barack” fundraising event that “turned traditional fundraising upside down a bit,” according to Rospars. The program had an impact on all of the three different missions of the campaign (communications, organizing, and fundraising). Typically, a traditional fundraising dinner allowed donors of high dollar amounts to buy access to dinner with candidates.

The Obama campaign did the opposite and selected four donors of any amount who had shared their stories with the campaign on why they had donated money (during the campaign’s first grassroots matching campaign). On MyBO, it stated: “While a typical political dinner these days consists of officials being wined and dined by Washington lobbyists and bigwigs from special interest PACs, Barack will be sitting down with four regular people from across the country, who will share their stories and discuss the issues that matter most to them.”²⁰ Over the course of the campaign, the team implemented two such “Dinner with Barack” events. Those selected met with Obama in a dinner setting and were able to discuss their important issues with him. The events were broadcast on YouTube and the campaign’s websites (**Exhibit 8**).

“Interestingly, a lot of people read the stories of other donors and were inspired to give because of the other stories they read about,” said Rospars. “The stories put a human face on our donors. There was a big communication and meta-message element to that. And at the same time, the stories also raised a ton of money. People really appreciated that we were doing things in a different way because small donors, especially early ones, sometimes think that the closer you get to the political process, the ickier it gets. But on our organizing mission too, we were able to get 25,000 new people to give \$5, for example, and we were able to provide a huge new list to fuel our organizers of people who’ve made some level of commitment to the campaign. This event checked all of our mission boxes and when we were our most successful, it was because we were able to meet all three missions.” Goodstein added: “With ‘Dinner with Barack,’ we were able to get all of our different external social networks engaged too. People were excited about this and they really wanted to meet Barack so the program became viral. Our video team also did a great job capturing the dinner on video. People were talking about the videos on our blog. I think the program integrated every piece of new media available, our entire team worked on it, and it raised a lot of money (**Exhibit 9**).”

Creating Big Moments: New York Rally

In September 2007, the Obama campaign was down in the polls by more than 20 percent²¹ and Rospars and his team were looking for ways to create “big moments.” “The big moments were

²⁰ <http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/dinner>.

²¹ A Siena Research Institute New York poll showed that among Democratic primary voters, Hillary Clinton would score 42 percent in a primary match, with Obama scoring 17 percent. Grace Raugh, “Obama Due Here for Fundraiser, Then a Rally,” *The Sun*, September 24, 2007.

few and far between in September 2007 compared to the fundraising and sign-up big moments prior to that,” said Rospars. “One of the things that we learned early in the campaign was that all the people who had signed up and RSVP’d on our site early on during rallies turned out to be incredibly valuable volunteers and donors for us later on. So we had a disproportionately high volunteer and donor rate in places like Travis County, Texas, because Obama had gone to Austin in that first month of the campaign and we had gotten 20,000 people to RSVP on our website for that rally, who then later wound up giving over time. So we had always argued to do more rallies and finally, when September came, we were able to persuade our team to do another big rally. We decided to do it in New York because it’s a great place to grow your e-mail list and donor base, because there are a lot of Democrats there, and it was also in Hilary Clinton’s backyard.”

For the rally, the team made a logo that, instead of saying “♥ New York,” said, “I <Obama logo> New York.” The volunteers who had already signed up on MyBO helped to put the posters up and to organize and build the rally. “Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx were covered with posters, flyers, and stickers about the rally,” said Rospars. “We had provided our supporters these materials electronically and encouraged them to go out and get them up.” Volunteers even organized events in the weeks leading up to the rally in order to promote the rally. The team also sent e-mails to supporters around the country telling them about the rally and asking them if they wanted to “make a road trip” to New York and to tell their friends in New York about the rally. “We didn’t do this because we thought a ton of people were going to get in their car and drive from Georgia,” said Rospars. “But we wanted to give them a sense of involvement in what was happening and to emphasize the importance of this rally to our campaign. We wanted everyone to take ownership of putting the rally together and feel responsible for its success.”

During the week of the rally, the team provided dispatches from the ground of the volunteers putting together the rally with pictures coming from Washington State Park. They also streamed the rally live online and conducted interviews of volunteers. Immediately after the rally, they produced a music video-type piece with a clip from Obama’s speech and examples of the volunteers’ efforts to get people to show up at the rally. The team sent out an e-mail from Obama to the campaign’s e-mail list, along with the video, thanking all supporters. “There was momentum around this rally, building up to our fundraising deadline that happened to be three days later,” said Rospars. “We were able to take what had happened in New York and this moment that we had essentially created from nothing and turn that moment into a fundraising rally—the best that we had done up to that point. Beyond a fundraising opportunity, the rally was also an organizing opportunity because anyone who did anything to help build that rally was now a volunteer who[m] our field people could reach out to. We could also call them and ask them to come to New Hampshire for the weekend, for example, and ask them to help us more.”

2008 CAUCUSES AND PRIMARIES

Iowa Caucuses

Iowa and New Hampshire were the two primaries that typically drew much attention because they held the first caucus²² and primary election respectively, often giving a candidate momentum to win the party nomination. In Iowa, residents met in precinct caucuses in all of Iowa's 1,783 precincts, and elected delegates to the corresponding county conventions (99 counties and thus 99 conventions). These county conventions then selected delegates for both Iowa's Congressional District Convention and the State Convention, which eventually chose the delegates for the presidential nominating conventions.²³

By January 2008, the New Media Department had grown to approximately 25 staff members. Rospars said: "January through June 2008, during the whole primary, we kept asking 'When is this going to end?' because we only had volunteers and interns and were not hiring staff, and were tight in terms of resources. It was a slog." In the first half of 2008, the campaign was "lurching from contest to contest," according to Rospars. "But what was great was that we learned something after every contest. For example, we learned how to make the Caucus Location Finder tool better, we learned how to generate a higher return on investments for advertising we were doing in the states to drive people to the Caucus location look-up tool or their polling place, etc. We made a lot of incremental best practice improvements during these contests." Hughes added: "During the first half of 2008, my team focused a lot on events, groups, and on personal fundraising. Events got a major facelift around this time, but we didn't have a lot of resources. Our basic infrastructure was there. We had a car, it just drove really slowly and broke down all the time. We never got to a Ferrari, but we got to a nice Toyota Camry."

The New Media team, like the entire campaign had all eyes on winning the Iowa caucus. "The entire campaign was focused on Iowa," said Hughes. "Every staff meeting, David [Plouffe] would ask, 'What did you do today to help us win in Iowa?'"²⁴ Winning Iowa would prove that Obama had mainstream popularity, with the ultimate goal of winning the nomination on Super Tuesday on February 5, 2008.²⁵ Obama ended up winning in Iowa and Hughes said: "It was a real flashpoint for the campaign. We could see that our organization was strong and that the message was resonating with people."²⁶ Rospars said that once the caucuses started, the team was still working to optimize communication and fundraising opportunities. For example, when Obama came off a stage after speaking, the team made sure to send an e-mail to supporters.

Loss at New Hampshire Primary Five Days Later

After winning in Iowa, Obama had hoped to win in New Hampshire to solidify his hold on the top spot during the state-by-state races toward the selection of candidates for the national election. But Obama ended up losing in New Hampshire, despite early polls that showed Obama was ahead of Clinton by double-digits. After the loss in the New Hampshire primary five days after the win in Iowa, the volunteer networks within the MyBO site "became critically important," according to Plouffe. "When we turned to the community, they were there. We sent

²² A meeting of the local members of a political party, to select delegates to a convention or register preferences for candidates running for office.

²³ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/iowa_caucus.

²⁴ McGirt, op. cit.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

stuff [leaflets, signs, etc.] into Colorado and Missouri for caucuses, and the staff was already half organized. We were there to support the people, but that simply would not have been possible if we did not have a set of online tools that enabled us to do that. It wasn't just a tactic. Chris made that happen."²⁷

Rospars agreed with Plouffe and added: "In all of 2007, we had been organizing people and getting them connected with each other and organized on their own with virtually no resources. So that when it was time to drop staff into these later primary and caucus dates, our field people didn't have to do the equivalent of dialing through the phone book to find out who our volunteers were. They had volunteer networks already set up in every city. They had a transparent view because it was all already organized on MyBO. And they understood who the leaders were, what their different roles were, they could see the level of activity, and then they just had to plug in and layer in their structure." Hughes added: "All of a sudden, it made a difference that we have 60 really organized groups in Kansas, a caucus state. And a hugely active Boise for Obama group."²⁸ Rospars said: "That's when a bunch of people really got what Chris and his group were trying to do. When we lost New Hampshire, we needed every leg we could stand on. The community turned out to be that leg."²⁹

February 12, 2008 Victories in Maryland and Virginia

In June of 2008, the New Media team had around 30 staff members. As the campaign moved forward, the staff noted how the MyBO community had really begun to gain momentum and help out in key states. For example, when Jeremy Bird, the official state director, landed in Maryland in February 2008 for the primary, he saw an entire field operation already functioning. "They had the entire thing set up—an office with seven computers, phone lines, a state structure, county chairs, and meetings every other Saturday. They had even picked their own state director."³⁰ Obama won in Maryland with 57.4 percent of the vote and he also won in Virginia that day too. Marcia Carlyn, co-administrator of the Loudoun County for Obama group, said: "We couldn't have done this without the MyBO site."³¹

RUN-UP TO THE ELECTION

Creating Big Moments: Vice President Announcement via Text

On August 23, 2008, Obama's team sent out a text to its 1 million subscribers announcing that Senator Joe Biden would be Obama's running mate. Nielsen Mobile called it the largest mobile marketing event in the U.S. to date.³² Goodstein said: "We had been using text messages very successfully through all the primaries and with the V.P. announcement, the media sort of caught onto what we had been doing all along and let the world know that we had and were going to have a serious text component to our campaign." The text message was not sent without a snafu, however, since the announcement had already been leaked to the media hours before.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Nick Covey, "2.9 Million Received Obama's VP Text Message," *NielsenMobile*, August 25, 2008.

Continuously Improving Technology: Two Breakthrough Tools

During the second half of 2008, the New Media Department had some time available prior to the Democratic National Convention³³ and before the general election to take what they had learned and build new aspects into their tools. Rospars said: “The tools largely remained the same, but there were some big differences in how they operated. Our phone banking tool or online calling-and-canvassing tool called Neighbor-to-Neighbor was launched in September 2008. It got a lot more sophisticated and much more real-time linked up with the voter database [a database called “VAN” that included all the voters in America], for example. We were trying to remove humans from the process of having to physically move data back and forth.” The Neighbor-to-Neighbor functionality allowed logged-in users on MyBO to see a list of undecided voters who needed to be called or reached by going door-to-door (**Exhibit 10**). Volunteers were matched with undecided voters that they could best relate to in terms of age, geography, profession, language, military service, etc. They had access to a script to use in their conversations, a customized flyer to distribute, and easy interfaces to report back the results of their efforts to the campaign. Volunteers used the tool to make 8 million calls.³⁴ Hughes added: “This new tool was much more stable than our original voter contact tool, and it directly integrated with the rest of the field database.”

Beyond the Neighbor-to-Neighbor tool, Hughes and his team also launched the Vote for Change voter-registration site. Instead of going door-to-door to register voters, the tool registered a million people online. Registering the same number of voters in person would on average, take 2,000 paid staffers and volunteers.³⁵ The voter-registration site was dynamic too, asking registrants a series of questions. If a registrant was a student, the site would ask where s/he went to school and the state s/he came from. “We’d determine which state was most important for us to win,” said Hughes, “...and assuming that the law says that a full-time student can register there, we would suggest it.”³⁶ The Vote for Change tool also showed users who logged in which of their friends in battleground states were not yet registered to vote. When they were not, messages would appear that encouraged the user to talk to their friends and help get them registered to vote.

Capturing Momentum and Building the Team

After a mid-year budgeting process, the New Media team hired more people from June through December, peaking at approximately 100 people by December 2008. This included both full-time staff and temporary staff. Rospars managed those 100 people, as well as an additional 40 people who reported dotted line into the New Media Department, but who were parts of the different state organizations. Hughes’ team grew to 10 to 12 back-end people around that time, all from Blue State Digital, and 5 front-end design people.

³³ The primary goal of the Democratic National Convention is to nominate and confirm candidates for president and vice president. The party’s presidential nominee is chosen in a series of individual state caucuses and primary elections, although the party’s presidential nominee is usually known months before the convention.

³⁴ McGirt, op. cit.

³⁵ McGirt, op. cit.

³⁶ McGirt, op. cit.

Rospars emphasized the team-orientation of the New Media Department. He said: “Right down to the last people we added to team e-mail for the home stretch, who were making \$100 a week, those people were making a material difference to the end result of what we were doing. Each of our 100 people and the 40-some volunteers we had were making a difference. There was so much complicated stuff going on. We were running 25 different battleground state programs, the national program, the constituency programs, the rapid response, fundraising, and organizing aspects of everything. Every single person was working up to 20 hours a day, making a huge difference.”

Leaving No Stone Unturned: Convergence of Online and Offline Universes

During the four days prior to the election, the New Media team worked on several things to support the campaign. If a supporter had given the campaign a zip code or other information, and visited the general campaign website or MyBO right before the election, the front pages of both sites listed an offline event that was happening near the supporter. Rospars added: “On top of that, if we could guess where you lived based on your IP address, we would show you an event where we thought you were located. If we didn’t know, then you would get a general search box.” He added: “This was the moment of truly linking the offline and online universes. If you rewound eight years prior on a candidate website, you wouldn’t have expected to see anything about what was going on offline. In the past, you might fill out a volunteer form and hope to hear back in six weeks by mail if the campaign wanted to raise money from you. And now we had this direct shortcut that said, ‘get off the website and go do this specific thing at a specific place and time.’ It was pretty incredible.”

Making sure voters knew the location of their polling places was also an important focus during the last few days of campaigning. Anyone who had given the campaign an e-mail address received an e-mail reminder to vote along with the polling address and hours. “You didn’t even have to come look on our website,” said Rospars. Another tool the team created towards the end of the campaign allowed a voter to look up his or her polling place. Moreover, in battleground states, if people went to the website to look up their polling places, the site would list five other people who had the same polling place and encourage the supporter to call them or knock on their doors and “take them with you,” said Rospars. “That was pretty cool and was part of our strategy of never letting people feel like there was not something else that they could do to help. We were able to come up with that tool right at the end and implement it quickly and I’m pretty proud of being able to provide people with that one last opportunity.” The e-mail team even followed up such efforts on Election Day, sending a list of five likely Obama voters in a supporter’s neighborhood with encouragement to help them get out to vote, and emphasizing a supporter’s “sense of ownership.”³⁷ On Election Day, the campaign also used Twitter to post toll-free numbers and texting strings for finding polling locations, as well as volunteer opportunities.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: TRACKING PERFORMANCE

The Obama campaign tracked the success of every e-mail, text message, and website visit. Each ad and e-mail was created in multiple versions with different headers, as well as other variables

³⁷ <http://www.banane.com/workblog/?p=527>.

such as buttons versus links, video versus Audio versus plain text, etc. But Rospars added an analytics team on top of that, whose job was to measure all of the New Media Department's efforts. By the end of the campaign, the team comprised five members, with an additional four to five unpaid staff. Rospars elaborated on performance measurement: "Team e-mail, online advertising, and the design and production people had their own internal systems to try things and test things as a matter of course. But the analytics team was something that I added for the general election, to be a sort of person peering over the shoulders and heavy sort of data cleansing and tools-building groups to jack things up to another level. Everything we were doing from rolling out new tools, to changing the design on the front page, to sending out e-mail was heavily tested and optimized based on what we had learned previously and what we were able to learn in real time."

Hughes also emphasized the importance of metrics right from the beginning of the campaign: "Our rigorous focus on ROI, votes, dollars, door knocks, people recruited, people signed up, etc. was consistent from the beginning. I think this was probably the biggest difference between the way we used the technology and the way some of the other campaigns had thought about technology up until then." Hughes group initially measured the number of groups and events, as well as the people participating in those events. "I didn't want empty groups or empty events; I wanted real-life events with real-life people," Hughes said. As time went on, metrics included dollars raised (and personal fundraising in particular), and the number of people who had been recruited as supporters from the existing supporter base (e.g., friends signing up friends, and people who had been contacted through the voter contact tools).

THE LEGACY

After 47-year-old Obama won the election on November 4, 2008, the million people who had been receiving updates and announcements via text received one final text message: "All of this happened because of you. Thanks, Barack."³⁸ Not only did Obama make history as the first African American president, but he also changed the way elections were run and would be run in the future. He and his team showed the world the power of social media and technology and more importantly, that individuals could make a difference if given the right tools and encouragement. The campaign and the New Media team showed that technology was not just a "tool in the arsenal, but a transformative force," according to Jascha Franklin-Hodge of Blue State Digital. "The campaign understood the power of the Internet to get people engaged in the process on a scale never done before."³⁹

Rospars reflected: "Over the course of 22 months, MyBO transformed into something much deeper and more functional, but fundamentally it was the same—it was about the notion of dissolving the tower down to the individual supporter to become an organizer with leadership ... and to do things themselves that they never thought they could." Hughes emphasized that the campaign was about more than just technology: "I hope the legacy of what we did would be that technology can make it easier for people to self-activate and to really invest in a political campaign and a candidate. I worry that, at times, the story is told like this—you sprinkle a little

³⁸ Gordon Rayner, "A Campaign Built on Mobile Phones and Social Websites," *The Daily Telegraph*, November 6, 2008.

³⁹ Talbot, op. cit.

bit of Internet magic and all of a sudden you have record fundraising numbers and lots of people knocking on doors. What I don't think people understand is that there was a real culture both internally and in the campaign in general, to really make sure that we were not just building tools online, but that we were connecting with the people who were using them and really helping them to understand how their work was integrated into the rest of the movement we were trying to build." Steve Grove from YouTube summarized: "There's a tendency to think of new media as a secret sauce that suddenly unlocks this viral potential and there's truth to that. But there's no such thing as some view count fairy dust that the Obama campaign had that somehow made their YouTube videos climb that chart. They had a very talented candidate who was a great communicator and they had a campaign philosophy that matched and mirrored very well with the Internet—openness, inclusiveness, self-organizing, grassroots. If they didn't have that campaign philosophy, they wouldn't have gone anywhere."

Exhibit 1

Lessons from Obama's Campaign

From Rahaf Harfoush, New Media Strategist and volunteer on the Barack Obama campaign

1. Give new media a seat at the table.
2. Tools are useful without a blueprint—half of all new media campaigns fail, yet 75 percent of Fortune 1000 companies will embark on them.
3. Hold to a clear message and vision. Obama focused on three key words: Hope, Change, Action.
4. Know the lay of the land: Map out your digital landscape. Know the top bloggers, the top social networks, and the central communications hubs.
5. Build relationships—Listen, be authentic, and ask questions.
6. Have a clear call to action: What do you want people to do? Every action in the Obama campaign was geared toward getting people to vote. The sole purpose of online activity was to create offline activity.
7. Give up control: Empower brand ambassadors. Embrace co-creation. Let the brand evolve.⁴⁰

Edelman Research

1. Start early.
2. Build to scale.
3. Innovate where necessary; do everything else incrementally better.
4. Make it easy to find, forward and act.
5. Pick where you want to play.
6. Channel online enthusiasm into specific, targeted activities that further the campaign's goals; and integrate online advocacy into every element of the campaign.⁴¹

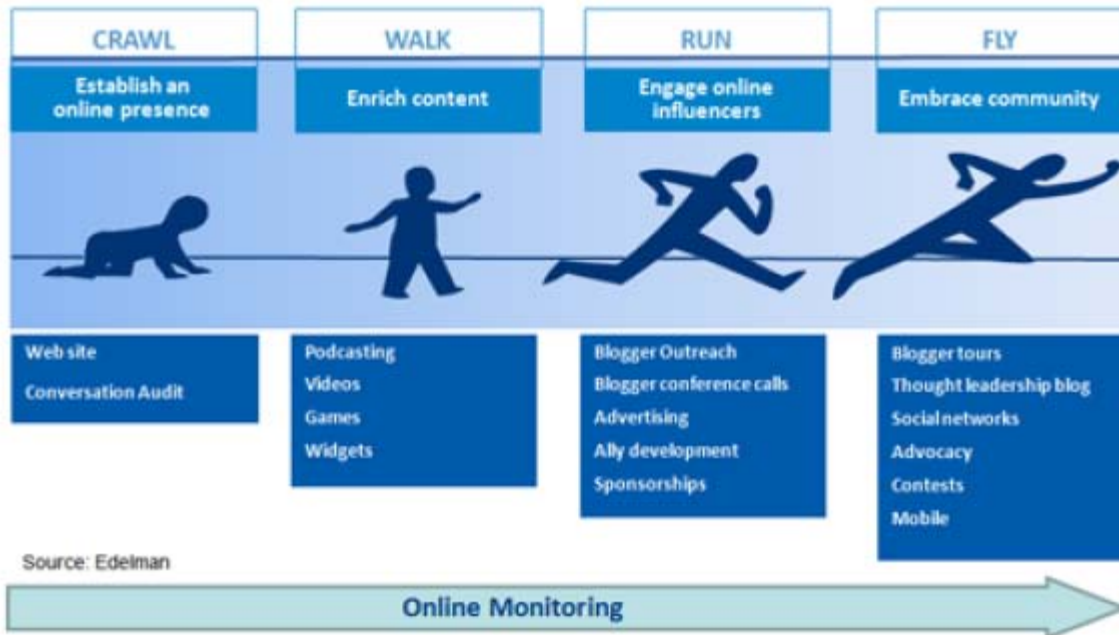
⁴⁰ Rahaf Harfoush, New Media Strategist and staffer on the Barack Obama campaign. www.happywookie.wordpress.com/2008/12/08/102/.

⁴¹ Edelman Research, "The Social Pulpit," 2009, p. 1.

Exhibit 1 (continued)
Lessons from the Obama Campaign

The Crawl, Walk, Run Methodology for Social Media

Establish online credibility and trust through a stepped approach



Source: Edelman Research, "The Social Pulpit," 2009, p. 10.

Exhibit 2

The Numbers

E-mail	13 million people on the e-mail list Who received 7,000 variations of more than 1 billion e-mails ⁴
Donors	3 million online donors Who contributed 6.5 million times ⁵
Social Networks	5 million "friends" on more than 15 social networking sites 3 million friends on Facebook alone ⁶
Web site	8.5 million monthly visitors to MyBarackObama.com (at peak) ⁷ 2 million profiles with 400,000 blog posts 35,000 volunteer groups that held 200,000 offline events 70,000 fundraising hubs that raised \$30 million ⁸
Video	Nearly 2,000 official YouTube videos Watched more than 80 million times, with 135,000 subscribers 442,000 user-generated videos on YouTube ⁹
Mobile	3 million people signed up for the text messaging program Each received 5 to 20 messages per month ¹⁰
Phone calls	3 million personal phone calls placed in the last four days of the campaign ¹¹

Source: Edelman Research, "The Social Pulpit," 2009, p. 4.

Exhibit 2 (continued)
Obama vs. McCain

Obama vs. McCain				
2x	4x	5x	10x	365 electoral votes
Web site traffic	YouTube viewers	Facebook friends	Online staff	66.8 million popular votes

Source: Edelman Research, "The Social Pulpit," *Edelman*, 2009, p. 2.

Social Media Website	Barack Obama	John McCain	% LeadLeader
Facebook	567,000	18,700	2932Obama
Facebook Supporters*	2,444,384	627,459	290Obama
Facebook Wall Posts*	495,320	132,802	273Obama
Facebook Notes*	1,669	125	1235Obama
MySpace	859,000	319,000	169Obama
MySpace Friends*	844,781	219,463	285Obama
MySpace Comments*	147,630	none listed	147,630Obama
Twitter	506,000	44,800	1029Obama
Twitter Followers*	115,623	4911	2254Obama
Twitter Updates*	262	25	948Obama
Friend Feed	34,300	27,400	25Obama
YouTube	358,000	191,000	87Obama
YouTube Videos Posted*	1,819	330	451Obama
YouTube Subscribers*	117,873	29,202	304Obama
YouTube Friends*	25,226	none listed	25,226Obama
Wordpress.com	19,692	14,468	36Obama
Flickr	73,076	15,168	382Obama
Flickr Photostream*	50,218	No Profile	50,218Obama
Flickr Contacts*	7,148	No Profile	7,148Obama

**Search Engine Results For
 "Barack Obama" & "John
 McCain"**

Search Engine	Barack Obama	John McCain	% Lead	Leading
Google	56,200,000	42,800,000	31	Obama
Google News	136,000	371,620	173	McCain
Google Image	24,200,000	8,620,000	181	Obama
Google Video	136,000	89,800	51	Obama
Google Blog	4,633,997	3,094,453	50	Obama
Technorati	412,219	313,497	31	Obama

Internet Presence For Barack Obama's & John McCain's Official Websites

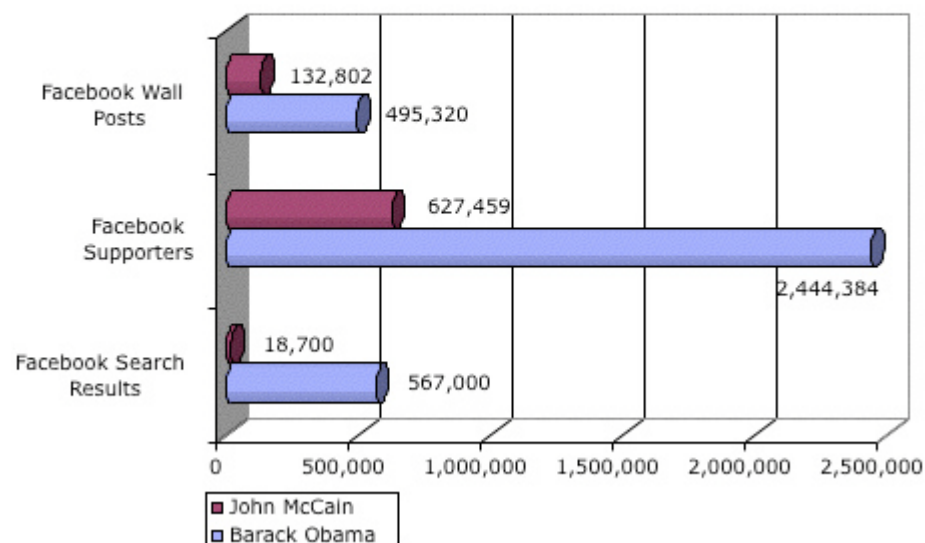
Internet Presence	Barack Obama	John McCain	% Lead	Leading
Google Pagerank	8	8	0	
Pages in Google	1,820,000	30,700	5828	Obama
Yahoo Links-Pages	643,416	513,665	25	Obama
Yahoo Links-Inlinks	255,334	165,296	54	Obama

* = The Candidates Sites on [Flickr](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#) and [Twitter](#).

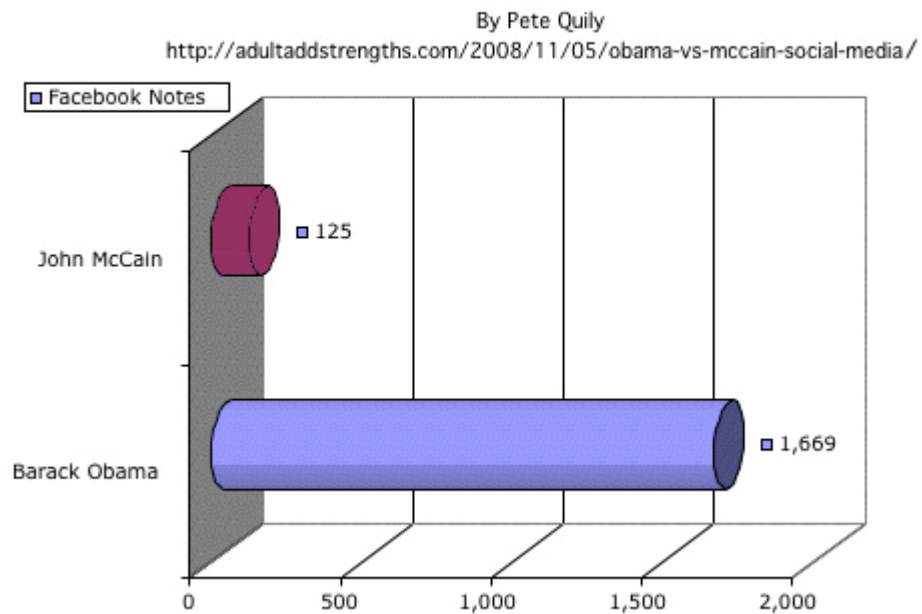
Barack Obama vs. John McCain on Facebook 1 of 2

By Pete Quily

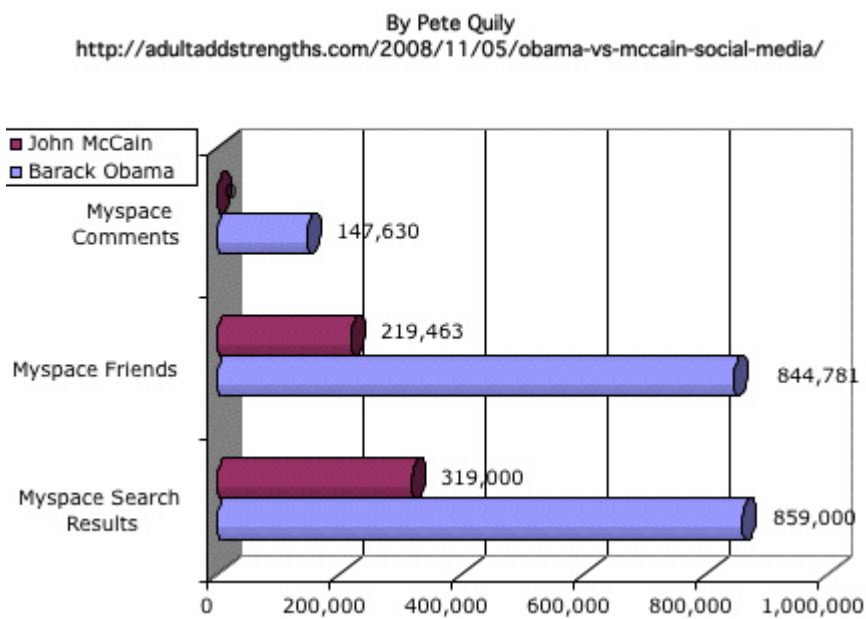
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Barack Obama vs John McCain on Facebook 2 of 2



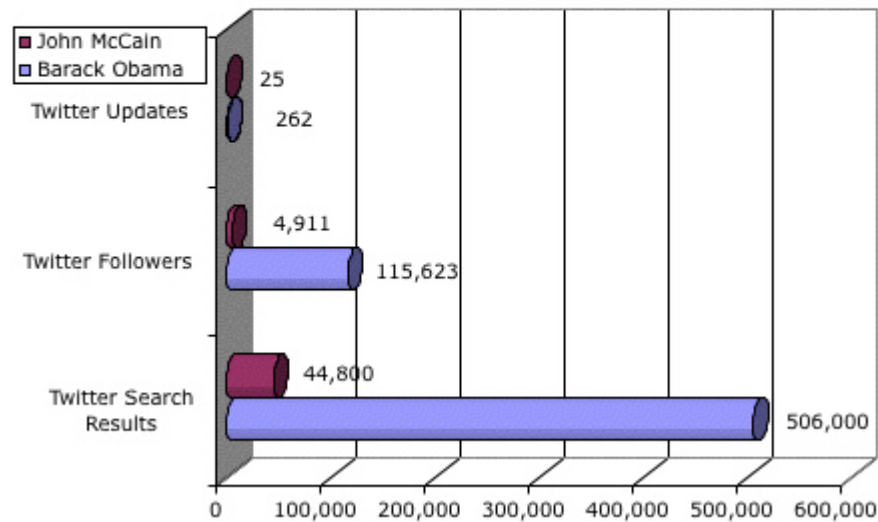
Barack Obama vs John McCain on MySpace



Barack Obama vs John McCain on Twitter

By Pete Quily

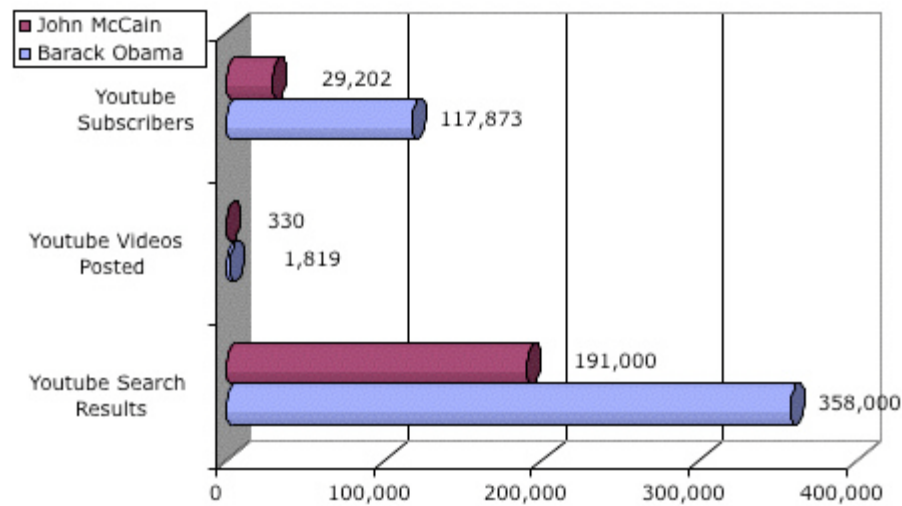
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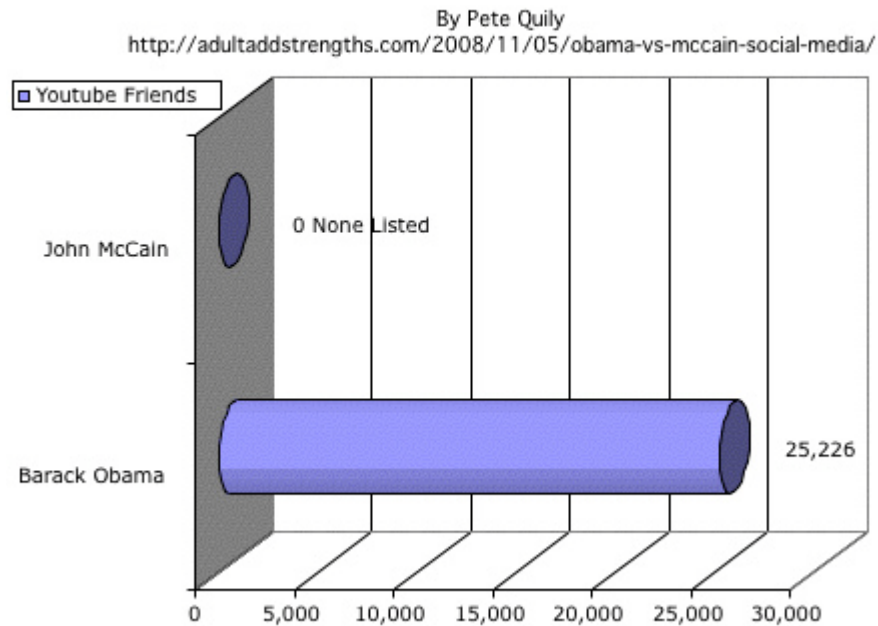
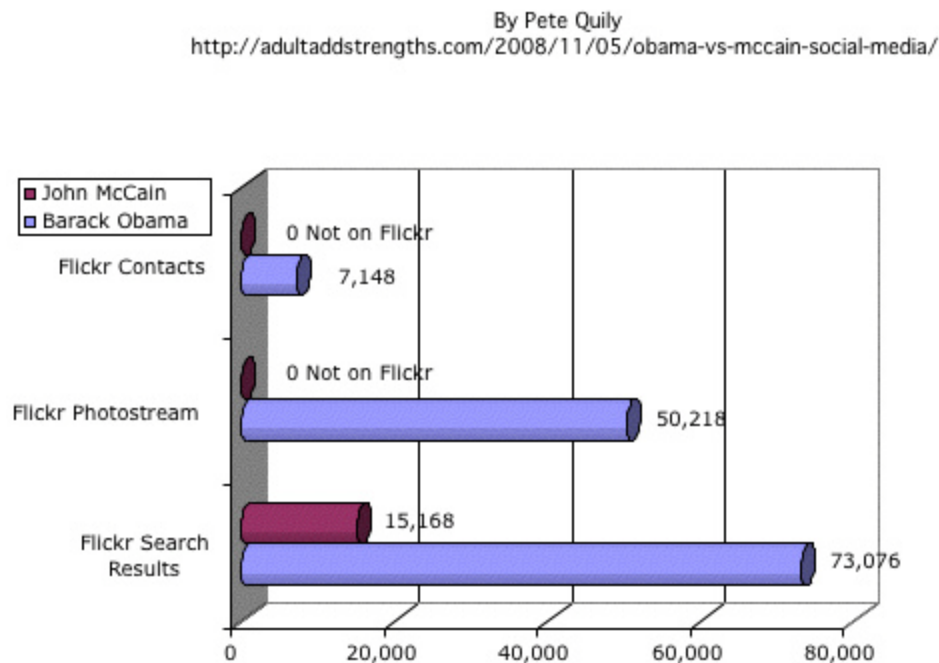


Barack Obama vs John McCain on YouTube 1 of 2

By Pete Quily

<http://adultaddstrengths.com/2008/11/05/obama-vs-mccain-social-media/>

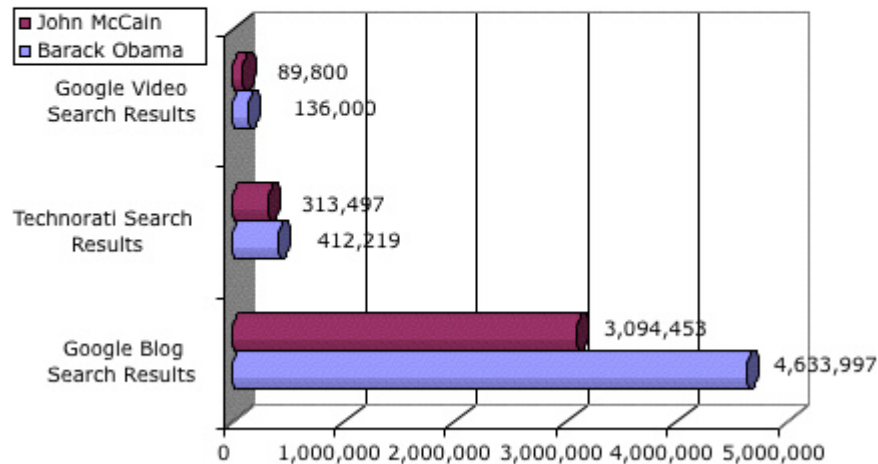


Barack Obama vs John McCain on YouTube 2 of 2**Barack Obama vs. John McCain on Flickr**

Barack Obama vs. John McCain Google Video Search, Technorati Search, & Google Blog Search

By Pete Quily

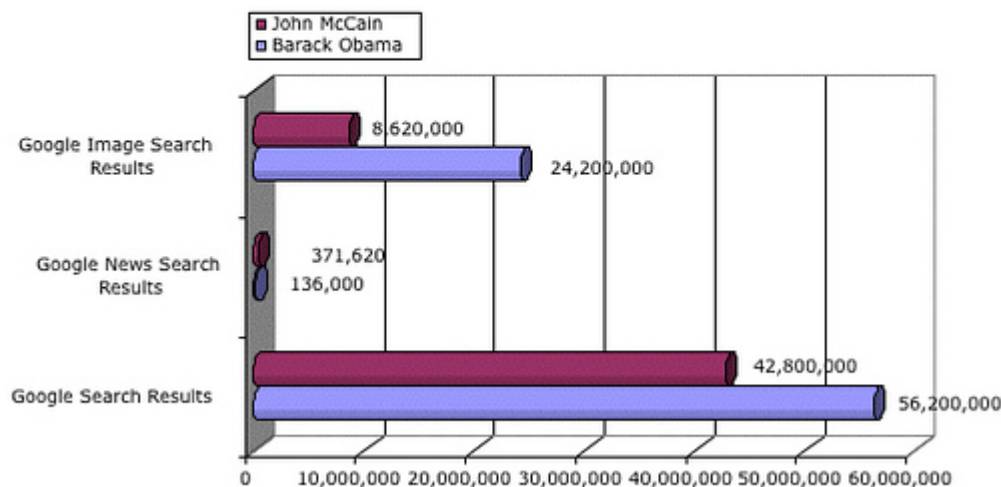
<http://adultaddstrengths.com/2008/11/05/obama-vs-mccain-social-media/>



Barack Obama vs. John McCain Google Search, Google News Search & Google Image Search

By Pete Quily

<http://adultaddstrengths.com/2008/11/05/obama-vs-mccain-social-media/>



Barack Obama vs. John McCain Yahoo Links-Inlinks & Pages in Google's Index

By Pete Quily

<http://adultaddstrengths.com/2008/11/05/obama-vs-mccain-social-media/>

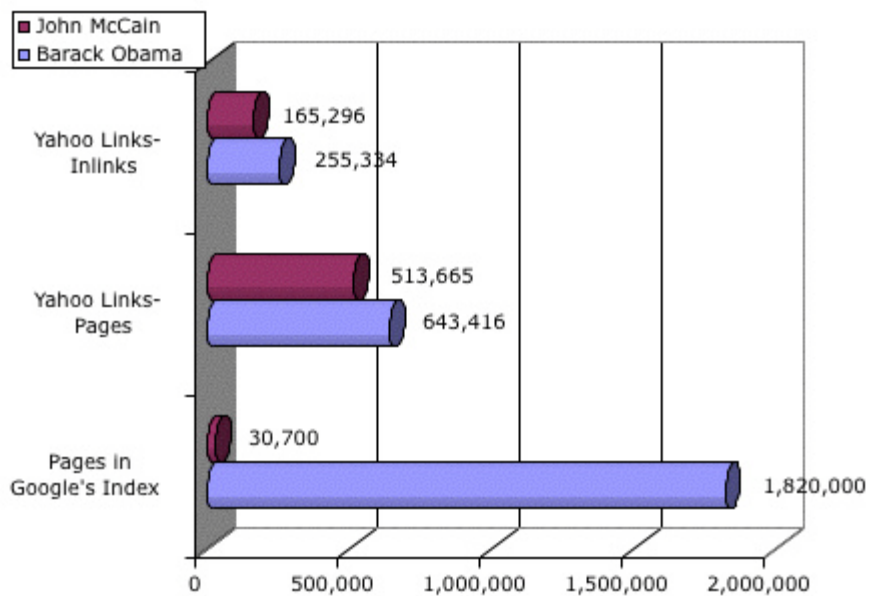


Exhibit 3

MyBO Supporter Profile Page

Get Local! Create Your MyBO Account ([or Login](#))

ORGANIZING FOR AMERICA

"I'M ASKING YOU TO BELIEVE.
Not just in my ability to bring about
real change in Washington ... I'm
asking you to believe in yours."
-BARACK OBAMA

GET EMAIL UPDATES

Victoria Chang Believe Logout | Account/Password

MY PROFILE

Share some basic information about yourself and why you support Barack Obama.
[Create Your Profile](#)

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR
At this time, there are no campaigns available to you.

Please click [here](#) to go to your my.barackobama.com dashboard.

MY BLOG

Share your thoughts and experiences with other Obama supporters. Whether it's a photo, personal story, or simply your opinion on the campaign, you can share it through a personal blog.
[Manage Your Blog](#)

MAKING A DIFFERENCE [What's This?](#)

1/10
My Activity Index
[Details](#)

MY ACTIVITIES

Events Hosted	0
Events Attended	0
Calls made	0
Doors Knocked	0
Number of blog posts	0
Donors to your personal fundraising	0
Amount raised	\$0.00
Groups Joined	0

FACEBOOK
Connect your Facebook account to your MyBO Account

my.barackobama.com

- My Home
- Community
 - My Neighborhood
 - My Groups
 - My Friends
 - Find Friends
- Events
 - Find Events
 - Host an Event
 - Manage my Events
- Fundraising
- Messages
- Blog

Done, but with errors on page. Unknown Zone (Mixed) 100%

Source: <http://my.barackobama.com>.

Exhibit 4 Tiers of Engagement



Source: Edelman Research, "The Social Pulpit," 2009, p. 5.

Exhibit 4 (continued)

MyBO Guides

The screenshot shows the MyBO website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: "Get Local!", "Create Your MyBO Account (or Login)", "Email Address", "Zip Code", and "Get Started". Below this is a header section with the "ORGANIZING FOR AMERICA" logo on the left, a quote from Barack Obama in the center: "I'M ASKING YOU TO BELIEVE. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington ... I'm asking you to believe in yours." -BARACK OBAMA, and a "GET EMAIL UPDATES" form on the right with fields for "Email Address" and "Zip Code" and a "SIGN UP" button.

The main content area is titled "ACTION CENTER" and features a section for "Guide to Running Your Own House Meeting". This section includes a sub-menu with links: "Get Started", "Before", "During", and "After". The text explains that house meetings are a way to recruit volunteers, spread the word, and gauge community support. It then outlines three steps: "Step 1: Set Goals", "Step 2: Register your Event", and "Step 3: Recruit Attendees".

On the right side of the page, there is a sidebar with a "my.Obama.com" logo and a list of navigation links: "My Home", "Community" (with sub-links: "My Neighborhood", "My Groups", "My Friends", "Find Friends"), "Events" (with sub-links: "Find Events", "Host an Event", "Manage my Events"), "Fundraising", "Messages", and "Blog". At the bottom of the sidebar is a link to "View All Blogs".

The browser's address bar at the bottom shows the URL: "http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/housemeetingguide/".

Source: <http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/housemeetingguide/>.

Exhibit 5

Obama's Facebook Page

facebook [Email] [Password] [Login]

Sign Up **Barack Obama is on Facebook**
Sign up for Facebook to connect with Barack Obama.

Barack Obama [Profile Picture]

Wall **Info** **Boxes** **Events** **Notes**

Basic Info

Current Office

Office: President of the United States

Detailed Info

Website: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Students-f...>
<http://www.myspace.com/barackobama>
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Michelle-O...>

Gender: Male

Relationship Status: Married to Michelle Obama

Birthday: August 4, 1961

Religious Views: Christian

Interests: Basketball, writing, spending time w/ kids

Favorite Music: Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, Johann Sebastian Bach (cello suites), and The Fugees

Favorite Movies: Casablanca, Godfather I & II, Lawrence of Arabia and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Favorite Books: Song of Solomon (Toni Morrison), Moby Dick, Shakespeare's Tragedies, Parting the Waters, Gilead (Robinson), Self-Reliance (Emerson), The Bible, Lincoln's Collected Writings

Favorite TV Shows: Sportscenter

Favorite Quotations: "The Arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." (MLK)

Work Info

Position: President of the United States

Time Period: January 2009 - Present

Employer: United States Senate

Position: Senator

Time Period: January 2005 - November 2008

Education Info

Grad School: Harvard '91

President Barack Obama is the 44th President of the United States of America.

Information

Current Office

Office: President of the United States

Supporters

6 of 6,389,168 supporters [See All](#)

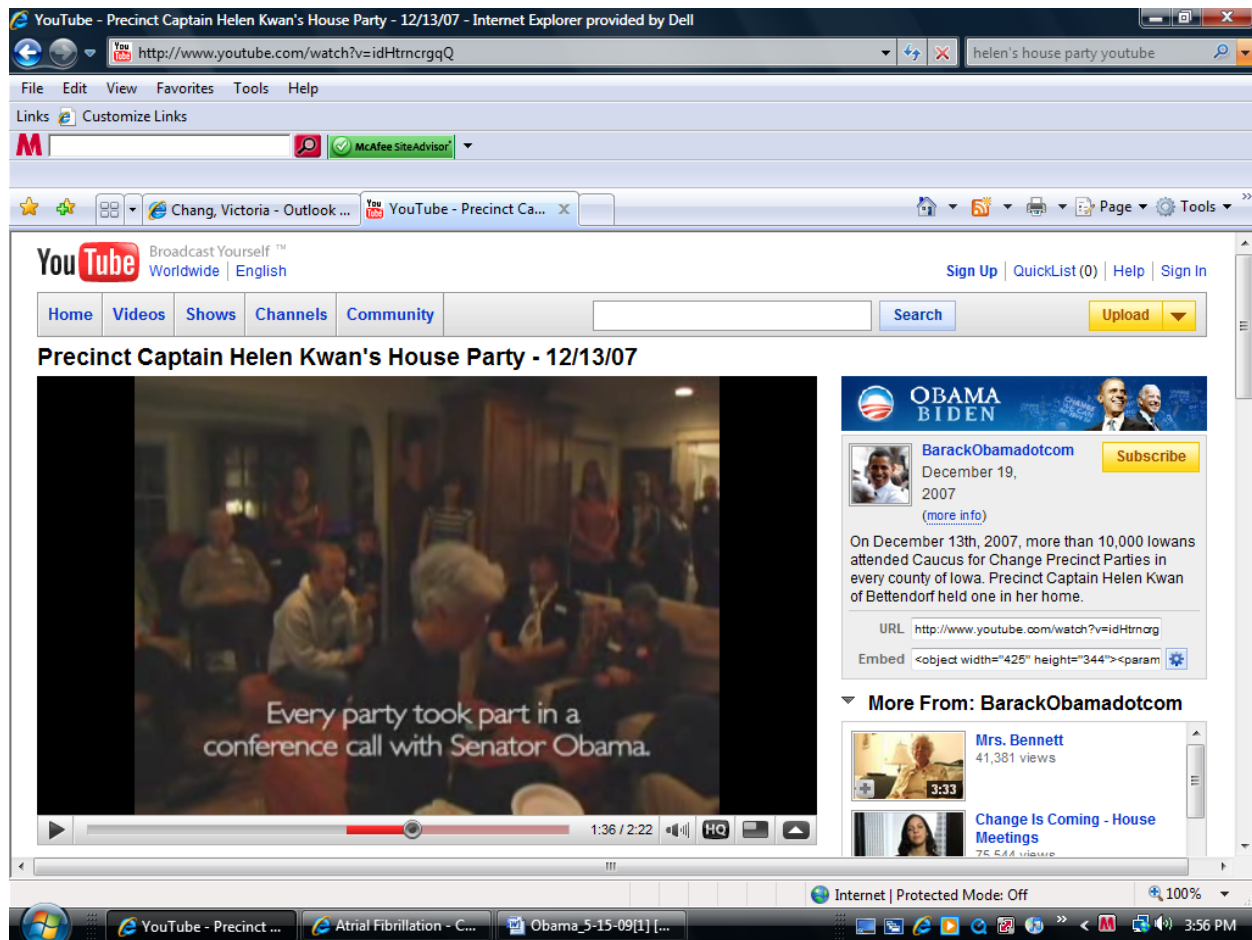
Jose Yannick Ellice

Done [Internet] 100%

<http://www.facebook.com/barackobama#/barackobama?v=info&viewas=0>

Exhibit 6

Precinct Captain Helen Kwan's House Party on YouTube



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a YouTube video. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idHtrncrggQ>. The YouTube page features a video player with a scene of a group of people in a home setting. A text overlay on the video reads: "Every party took part in a conference call with Senator Obama." The video player includes a progress bar at 1:36 / 2:22 and a volume icon. To the right of the video player, there is a sidebar with a channel profile for "BarackObamadotcom", established on December 19, 2007, with a "Subscribe" button. Below the profile, a description states: "On December 13th, 2007, more than 10,000 Iowans attended Caucus for Change Precinct Parties in every county of Iowa. Precinct Captain Helen Kwan of Bettendorf held one in her home." Further down, a section titled "More From: BarackObamadotcom" lists two other videos: "Mrs. Bennett" (41,381 views) and "Change Is Coming - House Meetings" (76,644 views). The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows several open applications, including "YouTube - Precinct Ca...", "Atrial Fibrillation - C...", and "Obama_5-15-09[1] [...]", along with the system clock showing 3:56 PM.

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

Exhibit 6 (continued)

99-Year Old Supports Barack Obama on YouTube

YouTube - Never Too Late For Change: 99-Year Old Supports Barack Obama - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVoJGYnVtJ4

helen's house party youtube

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Links Customize Links

M McAfee SiteAdvisor

Chang, Victoria - Outlook ... YouTube - Never Too Late For Change: 99-Year Old Supports Barack Obama

Never Too Late For Change: 99-Year Old Supports Barack Obama

votessharp September 21, 2008 [Subscribe](#)

Lillian is a 99-year old woman with a very unique background. In the last ten years, having pursued a college education and written four books in the process, she learned that you're never too old,...

URL <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVoJGYnVtJ4>

Embed `<object width="425" height="344"><param`

More From: votessharp

Related Videos

- Why GrandMothers Endorse Obama 3**
2,038 views
[GrandMothers4Obama](#)
- Republicans for Obama in Indiana!**
736 views
[barackobama4prez2008](#)
- Homer Simpson tries to vote for Obama**
9,321,744 views
[deebold08](#)

This is a video response to [Sarah Silverman for Obama!!](#)

★★★★★ 40 ratings 6,985 views

[Favorite](#) [Share](#) [Playlists](#) [Flag](#)

Internet | Protected Mode: Off 100%

YouTube - Never To... Atrial Fibrillation - C... Obama_5-15-09[1] ... 4:00 PM

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVoJGYnVtJ4>

Exhibit 6 (continued)

Signs of Hope and Change Video on YouTube




Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcRA2AZsR2Q>.

Exhibit 7

75,000 Donor Blog Story

Get Local! Create Your MyBO Account ([or Login](#))



**ORGANIZING
FOR AMERICA**

"I'M ASKING YOU TO BELIEVE.
Not just in my ability to bring about
real change in Washington ... I'm
asking you to believe in yours."
-BARACK OBAMA

GET EMAIL UPDATES

Community Blogs

[Manage](#) | [Logout](#) | [Search Blogs](#)

Post from Obama HQ:

75,000!
By *Sam Graham-Felsen* - Mar 30th, 2007 at 12:41 am EDT

[Comments](#) | [Mail to a Friend](#) | [Report Objectionable Content](#)

We just hit our [goal of 75,000](#) people giving to this campaign.

That's a huge number. Figures this big can obscure the fact that behind each number is an actual human being with a real story and a personal reason for giving.

Number 75,000 gave a five dollar donation.

I decided to call number 75,000, and as it turns out, there's quite a story behind that five dollars.

Rashed R. is a 28-year-old IT help desk specialist from Long Beach, California:

This is the first time I've given to any type of campaign. I studied political science in school, but its really rare when someone comes along like this—someone who's intelligent, ethical, and persuasive all rolled up into one.

His background really intrigued me too. I was in the Navy right out of high school and traveled to eight different countries when I was 18. My dad was in the military and I moved a lot as a child too. I remember feeling like an outsider. When I read Barack's book, *Dreams From My Father*, I connected to it, because he moved around a lot as a kid, and he felt like an outsider for a while too.



[My Home](#)

[Community](#)

[My Neighborhood](#)

[My Groups](#)

[My Friends](#)

[Find Friends](#)

[Events](#)

[Find Events](#)

[Host an Event](#)

[Manage my Events](#)

[Fundraising](#)

[Messages](#)

[Blog](#)

[View All Blogs](#)

Done

100%

http://my.barackobama.com/page/community/post_group/ObamaHQ/CQtN

Exhibit 8

Dinner with Barack

Get Local! Create Your MyBO Account ([or Login](#)) Email Address Zip Code

ORGANIZING FOR AMERICA

"I'M ASKING YOU TO BELIEVE.
Not just in my ability to bring about
real change in Washington ... I'm
asking you to believe in yours."
-BARACK OBAMA

GET EMAIL UPDATES

Email Address

Zip Code

DINNER WITH BARACK

Meet Barack's Dinner Guests

The table has been set for the second Dinner with Barack.

While a typical political dinner these days consists of officials being wined and dined by Washington lobbyists and bigwigs from special interest PACs, Barack will be sitting down with four regular people from across the country who will share their stories and discuss the issues that matter most to them.

Gabrielle Grossman of Exeter, New Hampshire
Gabrielle worked as a 7th grade teacher but recently became a stay-at-home mom. She's been volunteering for more than a month with the campaign. The day she signed up to volunteer, she found out some tough news: her 2-year-old son was diagnosed with autism.

In her letter to Dinner with Barack, Gabrielle said, "There is not enough funding to get kids the services they need. So many kids are getting diagnosed, and there just aren't enough resources out there for kids. That's a huge issue for me personally."

The campaign has kept her motivated and energized throughout this tough time in her life. She adds, "At a time when you don't feel like you have a lot of hope, it's done the total opposite, the campaign has got us involved and given me more hope than ever."

Brittany Washington of Los Angeles, California
Brittany is a Howard University student who wants to join Teach for America and

SUBMIT A QUESTION FOR BARACK:
Every supporter who made a donation of \$5 or more between July 26th and July 31st took part in our second Dinner with Barack campaign.

On Labor Day, September 3rd, four lucky supporters from all over the country will join Barack for an evening of good food and good conversation.

Read about Barack's guests and submit a question you'd like them to ask:

Email: *

Zip / Postal Code: *

Your question: *

Source: my.barackobama.com/page/content/dinner.

Exhibit 9

Dinner with Barack on YouTube

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. The video is titled "Dinner with Barack Obama" and is from the channel "BarackObamadotcom". The video has 36,649 views and 245 ratings. The right sidebar shows a list of related videos, including "The Obamas and Bidens at the Yankee Kitchen Diner" and "Dinner with Barack Obama: Veterans/Poverty".

YouTube - Dinner with Bara...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PIJR-KBj1c>

You Tube Broadcast Yourself™
Worldwide | English

[Sign Up](#) | [QuickList \(0\)](#) | [Help](#) | [Sign In](#)

[Home](#) [Videos](#) [Shows](#) [Channels](#) [Community](#)

[Search](#) [Upload](#)

Dinner with Barack Obama

OBAMA BIDEN
BarackObamadotcom
July 18, 2007
[\(more info\)](#)
Barack Obama has dinner with four grassroots donors.
URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PIJR-KBj1c>
Embed: `<object width="425" height="344"><param`

More From: BarackObamadotcom

- The Obamas and Bidens at the Yankee Kitchen Diner**
67,883 views
1:49
- Dinner with Barack Obama: Veterans/Poverty**
3,919 views
2:20
- Join Barack for Dinner**
7,837 views
1:35
- Barack: A working birthday**
7,603 views
1:53
- NBC Nightly News: Barack Obama Interviewed**
34,577 views
3:13

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 245 ratings **36,649 views**

[Favorite](#) [Share](#) [Playlists](#) [Flag](#)

[MySpace](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [\(more share options\)](#)

[Statistics & Data](#)

[Video Responses \(0\)](#) [Sign in to post a Video Response](#)

start [Obama and Social Me...](#) [Email Research.doc - ...](#) [YouTube - Dinner wit...](#) **8:18 PM**

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PIJR-KBj1c>.

Exhibit 10

Neighbor-to-Neighbor Tool

The screenshot displays a Netscape Browser window with the YouTube player. The video title is "myBO: Neighbor to Neighbor Canvassing". The video content shows a website for "OBAMA '08" with a section titled "The List of Your Neighbors - Print Walk Lists". The website text explains how to use the tool to find neighbors and print walk lists. The video player shows 113 ratings, 33,359 views, and a progress bar at 1:07 / 3:32. The right sidebar features a "BarackObamadotcom" channel with a "Subscribe" button and a list of related videos including "myBO: Neighbor to Neighbor Phone Banking", "myBO Tour", and "CNN Coverage of 'Neighbor to Neighbor'".

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tt9JKIIs9Sw>.