

# Social Media:

## The Past, Present and Future: A Comparative Look into How Social Media Affects Fundraising and Strategies of Presidential Campaigns

### Alexis Jordan Ojinaga

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

*Presidential campaign finance and campaign strategies are two topics that launch a candidate into office or into the shadows. This thesis focuses on how the Obama campaign was able to simultaneously raise money and attract voters by using technology to appeal to a younger demographic. By researching George Bush's 2004 campaign, Mitt Romney's 2012 campaign, Obama's 2012 campaign, and Donald Trump's and Bernie Sanders' current 2016 campaigns, it will show just how different candidates raise funds as well as shed light on the different strategies the campaign committee's implement in order to win elections. Using past campaign sites, social media interfaces, popular sources, and interviews with individuals who worked directly inside Obama's financial committee, I will address how Barack Obama's 2008 fundraising strategies 2008 changed the way future campaigns choose their own fundraising strategies.*

Presidential campaign finance and campaign strategies are the two growing topics that launch a candidate: either into office or into the shadows. When examining the literature on campaign finance and campaign strategies, it can take you into two very different directions when talking about a presidential campaign. This thesis examines the specific way the Obama administration was able to raise money and voters simultaneously. The focus of my thesis is presidential campaign finance and the strategies that these committees put in place to get a candidate into the White House. This research will show just how different candidates raise funds to be able to campaign in elections, as well as shed light on the strategies the campaign committees' implement in order to win elections. I have chosen these subjects to focus this thesis on due to it being a presidential campaign year we are able to see politicians come

together and demonstrate what politics means to them. In order to do that they will need to raise money to appeal to the voters and gain their overall support in what each candidate believes in or what they propose to do for America. When you bring money into these campaigns, we are able to visualize the issues that campaign finance faces during campaigns.

The other portion of the thesis campaign strategies sheds light on many tactics the different committees implement in order to push their candidate to the top. In recent years, presidential elections have changed the way they choose to reach out to voters with technology growing at rapid speeds around us. Everyone is connected with one another through emails, smart phones, tablets, videos, and social media. With the millennial voter generation being so widely connected, the campaign committees took notice and used these tools to their advantage. However,

the internet was not just invented in the last ten years, it has slowly been progressing since January 1983 when the TCP/IP Protocol that powers our modern internet was born (Agarwal 2004). Since the internet has been increasing in speed, accessibility, and availability, it has become easier for more and more people to be able to use it, which is connecting people from all over. The use of the internet for campaigns did not just start in 2008 when Barack Obama used MySpace and Facebook to connect with his voters and funders, he was just the first to put his brand on this type of campaign marketing. Presidential candidates before him created websites and blogs to try and reach the voters, but something was different about the outcome of these strategies used as compared to Obama's campaign strategies. With that said, it raises inquiry about how President Obama was able to raise money, and ultimately, voters to put him into the White House for two terms. The current campaigns that these candidates market themselves hourly on the internet, makes the voters question that these candidates could be following some kind of unwritten book on how to campaign using the internet.

### Research Question:

This thesis query's the question: how did Barack Obama's fundraising strategies in 2008 change the way future campaigns choose their fundraising strategies. By using this question, this thesis hopes to compare the different campaigns use of the internet via websites and social media, which occurred before Obama ran for President, 2008 and 2012 campaigns, as well as the campaigns that are currently happening in the 2016 election. This thesis will examine

George W. Bush's 2004 campaign, how he raised money and supporters, and what different techniques his finance committee used to get him into office. It will also look into Mitt Romney's financial committee and his campaign strategies and compare this to Barack Obama's and determine what Mitt Romney did differently that cost him to lose the race to Barack Obama, and if he could have changed a strategy maybe he would have won. Another campaign I will examine in the course of this thesis will be two of the current 2016 campaigns that are happening in the race for the nomination, business tycoon Donald Trump and Senator Bernie Sanders. This thesis will look at these two 2016 presidential candidates and look at what ideas and techniques that they copied from President Barack Obama's past campaigns and what these two candidates are doing differently. The concepts that this thesis focuses on are: President Barack Obama's finance committee and President Obama's change in funding. These concepts relate to each other because the way President Barack Obama raised money for his campaign was so revolutionary, due to use of the internet. Showing his strategy in 2008, and looking at the evolution on campaign finance for the years to follow, the most likely outcome to the question is that other candidates have adopted some of the innovations that President Obama's committee had implemented in 2008. By using these innovations, presidential candidates are able to overall receive more money and more voters. This is the expectation of this thesis because people witnessed how these new ideas were successful in getting Barack Obama in the Oval Office; therefore, they will utilize the ideas for themselves. This could also go in a negative way; such as, other candidates

---

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I would like to thank Paul Ojinaga, Paulette Ojinaga, Maddie Ojinaga, T.J.Graham and Tootsie for all of their continued support through this entire journey of my undergraduate career. Without all of your support and encouragement, I do not think this research would have been the same. I love you guys!

My sincere thanks goes to Corinne Tapia, without whom this paper and project would have not come full circle into something as wonderful as it has. With her assistance, guidance and immense knowledge about presidential campaigns, it was one of the greatest resources available and I was very lucky to have it. Thank you for being the greatest mentor, and role model that I could have asked for, you have helped me grow as an undergraduate student and have prepared me for my next steps towards law school. Thank you Corinne.

Finally, I would like to thank Professor Guerrero. Without your help through this process every step of the way it would have never been completed. Thank you for your patience, motivation, knowledge and humor it contributed significantly to this thesis. Thank you for everything you have done for me during my undergraduate career at Cal Poly, from advising, to office hours. I could not have accomplished this thesis and my undergraduate career without a great professor, mentor, and advisor like you. Thank you Guerrero for everything.

and their committees implemented the ideas and they failed to raise as much money, more voters and eventually lost the race. By looking at these campaigns and candidates, we look into the way that each individual was able to raise money and gain voter support by showing strategies that were indifferent than other candidates in the past, present and future.

This question is important to the subfield of American politics because it sheds light on the way people are choosing to campaign using different social media and internet tools. According to the Bureau of Labor: since political scientists study political trends, policies and the way political systems operate, it is crucial that they are aware of trends that change the way that future campaigns will be conducted by learning from the past. With the United States of America being part of a direct democracy, where we vote for our leader and representatives, it is only fitting that citizens have an inside knowledge into how these campaigns are conducted and how candidates choose to reach their voters. Furthermore, this question is relevant for American politics because campaigns, candidates and their indicatives have a great impact on our country

### **Argument:**

Therefore, the argument to this thesis question is: the methods Barack Obama used in 2008 were so rare and produced tremendous results, other candidates chose to replicate his tactics in future campaigns. The argument that is trying to be proved would produce the outcome of people following President Obama's strategies in the 2016 election and further elections to come. By using this argument, George W. Bush's campaign will also be looked at to compare what Obama's finance team looked at in the past to change how they campaigned in the future. This argument will also prove where Mitt Romney went wrong during his campaign time and how his finance committee cost him the election, thus, the reelection of President Barack Obama. Then, the competing argument would be that if future candidates do not implement any of President Barack Obama's campaign strategies and financial tactics, it is due to them wanting to use their own strategies and financial ideas to become the next president. Thus, that competing argument would look like this, future campaigns saw the strategies that President Barack Obama used in 2008 and went opposite due to trying to appeal to the Republican demographic, rather than the Democrats. The arguments could then be proved by obtaining information on the political participation and the strategies that each candidate had during their election

period. In order to achieve this, we must examine the candidate's websites, fundraisers, various social media outlets, news articles, and any information that is available online. We also need to establish the timeline of the internet and social networking from 2004 to present day 2016 in order to get an idea of the number of voters' accessibility and activity on the internet.

## **Literature Review**

Presidential elections are something we, as Americans, have grown used to. With the 2016 presidential nomination upon us, it is appropriate to examine what strategies appeal to voters and raise money to fund campaigns. In recent years, we have seen elections take a whole new shape due to the ever increase in technology and internet. But, we must also look into the traditional campaign by examining finance legislation and strategy policy. In the following literature review, three separate paths of scholarly articles will be examined. One path will look into campaign finance and the way candidates raise money to fund their campaigns, as well as the legislation that affects the money. Another path will take a look into campaign strategies in general, and get an idea of what these candidates do to gather supporters and grow their approval ratings. The last path will examine scholarship in regards to specific campaigns, such as the 2012 presidential election race between Incumbent President Barack Obama and challenger Mitt Romney.

### **Political Campaign Finance**

The importance of money in politics stems from its value as a political resource, which presumably benefits candidates who have it in abundance (Nice 1984). Before the Watergate scandal, the U.S. system of campaign finance had three basic features: no limitations on contributions, weak disclosure rules, and unlimited spending based on whatever the candidates were able to raise (West 2014). Since President Nixon left a bad taste in the public's mouth with the Watergate scandal that caused campaign finance rules change dramatically (West 2014). United States Congress attempted to regulate the way American political campaigns for Congress and the presidency. This act is Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, which governs nearly all aspects of campaign finance. FECA covers four large issues in campaign finance, which are the size of the contributions to campaigns, the source of the contributions, public disclosure of the campaign's financial information, and all public financing of presidential campaigns. In 1976, the landmark case *Buckley v. Valeo*, limit-

ed contributions to political candidates. It stated that candidates must disclose and report contributions, this case limits individual contribution as well as campaign expenditures (Rosenthal 1976). The case of Buckley used FECA regulations to set the stage for making people report their contributions and disclose what the campaigns are spending the money on. In the early 1980's, political scientists had a great idea on how big of a role finance of campaigns influenced politics, and how a campaign needed to be well-funded to lead to win. Since elections have been closely contested, the parties have raised substantial sums of money. For example, in the 2004 election cycles, \$370 million was spent more in presidential elections (Bergan 2005). It is clear to see the role that money is starting to play in the campaign systems and how rules had to be set to try and limit the money. Nice finds that public finance of campaigns help to reduce the influence of the wealthy individual voters and organizations that could play a large role in the system of finance (Nice 1984). However, not so conflicting scholar Stratmann and Castillo state that campaign finance in a democratic society must be regulated and that it is an important issue due to the belief that if regulations are stricter, it will improve the competitiveness of elections (Stratmann and Castillo 2006).

According to Nice states limited campaign contributions by union and by individuals, but these regulations differed in each state and by contributor per election year (Nice 1984). Campaign finance reform limits the increase of contributions, which Stratmann and Castillo argue does increase competitiveness while increasing party competition in the legislature (Stratmann and Castillo 2006). Nice talks about when we limit campaign contributions for corporations and individuals, we see that the limits vary from state to state and there are more limits on Republican party individuals that do not seem promising due to being too liberal; however, the more encouraging results we see are the individual campaign finance limits and the limits on the public finance system (Nice 1984). In 2002, Congress passed the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA). This was passed in response to reform the campaign finance system of the elements that are viewed as corruptive, would compromise the democratic process (Panagopoulos 2007). Bergan states that even after the campaign finance reforms in 1990, parties found ways around bans, like that of the collection of soft money by attempting to raise small donations in larger quantities (Bergan 2005). The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) began sending out direct mail to reach a small donor base while the Republican National Committee paid

websites a commission of 30 percent if they directed contributors to the Republican sites (Bergan 2005).

As you can tell from these scholarly articles, the authors show how the limits on certain aspects of campaign finance are very grey, with it being hard to find out why these limits are in place. But just as the authors stated, both parties have found ways to raise money around the barriers that these reforms have put in place. These scholars state that without any kind of campaign finance reform, the current system creates a higher level of competitiveness between the campaigns, because the more money raised, the more voters that are supposed to follow. Samples said that campaign finance reform is simply a battle between two separate visions of politics, the first was the Madisonian vision of the constitutional framers and the second one was the progressive vision that rejects the framers' ideals of liberty (Samples 2009).

### *Campaign Strategies*

In presidential nomination campaigns, this is where candidates make strategic decisions to maximize their chance of nomination (Gruian and Hayes 1993). When candidates need to have a strong campaign, and a set strategy on how to gain voters; this is what will earn them nomination. When we are looking at the topic of campaign strategies, the first question that pops up is do campaign elections really matter? At the early part of the campaign, candidates are unknown and are at a disadvantage of getting votes and different contributions from voters, unless you are a celebrity running for the nomination like Donald Trump (Gruian and Haynes 1993). Presidential campaign strategists look at the battleground states and media market (Burton 2007). What Burton argues candidates want to target the swing states because those states will help them win the nomination. Some campaign strategies use different types of media to obtain voter support, the data then shows that the candidate activities had a positive and often-significant impact on both vote share and candidate favorability (Burton 2007).

Another form of campaign strategies is the candidate personality, according to Palazzolo and Theriault; there is an ongoing debate of the importance of issues and personal characteristics in the voting behavior literature (Palazzolo and Theriault 1996). These authors also state that, identification is stable and a reliable factor in deciding the voting behavior among constituents; some of the voters responded to short-term stimuli that emerge during a campaign (Palazzolo and Theriault 1996). What this breaks down to is that voters are more likely to fall in favor

of a candidate during a campaign when media evaluate their personal characteristics. To fully understand candidate characteristics in campaign strategies and as well as voting behavior Amihai Glazer found that candidates maximize their vote totals by remaining ambiguous on issues (Palazzolo, Theriault 1996). The reason that campaigns use tactics such as this is due to the fact that without putting a stance on certain issues or being very rowdy on topics keeps candidates out of the hot seat. Thus by remaining ambiguous on issues voters is unable to decide how they vote based upon some issue stances these candidates take.

A main problem that campaign strategies faces, is how to appeal to the electorate to get them to vote. According to Barkan and Bruno campaign organizations are trying to obtain political knowledge from what is already known (Barkan and Bruno 1972). By obtaining knowledge about campaign strategies, these current campaigns are looking into the history of how to win and lose campaigns. These campaigns are trying to gain knowledge of what was successful in certain situations as well as ideas to stay away from. In order to get to these voters, the campaign strategists must identify and locate the segments of the electorate that possess the marginal votes on which the outcome of the election depends and the segments are most likely to constitute a base of loyal support (Barkan and Bruno 1972). What these authors are trying to explain, these political staffers in these different campaigns try to find these voters that end up being the electoral majority of all voters and get them to vote for their specific candidate.

### *Campaign Case Studies*

When we begin talking about campaigns, we will be discussing how president candidates raise awareness for their campaign and ultimately get votes. Every election year, different campaigns raise awareness of getting people to vote. They are targeting mostly voters older due to them being a high voting group that has the largest impact. These scholars will be looking at voter turnout, how the candidates reached the voters, what each of these campaigns did different, and what strategies worked to help them earn a nomination. In Campbell, the author examines the election on President George W. Bush and why he won the 2004 election (Campbell 2005). One hundred twenty-two million American voted in the 2004 election, which according to Campbell is nearly seventeen million more than in 2000 (Campbell 2005). Campbell states that three fundamental factors influence the vote: the public's opinion about the candidates at the outset of the campaign, growth in the election

year economy, and incumbency (Campbell 2005).

President Barack Obama's campaign in 2008 was very different; he personalized it through Internet and television, which was raising his social capital (Ewing 2009). Obama's campaign was connecting to his voters through social capital, establishing membership, trust and networks (Ewing 2009). As stated by Ewing (2009), Obama was able to effectively respond to any type of attacks on his character, campaign, or beliefs all through utilizing online technology. Obama's campaign used YouTube for free advertising, his campaign material was watched over 14.5 million hours, his Facebook site had 3,176,886 supporters and he had 987,923 MySpace friends, they also used text messages to stay connected to youth voters (Hendricks 2010). As you can tell, Obama was a technological campaign entrepreneur. The reason that he was able to appeal to more voters and ultimately wins the election. Social media and the Internet in general would appear to greatly expand the number of voices that can be heard in political debates (Coffey, Kohler, Granger 2015). When Obama ran for reelection in 2012, he went up against Governor of Massachusetts Mitt Romney. Campbell states that Obama surely was facing a loss due to his current economic status and Romney faced a loss due to Obama being the current incumbent (Campbell 2005). President Obama was elected into his second term despite of his economic record and his ideological orientation, because voters did not blame Obama for the economy, they blamed President George W. Bush (Campbell 2012). The Romney campaign showed that it was not ready for prime time with one big statement, when the campaign chose to deal with the question of whether and when to make Romney's tax returns public (Miller 2012). But just as Miller (2012) found out in his article, this had put Romney in a unpopular situation with the voters, because at first it was a secret then it turned worse when Romney tried to explain his reasoning. With these different campaign strategies that were tried by his campaign were just some of the few errors that were made. With examples such as these we will be able to look more in-depth in this thesis at more reasons Romney's campaign fell short. After Obama won re-election, commentators offered advice to the Republicans, they were told they needed to compromise on immigration, move to the left of social issues to win votes of the younger generation, and try to tone down conservatism that is more compassionate and not threatening (Miller 2012). With a statement made like this by voters to the Republican Party, this is something they should take into account for the next election. While examining each candidate currently in the running for president, we

will be able to identify if the Republican Party to the commentators' advice on how to reach voters.

As for the current campaign, there is not any scholarly research done so far on how these candidates raise money and earn voters. However, by simply watching the campaign we can make some assumptions that the candidates are still taking some kind of media or technology to earn votes and followers. During the course of my thesis, the current 2016 campaign will be discussed further and will take a look into how these candidates are gaining ground towards a nomination.

## Conclusion

Many scholars have written about campaign finance and campaign strategies. They have explained how to raise money and what helps candidates win elections. After looking into Obama's 2008 and 2012 campaigns, we can tell that things did not change as much in the sense of the way he campaigned. Obama was able to make the right choices and plan great strategies on how to earn money and voters. When he came up for re-election Obama was able to use those same strategies with great use of technology and win re-election. Scholars have found out the formula that Obama was able to tap into and figure out how to win elections simply by staying in touch with your voters.

## Hypothesis:

By using past scholarship on presidential campaigns with an emphasis on strategies and finance, in conjunction with internet and social media data, we are beginning to see a clear connection between social networking and presidential campaigns. Thus based off the current scholarship in the areas of presidential campaigns, elections, literature and data on social media with relationship to politics the following hypothesis can be made:

H1: The increase in social network and internet use in daily lives of Americans has altered the way presidential candidates campaign in their elections.

The null hypothesis for this would then be: Although there has been an increase in social media and internet use in the daily lives of Americans, presidential candidates continue to campaign as they have in the past with no technological advances.

## Methodology:

In using qualitative analysis to achieve the results of this thesis, it predominantly examines six case studies. It will also include an interview with Corinne Tapia, a member of the Democratic National Committee in the finance sector from election years 2008 and 2012. The overall goal of this thesis is to find out how Barack Obama and his presidential campaign were able to use recent advances in technology to raise money and supporters. Once I am able to find Obama's 2008 campaign strategies, I will be able to compare them to past and future presidential candidates.

The six case studies look at four different presidential campaign years: 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. In the years 2012 and 2016, we will be looking at candidates from the Republican party as well as the Democratic party. These campaign years are influential to examine because they all happen during the recent technology increase and are centered around the 2008 election year of Barack H. Obama which is my constant data set. To look into these campaigns, this thesis will focus on the candidates' campaign websites during each of the candidates' campaign years as well as social media sites that the candidates used. In order to go back in time to the internet as it was back in 2004, 2008 and 2012, this thesis uses a website called the Way Back Machine. This is an online portal, which allows users to see websites as they were in any given time period. The Way Back Machine takes snapshots of how different sites look at different times and months of the years. By using this site, we will not only be able to look into the campaign websites but also the candidates' social media accounts such as Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, Instagram and Snapchat. This site will open a portal to the past, which allows this thesis to compare past presidential candidates to present candidates to find similarities on techniques involving social media and the internet.

### *Social Networks Evolution in Politics:*

In order to understand the results of this thesis, you must understand what social media is and how it operates. Social media as defined by Merriam Webster states, "forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and micro-blogging through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)). Social media is a huge technological advance and it is present in our everyday lives, it did not start out that way when it was first created. When social media started in 2002 it was very

archaic to the way we view these networks today.

We now must establish a timeline for when social networks first began to emerge on the internet and when these social sites began to gain popularity. In March of 2002, the granddad of social media sites was launched; it was called Friendster (Wood 2016). By January of 2004, MySpace is launched, Google begins Gmail, and Facebook expands from Harvard to other universities (Wood 2016). By December of 2004, Facebook hit one million members in less than a year of university expansion (Wood 2016). At the end of 2005, Facebook became available to United States high schools and continued expanding to UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Wood 2016). In 2006, MySpace takes first place for the most popular social media site in the United States (Wood 2016). In July of 2006, a website for mini-blogging and social networking began it was called Twitter (Wood 2016). April 2008, Facebook surpasses MySpace as the most popular social networking site; MySpace had been the most popular since 2006 (Wood 2016). By 2009, Twitter moves from rank 22 to the third-ranking social networking site (Wood 2016).

#### *The Internet and Election in 2004*

Social media was just beginning to pop up on the Internet in 2004; with MySpace making it's debut in January (Wood 2016). When President George W. Bush was running for reelection against Democratic Presidential nominee, John Kerry; social networking was not a huge trend. However, internet activity in 2004 was increasing "75 million Americans- 37% of the adult population and 61% of Americans who were connected online- used the internet to obtain political news, information, discuss candidate, debate issues via emails and participate directly to the political process by volunteering or contributing to the candidates" (Rainie 2005). Internet had grown rapidly in the political sector; voters were able to connect to online political news faster than before. From 2000 to 2004 online political news grew from 18% to 29%, which was an increase of 11% in just 4 years (Rainie 2005). Americans were also beginning to credit the internet for their number one source for presidential campaign news; this was in increase of 50% from 2000 (Rainie 2005). According to the Pew Research Center, "61% of internet users said they had either gotten campaign information or news online, exchanged email about the campaign, or participated in campaign- related activity such as making an online donation" (Rainie 2005). In terms of finances, the 2004 presidential election saw an increase of 4 million people donate to a campaign online,

that is an increase of 80% (Rainie 2005). Candidate websites functioned as an online equivalent of campaign headquarters, used to organize, mobilize, energize and raise funds from the existing supporters (Living room Candidate 2012). Candidates had to adapt and utilizes tools, because the internet was becoming more widespread and used by the public. In turn, campaign websites would be the new hub or headquarters for presidential campaigns in future elections. It would become a way to connect with supporters via the internet. This was the also the first year that candidates were able to use web-based video campaign advertisements; this was a new strategy to reach the people connected to the internet.

#### *The Internet and Election in 2008*

The social network community in 2008 has grown tremendously since the previous election in 2004, four years prior. This presidential election year was different, because this was the first time that three Democratic candidates declared their candidacies online (Rainie 2008). Hillary Clinton, John Edwards and Barack Obama, used the internet to announce that they were running for the Democratic nominee (Rainie 2008). After the primaries, the 2008 election year was narrowed down to Democratic nominee Barack H. Obama and Republican nominee John S. McCain. The voters were already witnessing a very different kind of campaign, simply based on how the campaigns are being operated mainly on the internet. Between 2004 and 2008, the number of all adults that have used the Internet to obtain political news and information about the campaign is up from 31% (Rainie 2008). During the 2008 campaign, we witnessed a 14 % increase in the amount of college students as well as a 33% increase in minorities, who used the internet for political purposes (Rainie 2008). Social networking sites became a way to stay politically active in some form; younger adults (18-29-year-olds) are 66% more likely to have at least one social site compared to older adults (30 and over) with only 18% (Rainie 2008). Due to this type of statistic, the candidates made sure that they had a strong online presence to target the younger voters. Another first for this election year, we were able to look at the partisanship divide among internet users. Democratic candidates began to surpass the Republicans in their adoption of social media; over one-third of online democrats or 36% have a profile on a social network site (Rainie 2008). That number is 15% more than online Republicans and 8% higher than online Independents (Rainie 2008). Along with social networking sites, the campaign website is still as important in the

internet world as it was in 2004. The major difference between campaign websites in 2004 compared to 2008, are the capabilities and functions the sites have allowed the voters to explore the candidate in depth.

### *The Internet and Election in 2012*

This is an election that should be slightly fresher in our minds, this was the election between current Incumbent President Barack H. Obama and Republican nominee Mitt Romney. By 2012, social media had become a high-speed freight train of information with no sign of ever slowing down. It was getting faster, more social media outlets were appearing, and it was becoming easier to get onto the internet and use smartphone applications. Due to the fact that social media is not a new and shiny object for the 2012 campaigns, this caused the candidates to look at internet trends to appeal to voters. In 2012, President Obama's campaign made a much better use of social media due to having excelled in this area in the 2008 campaign. According to *The State of the Media*, "Obama's campaign produced 25 times more twitter posts than Romney's campaign" (*State of the Media* 2012). However, both President Obama and Romney faced negative messages on social media, although Romney took slightly more heat over religious views. More than 75% of online presidential advertisement campaigns were negative (*Living room Candidate* 2012).

### *The Internet and Election 2016*

The presidential primaries for the 2016 presidential election are currently happening. As of March 5, 2016 the Republican party has four candidates in the race for the nominee while the Democratic party has two. The Republican party's candidates that are left in the race are business mogul Donald Trump, Senator Ted Cruz, Governor John Kasich, and Senator Marco Rubio. While on the Democratic side the two candidates that are competing for the nomination are former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and Senator Bernie Sanders. Since these races are currently happening, the social networking data changes frequently, however we already see that just like the 2008 election year the way to campaign is through the internet. The Pew Research center conducted a study in 2015 on the amount of Americans who use the internet, it was 84% this increased 1% since the 2012 election (Perrin 2015). At a 96% usage rate is the age group of 18 to 29 year-olds, and at 93% usage is the age group of 30 to 49 year-olds (Perrin 2015). If we look at the older demographics of America, the age group of 50 to 64 year-olds only

81% use the internet while senior citizens who are 65 and older only 58% use the internet (Perrin 2015). If we look back at the 2012 presidential election there are only two age groups that increased in internet usage. Those groups were 50 to 64 year-olds who risen 3 % and 65 and older who increased 4% (Perrin 2015). This is proving to us that more American citizens in key voting ages are using the internet. We know that the candidates, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, are relying heavily on online campaigning.

These six case studies were chosen to prove this thesis for these following reasons. First, to establish a timeline for the presidential campaigns pre and post President Obama while also examining the internet with an emphasis in social networking. Second, to look at presidential campaigns after the social media boom in 2008 and see if the candidates follow trends and strategies of previous candidates. Third, to prepare us and show us how presidential campaigns are evolving with technology as we as a country move into a high-speed world. However, each case will be slightly different due to the year, technology available and whether an incumbent is running or not. These are key issues we must take into account during the results in order to consider a level playing field for the data to be represented.

## **Results:**

To answer this thesis question and prove the argument to be true, this thesis analyzed the amount of donations each candidate received and then separated the online donations from the total amount. This thesis also analyzed the amount of followers, supporters, and friends the candidates had at various points in the election year, and how many they have now. After collecting the data and compare it to the different candidate's social network abilities to the amount of online donations received then cross referencing that with Obama's 2008 campaign. From there, this thesis analyzed the effects of social networking on gaining voters as well as increasing online donation totals and test the research question and argument. The results are as follows, presented as a year-by-year and candidate- by- candidate analysis:

### *President George W. Bush 2004 Reelection Campaign:*

Due to the internet gaining steam after 2000, the Pew Research center concluded that presidential campaigns during the 2002- 2004 election cycle learned how to use some of the internet's distinctive qualities pay off on a continual and systematic basis (Cornfield



2005). During President George W. Bush reelection campaign in 2004, they knew that the internet was going to be a huge factor in the election compared to 2000. Bush and Cheney's 2004 campaign (or BC04) was prepared, they were internet proficient due to the fact they had an internet campaign team in place before the Democratic candidates started competing with one another (Cornfield 2005). The BC04 had hired Chuck DiFeo, as the campaign's e-campaign director, and he took the campaign's sights off fundraising and placed them on the grassroots organizations (Cornfield 2005). "BC04 planned, tested, refined and committed itself and its allies to a program which fused the basics of old fashioned canvassing, marketing, and proselytizing with the latest in data acquisition, analysis and distribution" (Cornfield 2005). DiFeo called this type of campaign strategy target grassroots. DiFeo had two major goals he wanted to accomplish, which were increasing efficiency and increasing output (Cornfield 2005). He accomplished this by following a strategy and keeping track of every action taken by the campaign (Cornfield 2005). The BC04 campaign followed this strategy to obtain supporters, determine the voting population it wanted to contact, installed a rewards program, which included choice seats to events featuring the president to motivate its volunteers (Cornfield 2005). It equipped volunteers with talking points and contact lists customized so they can get the most out of existing relationships. It also supplied home door-knockers with downloadable maps spelling out the estimated walking times between houses (Cornfield 2005).

The Bush and Cheney's 2004 campaign used one of the internet's tools to organize, and coordinate team-building sessions towards the bigger goal of targeted grassroots operation (Cornfield 2005). Meetups hosted by the third party company Meetup.com, helped run the House Party for the President initiative, which was a 30-minute conference call on July 15, 2004 with the first lady Laura Bush (Cornfield 2005). During these 30 minutes, Mrs. Laura Bush would answer six questions that were selected from earlier submissions, and then would bring President Bush to the phone for a surprise finish (Cornfield 2005). On July 15, 2004, Meetup.com hosted 6,920 parties in a day that had over 350,000 participants (Cornfield 2005).

Since there was no social media trend during 2004, the focus was on these third party contact sites, blogs and of course the campaign website. The internet was just beginning to start social networking with the launch of MySpace in 2004. The Bush and Cheney's campaign was running behind in the online campaign portion compared to candidate Howard Dean when it came to internet trends such

as blogs (Miller 2008). But the Bush and Cheney campaign used their campaign website as a campaign headquarters, to mobilize, reach out, and appeal to grassroots organizations (Cornfield 2005).

### *President George W. Bush's 2004 Reelection Finance Committee:*

Unlike the other candidates that were running against them in 2004, Bush and Cheney did not need to raise money from individual donors due to a large PAC following. The Bush and Cheney 2004 campaign had however for the first time raised more money from individual donors than the Democratic candidates (Edsall 2006). The Bush and Cheney 2004 campaign received \$74 million dollars from federal funds, \$3 million dollars from PAC contributions, \$17 million dollars from other finances (Center for responsive politics 2006). However, Bush and Cheney raised \$271 million dollars on individual contributions, this was attributed to the small donor surge (Center for Responsive Politics 2006). Due to the internet playing a role as a platform for campaign contributors, we witnessed a surge in small donors who gave via online donations (Edsall 2006). What policy and campaign analysts figured out after the 2004 election, was that the online donation platform was targeting a key donor group, the middle class, which had more women willing to participate in politics (Edsall 2006). Small donors began to play a much bigger role in the 2004 election than ever before which began to shed light on the political importance of the internet as a new fundraising regime (Edsall 2006). When the 2004 election ended and President George W. Bush was reelected, the reports were released on how much he raised through various areas. The average contribution to the campaign was \$116, major donor programs raised \$130.6 million dollars, \$114.6 million dollars was raised via mail and phones, and \$13.8 million dollars was raised with online donation (Eric 2004). After the 2004 election, analysts figured out that they could target a key group of voters, women and the middle class, which they had a hard time doing in the past.

As we can begin to grasp a strategy from the Bush and Cheney 2004 campaign, the internet was beginning to be the new outlet for political information. Although there were no social networking trends happening just yet, people were still communicating about politics through email, instant messaging and blogs. Campaign technology was advancing with the use of blogs, supporters and individuals could communicate their opinions and viewpoints through cyberspace which was bringing supporters to-

gether to begin forming an online community (Rice 2004). The campaigns used emails to increase communication between voters, which became an effective way of increasing their total fundraising strategy (Rice 2004). However, because Bush and Cheney had an idea that the internet would play a large role in the 2004 election, they were building their email list of supporters for nearly six years and by the 2004 campaign they had almost 5 million supporters on their list (Rice 2004). By looking at the 2004 campaign, we can see that the internet was already becoming a large part of campaign politics, Bush and Cheney saw this major shift coming and were able to prepare for it. Thus putting them light-years ahead in terms of online campaigning, it is safe to say that President Bush and Vice President Cheney were the pioneers of online campaigns and online fundraising. They saw a shift in the election trends and where politics was heading post 2000 election and they planned ahead for the 2004 election.

### *2008- Election of Barack H. Obama:*

As we look back to 2008, this election year was legendary for a few reasons. First, we had a woman and an African American man running for the Democratic nominee. Second, it was the first time that a campaign was run via social networking, thus making 2008 an iconic election year. Using the Way Back Machine, we can see that Senator Barack Obama announced his presidential campaign on February 6, 2007 via the internet, before announcing his presidential bid Barack Obama was asking people on Facebook to give their feedback if he should run for president. Just six short days later Senator Barack Obama's new campaign committee launched his presidential campaign website. This campaign website was not like anything voters had ever seen before, the options that were available were so revolutionary it made politics simplified. What the Obama 2008 campaign did that was different was they had a large online presence. Aside from his campaign website, Obama was present on twenty-one different online websites. These websites ranged from YouTube, Flickr, Gather and iTunes. However, we can already see a difference between the 2004 and 2008 campaigns; just in the sense of how much the internet and social media evolved in four short years.

When Senator Barack Obama was trying to win the nomination of the Democratic Committee, he was already establishing a strong online presence. Looking back into social media using the Way Back Machine, in 2008 Obama's campaign website had many things that others simply did not. On the site

you could register to vote, sign up as a volunteer, sign up for email updates, donate, buy Obama gear, and supporters had access to my.barackobama.com where they had the ability to make their own site to raise money for his campaign. The supporters had their own section on the campaign site where they could "Make a Difference" by making calls, and volunteering at campaign sites and events. Through Obama's twenty-one online social media sites you could add "Vote for Obama" badges and banners to our own home pages, become his friend and talk to other Obama supporters. One of the things that Obama did differently than any other presidential candidate before himself was, he used YouTube to put campaign ads on the internet. By doing this he had over 19 million channel views with over 1 million people subscribed to his YouTube channel by the time he was elected. When he used YouTube, Obama was also able to link those videos to his other social media websites, like Facebook. Which reached another demographic of internet and social media users then just one online site alone. This was one strategy of the Obama campaign that they were targeting different sites on the internet to reach as many people as possible.

With the help of the Way Back Machine it showed how the Obama campaign targeted many individual types of voters including students, women, minorities, environmentalists, religious individuals and the L.G.B.T. community. Due to his efforts trying to appeal to these voter demographics, his online presence was strong on websites that these types of voters would use on a daily basis. Barack Obama had profiles on Blackplanet, Faithbase, Eons, Glee, MiGente, MyBatanga, and AsainAve. All these websites had links on Obama's campaign website, as well as links to his other social networking sites. Another great online strategy that Obama's campaign committee used was the use of My.BarackObama.com, where supporters were able to make friends with other supporters, host events for Obama, help fundraise for Obama and host their own blog to raise awareness on Obama's stance on certain issues as well as raise funds. By tapping into this uncharted area of presidential campaign tactics, it was a unpaved path that had never been traveled on before. But Obama's campaign committee was able to grasp how to engage supporters and rally support around him due to turning Senator Barack Obama into the brand of "Obama" (IMG 2008).

### *2008-Barack H. "Obama," the Brand:*

Barack Obama was able to do something a candidate had never done before, that was to turn themselves into a brand. His campaign committee

saw how he was gaining such a large following of students, young voters, Latinos and African Americans (IMG 2008). They used his name and created creative slogans that appealed to all the different demographics that Obama was targeting. His committee used creative slogans that Obama would say in speeches and debates such as “Change”, “Hope”, “A Road to Change”. This also helped him appeal to more and more donors, which would grow his supporters. Obama’s campaign took a page from Bush and Cheney’s 2004 campaign; they sent emails to supporters asking for money to support the campaign. However, Obama did not have six years to grow an extensive email list of possible donors, they had fewer than 50,000 emails, all of which came from Obama’s campaign for senate (Luo 2008). However, his 2008 presidential campaign committee was quick to help grow this list, at events and rallies that drew thousands of people, they asked the attendees to give their emails for the campaign (Luo 2008). This is how Obama’s campaign was able to tap into the small donor money market, by sending out emails asking for donations and to get them to volunteer (Luo 2008).

### *2008- Election of Barack H. Obama Finance Committee:*

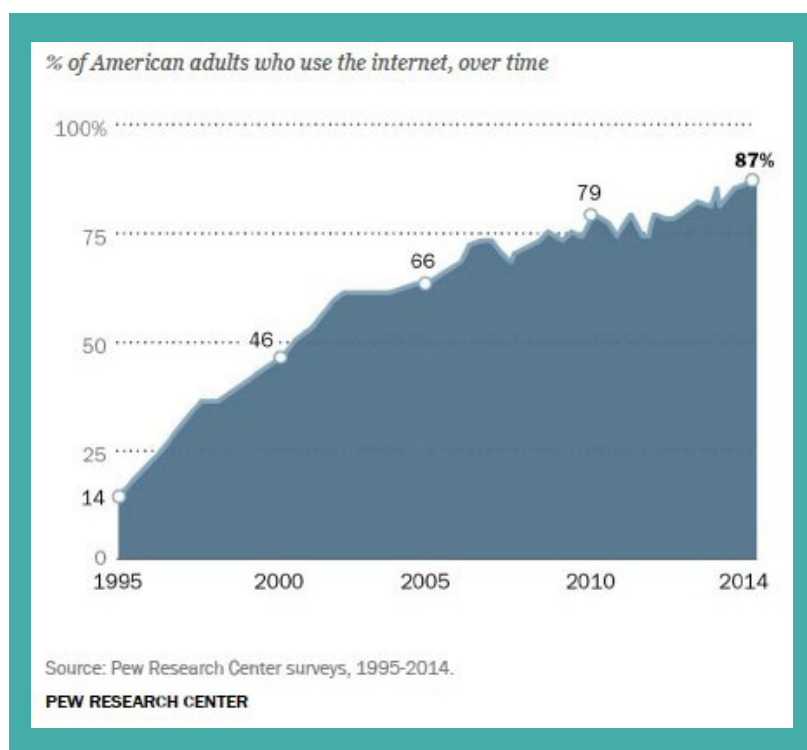
With his campaign targeting small donors in the primaries and into the general election, they had an extensive donor list created (Luo 2008). Once the brand of Obama was established, his campaign committee alongside the Democratic National Committee targeted large and small donors for any kind of support that they could get from donors.

In an interview that was conducted with Corinne Tapia, a member of the Democratic National Committee in the finance division for election years 2008 and 2012, she was able to give insight into the Democratic National Committee and how they were able to raise tremendous amounts of money for Obama. By having an established brand like Obama did, it was easier to reach out to donors and ask for campaign contributions, stated Ms. Tapia. The event that set Barack Obama apart from other candidates was his ability to draw in donors who would give large amounts to the Democratic National Committee every year. But the dramatic change was when there was a large surge of high net worth African American donors giving money towards Obama’s campaign, stated Ms. Tapia.

With the use of all Obama’s social networking sites, campaign website and email lists and with the help of the Democratic National Committee for the 2008 election Barack Obama raised a total amount of \$750 million dollars. Out of that \$750 million dollars,

25% or \$190 million dollars, consisted purely of online donations, which helped give Obama’s campaign an extra boost (Lou 2008). A majority of the money that was raised online for Obama was through small donations of \$20 or less (Pew Research Center 2012). As we look at how much the presidential campaign has changed since President Bush and Cheney were running for reelection in 2004, we can see that appealing to the younger generations is becoming easier with the connectivity of social media. The age group of 18-29 year-olds has been a demographic that is hard to appeal to or to get to vote, this changed with Obama due to targeting them on social media. Obama used technology, videos and social media to get his message and face to

**Figure 1: Internet Use 1995-2014**



the younger generation, with his get-out-and- vote campaigns in the battleground states proving to be a key reason for such a large turnout (Keeter 2008).

The 2008 election taught us that the internet is becoming a way to reach voters, supporters and raise money. Due to it being so easy to connect with one another, voters are able to educate themselves more about candidates and follow, or friend them on social media. Obama saw this as a huge plus because his supporters felt like Obama was relatable and seemed like a normal American with a family rather than a man who was rich, powerful and came from a political family like they had just experienced with President Bush.

### *2012- President Barack Obama vs Mitt Romney:*

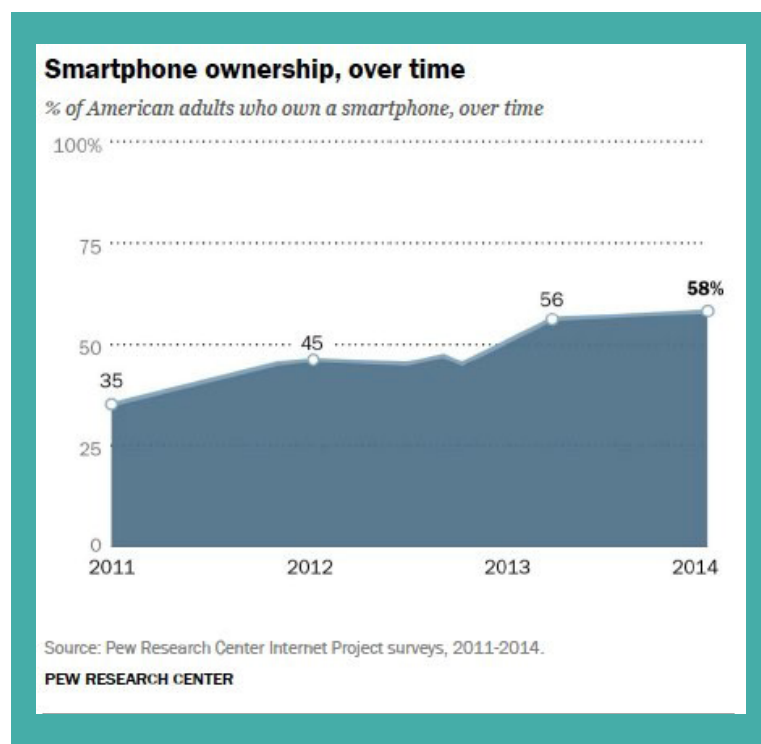
President Obama ran for reelection in 2012 against the Republican nominee Mitt Romney. This election started out very different from elections in the past because it was the reelection of America's first African American president, social media, the internet and smart phones were more accessible and faster than ever. The reason these were already creating a large impact was because smartphones were in the hands of 45 % of voting American (Fig 1) and 80% of Americans used the internet (Fig 2) (Pew Research Center 2014). The media and in-

formation highway was faster than we had ever seen before during a presidential election year.

### *Mitt Romney 2012 Campaign:*

Mitt Romney launched his second attempt to gain the Republican nomination in June 2011 on his Facebook and campaign website (Way Back Machine 2011). With the help of the Way Back Machine, looking into Mitt Romney's campaign website, he had a standard site that showed his positions on policies, accepted donations, had links to his social media, and allowed you to buy gear. However, Romney's campaign was already doing something different than 2008 Obama, they did not have profiles on twenty-one social networking sites. Mitt Romney was present on Facebook, Google Plus, Twitter, YouTube, Tumbler, Flickr, Instagram, Spotify and Mitts VP. For Romney's online campaign, he hired Zac Moffatt to run his social media efforts and to try and create a brand of Romney (Felix 2012). When you look at Romney's social media websites they have fewer followers than President Obama due to the profiles being newer (Felix 2012). However, a large difference between the layout of their social media pages is that Romney's pictures are far away and they are more headshot candidate type pictures which make them less intimate when comparing them to Obama's. When looking at the followers and supporters on three of Mitt Romney's social network sites, his numbers were not astronomical 12 million Facebook friends, 1.7 million Twitter followers, and 36,000 Instagram followers (Felix 2012). Mitt Romney's campaign says that it is not accurate measure of their social media presence when you compare it to President Obama's because Obama had four years to build a following (Burrus 2012). But the biggest issue for Romney was, social media as a strategy was not his campaigns top strategic priority (Burrus 2012). The way that Romney was trying to campaign was to show that President Obama was not performing as a good president due to the state of the economy and that Obama was not good fit for the country (Pew Research Center 2012). Romney and Ryan's strategy was to come at President Obama and Vice President Biden through the debates and challenge what

**Figure 2: Smartphone Ownership 2011-2014**



they have actually accomplished for the country in four years (Pew Research Center 2012).

#### *2012- Mitt Romney Finance Committee:*

When we look into donations that Romney was able to collect during his 2012 election, he raised a total of \$992.5 million dollars (Ashkenas 2012). Romney got \$994,782 dollars from PAC's, \$3 million dollars from other contributions, \$52,500 dollars that he self-financed and got \$384,901,892 dollars from individual donors (Center for Responsive Politics 2012). Romney was able to raise \$282 million dollars through online donations from his website, social media accounts and emails, which was the highest amount of online donations we have seen collected by online donations when comparing 2012 to the election years of 2004 and 2008 (Center for Responsive Politics 2012).

#### *2012- President Barack H. Obama Reelection Campaign:*

When President Obama and Biden started to run for reelection, they were prepared to battle via social media and the internet so they rehired Teddy Goff (Felix 2012). President Obama's social media had a large following already but he gained more during the 2012 election. On three of his top social media sites is followers were in the millions, Facebook was at 32 million friends, Twitter had 21 million followers and 1.3 million friends on Instagram (Pew Research Center 2012). President Obama was able to use his brand once more and appeal to the same voters and demographics he targeted in 2008, including students, women and minorities, because these were groups that Romney could not appeal to (Pew Research Center 2012).

When using the Way Back Machine to look at the campaign sites for 2012, you can see that Obama's campaign did not change the way that they reach out to the voters. The only difference is that there were more of the attacks towards each other on each of the campaign websites and social media sites. Mitt Romney gained ground against Obama after the first debate due to no preparation on the part of President Obama; however, Vice President Biden was able to slam-dunk a debate against Paul Ryan, which evened the playing field once more (Kennedy 2012). This showed supporters how well Joe Biden and President Obama work with one another.

Due to the Republicans using these attacks on the President, the Obama campaign came back at them with a vengeance. President Obama talked

about Romney's failed Bain Capital, labeling Romney as a job destroyer and how Romney just wants to protect the wealthy (Kennedy 2012). This helped President Obama gain support of the lower and middle class people who were swaying into the other direction. At President Obama's field offices, they focused on swing states, but they had tools that they did not have in 2008, they had an enriched voter database, and collected viewing habits from television companies (Wilson 2012). With this information the campaign knew where they had to place President Obama's advertisements, it was with cheap cable buys on channels such as HGTV, ESPN, Tennis Channel and on the Spanish language networks instead of spending money on high cost news networks.

#### *2012- President Barack H. Obama Finance Committee:*

President Obama's campaign with the help of the Democratic National Committee once again, they were able to tap into a large individual donor market. Obama received \$631,650,564 dollars with individual donations alone, \$214 million dollars from small contributions of \$20 or less while the large contributions were from donations of \$200 or less (Center for Responsive Politics 2012). The president self-financed \$5,000 dollars of his own money and collected \$521,000 dollars from other funds (Center for Responsive Politics 2012). For the overall 2012 election, President Barack Obama, and the Democratic National Committee raised a total of \$1072.6 million dollars of that \$690 million dollars was from online donations (Ashkenas 2012). During the 2012 election, President Obama saw the big surge of donors when his campaign sent out emails to his supporters letting them know that he was going to be outspent by Mitt Romney (Wilson 2012).

When we look at how President Obama and Mitt Romney stack up against one another it is easy to see that President Obama used social media better and raised more money online than the Romney campaign. President Obama campaigned in 2012 the exact same way he did in 2008, by targeting certain groups with his brand and making himself more relatable and personable on social media and in general. Which was something that Mitt Romney was unable to do, his social media accounts were cold and did not seem as personal like President Obama's. It truly showed that social media was not a top priority of the Romney campaign; it was more of their priority to attack President Obama's policies, economics, national debt, and jobs. Which backfired terribly when Mitt Romney had a hard time relating to minorities, the middle

class and especially women with certain comments such as his famous “binder full of women” comment. If Mitt Romney was to ever try again for the Oval Office, maybe he will listen to the trends like President Obama did and use tools like social media to make himself seem relatable instead of superior to his voters.

### *2016- Presidential Primaries:*

The presidential primaries began happening during the final months of 2015 and are currently happening now. As we have watched the Democratic and Republican parties thin the heard of potential candidates, we are down to a much smaller number in March 2016. There are two Democratic candidates running for the nomination, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. While there are four Republican candidates running for the nomination, Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and John Kasich. As we get closer and closer to June 2016, the primaries are just getting heated up between the remaining candidates.

While the younger generation is backing Bernie Sanders and trying to push him past Hillary, the Republicans are trying to stop Trump from obtaining the number of delegates needed for the nomination. This race is already proving to be legendary simply due to the Republican party trying to stop Donald Trump. As we are seeing on the news and online daily, social media between the candidates is larger than ever. For this thesis we will examine the outliers from both parties to see how their social networking tactics and financing strategies compare to President Obama’s winning campaign strategy.

### *2016- Republican Candidate: Donald Trump*

These days you cannot talk about the current 2016 election without someone mentioning Donald Trump. He is truly outlier for the Republican party, as we can tell with the current “Stop Trump” campaign led by Mitt Romney. However, Donald Trump is an avid user of social media and we can look on his social networking sites and see that he has a large following that is growing daily. On Facebook Trump has 6 million friends, 1 million followers on Instagram and 6.2 million followers on Twitter (Evans 2016). During this campaign for the nomination, Trump has been in the hot seat a few times for statements made on his social media sites, mainly Twitter. Trump has done such outlandish things during his run for the nomination then we have ever seen any other candidate do, from mocking a handicapped reporter, to putting down a women reporter saying she was on her menstrual cy-

cle, to his latest stunt with David Duke and the Ku Klux Klan (Evans 2016). Even with all this “sending Tweets from the bedside” type of antics, Trump is still soaring in the polls. “The rise of social media has forced us to forgive things that would’ve been a death sentence to candidates in the past, and Donald Trump is just the first benefactor” (Evans 2016). It is hard to tell if we as Americans have become forgiving of these events because of his celebrity status as pre-presidential candidate, but it seems like when Trumps rants and has a fiery twitter speech that it is a direct engagement to the voters (Evan 2016). Which in comparison to President Obama in 2008, is a much different way to appeal to voters and donors due to not relating to them but appealing to the anger or hatred of government that Trumps supporters are feeling.

### *2016-Republican Candidate: Donald Trump’s Finance:*

One of the first things Donald Trump did in his campaign was to denounce PAC support and declared himself as a self-funding candidate and urged his opponents to do the same. Trump is gaining money from private donations, along with his own finances, but he is also getting individual donations from supporters. “Social media has completely shifted the balance of power when it comes to funding a political campaign” (Evans 2016). As of February 2016, Trump had a total of \$3.9 million dollars raised through online donation to his road to the nomination. Since this campaign is still happening, we will have to see how it unfolds to be able to completely compare Trump to Obama. But from what we have learned so far, Trump is using social media to his every advantage and getting in front of a camera as often as possible, so in the way he reaches voters it is very similar to President Obama’s strategy but he is not appealing to different groups like President Obama’s campaign. He is alienating the minorities due to his stance on immigrants and Muslims, alienating women on his stance on abortion, and alienating the Republican party with everything that comes out of his mouth or on his twitter feed.

### *2016- Democratic Candidate: Bernie Sanders:*

On the side, the Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders is gaining followers and speed on Hillary Clinton. He is standing out in this election due to people viewing him a “socialist” and not a democrat. However, Bernie Sanders is much like Barack Obama in the sense of his use of social networking and online strategies. When we look at Bernie Sand-

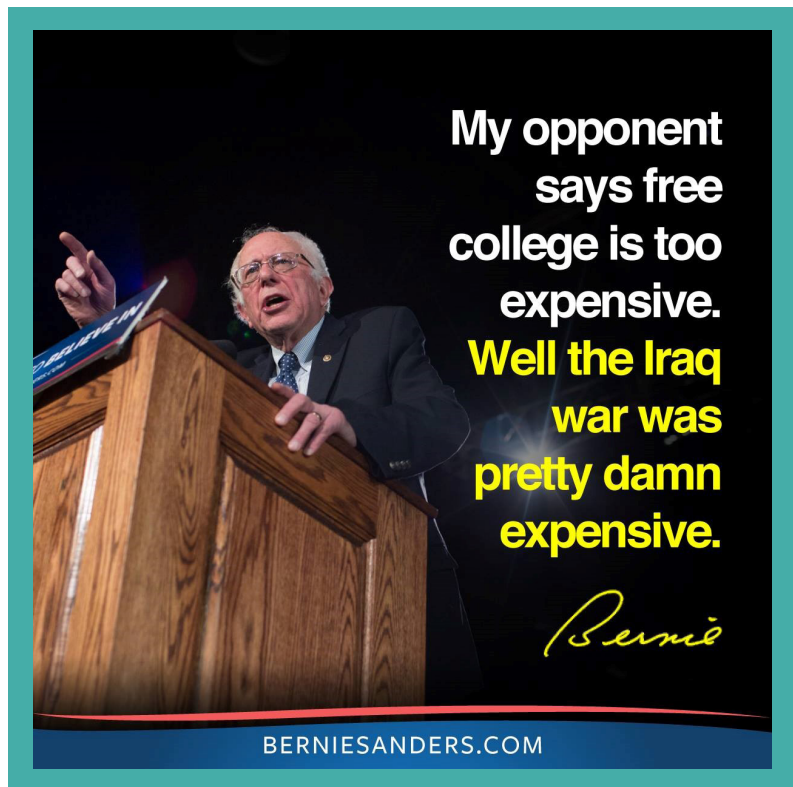
ers social media accounts between his staff and himself they have a large presence on five different social media accounts. On Facebook Sanders has 2.8 million friends, between his staff's twitter and his they have 2.9 million followers, his Instagram has 800,000 followers and his YouTube account has 100,000 followers. When we compare Sanders to Trump, the difference between the two is not that drastic but Trump has a larger following. Whether this is due to his pre-celebrity status or his super crazy posts as a presidential candidate, we will never know the truth. But what Bernie is doing different is using his social media to relate and appeal to his voters; he is targeting college students mainly. He is appealing to these individuals by using memes, and gifs to seem hip to the current trends of the college students. Memes are pictures with words describing a quote or a funny statement (Fig 3), while Gifs are pictures with moving images. This is a type of tactic he is replicating from Obama's campaign, which is to target trends of the youth and reach out to them using these types of strategies. Sander's campaign is also making Bernie a brand like Obama was; they have created catchy slogans like "Feel the Bern".

#### *2016- Democratic Candidate: Bernie Sanders' Finance:*

When looking at Sanders financial strategy for his campaign so far we can see that he is taking all the help from individual donors that he can. So as of January 2016, Bernie Sanders has raised \$96,356,657 dollars for the campaign and \$2.5 million dollars through online donations (Center for Representative Politics 2016). What political analysts are already starting to put together is that Bernie is receiving donations in small denominations, similar to Barack Obama, in \$20 or less (Center for Representative Politics 2016).

As the race continues, we will have to see if the tactics that Sanders campaign is using from Barack Obama will help him surpass Hillary Clinton for the nomination as Obama did in 2008. Or if Donald Trump's new style of reaching out

**Figure 3: Bernie Sanders Meme**



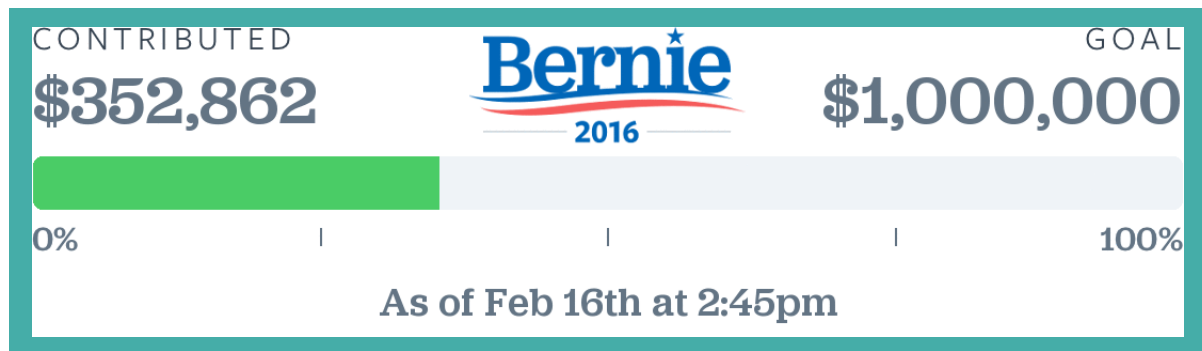
to voters on social media will become the new type of normal for presidential elections to come.

#### **Conclusion:**

Social media and the internet have already begun to alter the way the presidential campaigns are being conducted. As we have learned with the dramatic increase in accessibility to the internet and with the evolution of social media, people can connect with one another faster and easier than ever before.

In 2008 Barack Obama and his campaign committee saw a trend that was increasing at a rapid rate and jumped on it. In doing so, they were able to market Barack Obama as a different type of candidate, something new, fresh, a brand. Barack Obama and his committee would have never seen the trend of social networking evolving as rapidly as it did if President George W. Bush and John Kerry caught on in 2004.

The 2004 campaign was the foundation for a successful social media and internet based campaign, without the knowledge that was learned from the 2004 campaign about this information highway changing the way people view politics the 2008 campaign may have been totally different. But with

**Figure 4: Bernie Sanders' Crowdfunding Campaign**

political analysts reviewing presidential campaign and election years, we are able to catch trends and learn how to build upon them for future reference.

The 2012 election, President Obama and his committee did not change a thing about how they wanted to campaign. They had found a strategy that worked at getting supporters, appealing to voters and raising money for the campaign. Mitt Romney on the other hand used social media but that was not his strong point in the campaign, he was out of date on how to stay fresh and cool on social networks, which just made him seem cold and not relatable.

The 2016 election is still happening and things are changing every day. But one thing is for certain; social media is changing politics, as we know it. Things that used to be taboo are now just overlooked and there are no repercussions. 2016 will be a model year on how social networks have evolved presidential elections from how they used to be in the 1960's

when candidates got more face time in with the voters to now when they simply send a tweet, a snap, or a post.

Obama's 2008 presidential campaign was so revolutionary on how he was able to gain supporters and raise funds that future candidates have chosen to follow in his footsteps. Obama followed his own path in 2012, and won his reelection because of it. His opponent Mitt Romney tried his own type of social media campaign hybrid, but networking took a backseat to Romney's other agendas, which cost him the race. As we can see in 2016, both of the candidate's that this thesis covered are using President Barack Obama's strategies for social media in some form but they are slightly evolving to put their own unique twist on social media. We will not know the outcome of the 2016 election, but looking at the campaigns so far they are choosing to replicate Obama's 2008 campaign.

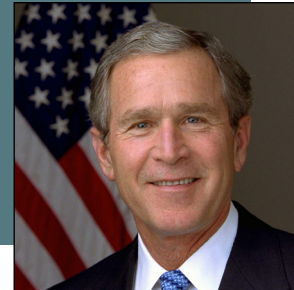
## References

- Agarwal, A (2008). How old is the internet? Retrieved from: <http://www.labnol.org/internet/favorites/how-old-is-the-internet/6244/>
- Ashkenas, J. (2012). The 2012 Money Race: Compare the Candidates. *The New York Times*. <http://elections.nytimes.com/2012/campaign-finance>
- Barkan, J (1972). Operations Research in Planning Political Campaign Strategies. *Operations Research*. 20(5) 925-941
- Barack Obama (2016) Retrieved From: <https://www.barackobama.com>
- Bergan, D., (2005). "Party Campaign Finance and Electoral Competition". *Northwestern University. Proquest Dissertations*. 129.
- Bernie Sanders (2016). Retrieved From: <https://go.berniesanders.com/page/content/contribute/>
- Brookings Institution Press (2014). *Billionaires: Reflections on the Upper Crust*. Can Rich Dudes Buy an Election? 33-54.
- Burton, M. J., Shaw, D. R., (2007). The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004. *Political Science Quarterly*. 122(3). 511-512.
- Burrus, D (2012). Did social media play a role in Obama's Victory? *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved From: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-burrus/did-social-media-play-a-r\\_b\\_2094145.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-burrus/did-social-media-play-a-r_b_2094145.html)
- Campbell, J. (2012). "The Miserable Presidential Election of 2012: A First Party Term Incumbent Survives". *A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*. 10(4). 20-28.
- Campbell, J (2005). Why Bush Won the Presidential Election of 2004: Incumbency, Ideology, Terrorism, and Turnout. *Political Science Quarterly*.



- 120 (2 ). 219-241
- César, J., Verlan, L. (2012). "The Presidential Election of 2012 by the Numbers and in Historical Perspective". *A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*. 10(4). 29-35
- Center for Responsive Politics (2016). Open Secrets for presidential election years 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.opensecrets.org/pres16/candidate.php?id=N00000528>
- Coffey, D. J., (2015). *Sparking Debate: Campaigns, Social Media, and Political Incivility. Controlling the Message*. NYU Press. 245-269.
- Cornfield, M (2005). Commentary on the impact of the internet on the 2004 election. They Cyber education of John Kerry and other political activists. Pew Research Center. <http://www.pew-internet.org/2005/03/06/commentary-on-the-impact-of-the-internet-on-the-2004-election/>
- Donald Trump (2016). Retrieved From: <https://www.donaldjtrump.com>
- Edsall, T (2006). Ride in Online Fundraising Changed Face of Campaign Donors. Washington Post. Retrieved from: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/05/AR2006030500816.html>
- Eric, M (2004). George W. Bush-Campaign Finances. Retrieved from <https://www.gwu.edu/~action/2004/bush/bushfin.html>
- Ewing, K. (2009). "Virtual Social Capital in the Obama Campaign". Michigan State University, Proquest Dissertations. 91.
- Evans,R. (2016). 5 Ways We got the Trump Campaign Wrong: An insider explains. Cracked. Retrieved From: <http://www.cracked.com/blog/trump-will-be-nominee-5-inside-reasons-it-happened/>
- Felix, S (2012). Side by Side: How Obama and Romney's social media battle stacks up. *The Business Inside*. Retrieved From: <http://www.businessinsider.com/winner-of-the-obamaromney-social-media-campaign-2012-9?op=1>
- George W. Bush (2004). Retrieved From: <http://www.georgewbush.com>
- Gurian, P (1993). Campaign Strategy in Presidential Primaries, 1976-88. *American Journal of Political Science*. 37(1) 335-341
- Handler, E., (1982). *Business in politics; campaign strategies of corporate political action committees*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.
- Hendricks, J. A., Denton, R. E., (2010). *Communicator-in chief: how Barack Obama used new media technology to win the White House*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Hoffman, L.(2012) *Embracing the medium: How presidential campaigns use technology*. Huffington Post. Retrieved From: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lindsay-hoffman/embracing-the-medium-how-presidential-campaigns-use-technology\\_b\\_1797550.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lindsay-hoffman/embracing-the-medium-how-presidential-campaigns-use-technology_b_1797550.html)
- Kallen, T. (2009). "Campaign finance: background, regulations and reform." Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/csupomona/detail.action?docID=10660203>
- Keeter,S (2008). Young voters in the 2008 election. The Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/2008/11/13/young-voters-in-the-2008-election/>
- Kennedy, K (2013). Use it or Lose it: Social Media in the 2012 election. Pulitzer Center. Retrieved From: <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/social-media-role-young-voters-increase-future-US-elections-Obama-Facebook-Twitter>
- Klinkner, P., Schaller, T. (2008). "LBJ's Revenge: The 2008 Election and the Rise of the Great Society Coalition". *A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*, 6(4), 1-17.
- Luo, M. (2008). Small Online Contributions Ass up to Huge Fund-raising edge for Obama. *The New York Times*. Retrieved From: [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/20/us/politics/20obama.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/20/us/politics/20obama.html?_r=0)
- Malbin,M & Panagopoulous, C. (2007)Reviewed Work: *The Election after Reform: Money, Politics, and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act*. *Political Science Quarterly*. 122 (1) 150-152
- Malveaux, J., (2011). "What Trumped? Race, Class, Gender, Generation, the Economy, and the 2008 Elections". *The Obama Phenomenon*. University of Illinois Press. 82-91.
- Mayer, W. (2012). "How the Romney Campaign Blew It". *A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*. 10(4), 40-50.
- Merriam-Webster. (2015). Social Media. Retrieved From: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media>
- Mitt Romney (2012). Retrieved From: <http://www.mittromney.com>
- Museum of the Moving Image.(2012). *The Living Room Candidate*. Retrieved from: <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/2012>
- Nice, D., (1984). Political equality and campaign finance in the American states. *Social Science Quarterly*. 65 (4). 1104-1111.
- Patil, B., (1968). Campaign Strategy and Voting Behavior. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 3(1/2). 157-162.
- Pew Research Center.(2012). *The Media and Campaign 2012*. Project for Excellence Journal.

- Retrieved from: <http://www.stateofthedia.org/2013/special-reports-landing-page/the-media-and-campaign-2012/>
- Pew Research Center. (2012). How the Presidential Candidates Use the Web and Social Media. Retrieved From: <http://www.journalism.org/2012/08/15/how-presidential-candidates-use-web-and-social-media/>
- Rainie, L (2005). The Internet and Campaign 2004. The Pew Research Center. Retrieved From: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2005/03/06/the-internet-and-campaign-2004/>
- Rainie, L (2008). Partisan Story. The Internet and the 2008 Election. The Pew Research Center. Retrieved From: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2008/06/15/partisan-story/>
- Rice, A (2004). The Power of the Internet. Retrieved from [campaignsonline.org](http://www.campaignsonline.org) <http://www.campaignsonline.org/reports/1104.html>
- Rosenthal, A. (1976). The Constitution and Campaign Finance Regulation after Buckley v. Valeo. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Political Finance: Reform and Reality. 425. 124-133
- Samples, J., (2006). The fallacy of campaign finance reform. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, A (2012). How Obama won social media. Dragonfly Effect. Retrieved From: <http://www.dragonflyeffect.com/blog/dragonfly-in-action/case-studies/the-obama-campaign/>
- University Authors Francisco, Apparicio(2006). Campaign finance law, electoral competition, and economic policy. ProQuest Dissertations. George Mason University.
- Way Back Machine (2016). Retrieved From: <https://wayback.archive.org>
- Wilson, S (2012). The Strategy that paved is a winning path. The Washington Post. Retrieved From: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/decision2012/the-strategy-that-paved-a-winning-path/2012/11/07/0a1201c8-2769-11e2-b2a0-ae18d6159439\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/decision2012/the-strategy-that-paved-a-winning-path/2012/11/07/0a1201c8-2769-11e2-b2a0-ae18d6159439_story.html)
- Wood, J (2016). Timeline: Social Media. Key dates in the evolution and increasing influence of social media. Retrieved from: <http://www.infoplease.com/science/computers/social-media-timeline.html>
- Yaverbaum, E (2012). Obama is a master of social media-New app fuels his campaign. Huffington Post. Retrieved From: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-yaverbaum/obama-social-media\\_b\\_1564602.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-yaverbaum/obama-social-media_b_1564602.html)



*In recent years, social media has had an increased influence on presidential campaigns and fundraising. Will popularity among social media users be a deciding factor in the 2016 elections?*

## Alexis Jordan Ojinaga



Alexis J. Ojinaga is a fifth year political science major. Her graduation date is June 2016. She plans on attending law school postgraduation to continue her career in academia.

---