



# The 51st State

## The State of Online

**THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN 2008**  
*Candidates and News Sources*

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**The presidential election of 2008 will be the first presidential “Internet election,” an historical phenomenon in which the Internet and its technologies are playing integral roles for candidates and their campaigns, the mainstream media, and voters and citizens.**

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by **Laura Gordon-Murnane**  
Information Consultant

Unlike previous campaigns, the Internet has become the essential tool for all political candidates to announce their campaigns, release new campaign ads, answer questions posted by voters, post videos and photos, and raise awareness, as well as lots and lots of money. Using the Internet, candidates can attract and connect with younger voters who spend most (if not all) their time on the Internet. The Net is where the younger generation of voters hangs out, gets their news, and shares ideas with friends, family, colleagues, and classmates (via blogs, video-sharing, photo-sharing, and social networking sites).

Tech-savvy candidates are offering Web sites, blogs, “create your own campaign” blog tools, and “be my friend” with links to Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and Flickr. Even so, a recent study by iCrossing has found that even with candidates’ attention to these social networking sites ►

## Presidential Candidates



### REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES

(Declared as of August 2007)

Sam Brownback  
Rudy Giuliani  
Mike Huckabee  
Duncan Hunter  
John McCain  
Ron Paul  
Mitt Romney  
Tom Tancredo  
Fred Thompson (Declared September 2007)



### DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES

(Declared as of August 2007)

Joseph Biden  
Hillary Clinton  
Christopher Dodd  
John Edwards  
Mike Gravel  
Dennis Kucinich  
Barack Obama  
Bill Richardson

and tools, most citizens/voters looking for information about candidates do not go to a candidate's Web site or MySpace page. Instead, they seek information about candidate voting records, position statements, etc., by going to both Web search engines and the online versions of traditional media — NYtimes.com, CNN.com, and the Washingtonpost.com.<sup>1</sup> The tech tools are available, but how well the candidates use them and whether the savvy ways their campaigns introduce them into grass-roots outreach and fundraising operations will benefit them remains one of the open questions of this current election cycle.

The Internet is also revolutionizing and reshaping the influence mainstream media has — or doesn't have — on presidential elections. Newspapers, news magazines, radio, and the major television networks used to be the way citizens and voters learned about candidates, the issues, and the solutions the candidates offered. I think it is safe to say that those days, if not over, are numbered. The Internet has opened up other avenues of news, commentary, discussion, and discourse. The growing number of options for learning, finding, and sharing news and information about candidates has dramatically altered public dependence on the mainstream press. In July 2007, iCrossing released a report entitled "How America Searches: Election '08" that found new media options more important than ever to the upcoming presidential election. The report stated that the Internet has "emerged as the number-two channel after television among potential voters looking for election-related information, and is tied with newspapers."<sup>2</sup> The survey revealed that "forty-two percent of voters look to the Internet for information about issues and candidates in the upcoming presidential election, with the Internet a considerably more popular information source than newspapers among respondents between the ages of 18 and 34." Indeed, more than half of younger online voters are turning to social media for election information; 61 percent of 18 to 24 year olds and 55 percent of 25 to 34 year olds seek answers on user-driven content sites such as blogs, YouTube, and Wikipedia.<sup>3</sup> Traditional news media organizations need to use the Internet and Web 2.0 tools to reach younger voters, as well as to hold on to older voters.

Technology is forcing mainstream media to sit up and pay attention. CNN jumped in by holding the first CNN-YouTube Democratic Debate on July 24, 2007, in which the entire field of Democratic candidates faced video questions submitted from voters and citizens, rather than journalists. Slate.com (owned by the Washington Post), Yahoo!, and The Huffington Post (HuffingtonPost.com) hosted the first ever online-only presidential candidate mashup on Sept. 12, 2007. All Democratic candidates agreed to participate in this event in which anyone could send questions via email, podcast, or video to The Huffington Post with moderator Charlie Rose asking the candi-

## Presidential Online Forums

Sept. 17, 2007

The Huffington Post, Yahoo!, and Slate.com host first online-only presidential mashup.

Nov. 28, 2007

CNN and YouTube host Republican candidates' forum in Florida.

Dec. 7, 2007

Online National Presidential Caucus [<http://www.nationalcaucus.com>]

MoveOn.org

Future townhall meetings [[http://pol.moveon.org/townhall/iraq/report\\_back.html](http://pol.moveon.org/townhall/iraq/report_back.html)]

Jan. 1-2, 2008

MySpace Online Townhall Forums

dates questions from those submitted. Responses will be videoed and coded and then released to the public to make mashups of the candidates responses.<sup>4</sup> CNN–YouTube has also convinced Republican candidates to participate in their own version on Nov. 28, 2007, with The Huffington Post also working with Republican candidates to host a presidential online mashup too.

While candidates use technology to raise money and interact with voters, mainstream media sites use it to deliver political news to a diverse and growing audience that often turns to alternative sources for political news. The interplay between the candidates, the mainstream press, citizens/voters, and the Internet is making for a very exciting, dramatic, real-time, “in your face” presidential campaign. Tracking presidential candidates, campaign and election news, fundraising news, political strategies, debates, primaries, successes, and missteps — this is happening more and more online.

So, what tools can you — the political junkie, the technology geek, the concerned citizen — use to find out about the current crop of presidential candidates; to track them; to monitor political news, campaign events, debates, and the money pouring into campaign coffers? To help monitor the campaign, we have put together a collection of tools and resources that can assist those interested in learning more about the 2008 presidential campaign. We begin with the candidates and how they use technology tools to present themselves to the voting public, raise funds, and hold campaign events and meetings. (See Table 1, beginning on page 22.) Next, we look at mainstream media online sites and how these sites cover and monitor the presidential campaign and its candidates. What tools are being used to bring news, blogs, candidate videos, user-generated videos, pictures, and other information about the candidates to the interested and uninterested voting public? Third, we look at a select group of blogs that provides timely news, commentary, reports, and debate on the candidates and the campaigns. Don't have the time to wade through all the blogs and news sites? Aggregator tools can help you find the news you want. We include a list of the really useful aggregator tools that cover both mainstream press and major political blogs. All of these tools — blogs, video/audio, social networking sites, etc. — can help you investigate candidates, major issues, and the solutions candidates offer to solve problems.

As of August 2007, there were eight officially declared Republican candidates and at least one undeclared candidate. Though Fred Thompson had not officially declared himself a Republican candidate, he had launched a “testing the waters” candidacy, built largely around his Web site. (As we went to press, Thompson had finally declared in early September during an appearance on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*.) The Democrats had eight officially

declared candidates. Unlike 4 years ago, all the political campaigns have embraced the use of technology to reach out to the public. Today, every candidate has a Web site. Compared to 4 years ago, the online tools available to raise funds, reach out to the grass-roots, and provide a voice and channel of communication between candidates and voters have improved dramatically. At the YearlyKos Convention in Chicago, the Democratic candidates were asked if they would appoint a White House blogger if elected; all said yes.<sup>5</sup> The question, let alone the response, would have been unthinkable 4 years ago. The Internet and the blogosphere together have energized the political debate.

All the campaigns have Web sites and can take donations up to the maximum of \$2,300. What tools and features are provided at these Web sites? We have looked at the different features and tools the candidates offer to supporters, volunteers, and interested citizens. First, not all candidates have a blog. On the Democratic side, Dennis Kucinich and Mike Gravel were without blog (WOB); on the Republican side, Rudy Giuliani and Duncan Hunter were also WOB. Campaign blogs are authored by campaign staffers and, for the most part, allow comments from those who register with the campaign. By allowing comments, the campaigns create an important dialogue between campaign staff, individual bloggers, and a broader community of bloggers. Opening the blogs to comments promotes direct communication. In another interesting development, some campaigns allow supporters to create their own blog space on the candidate's site. John McCain offers this feature on his site, McCainSpace. Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, John Edwards, Bill Richardson, and Dennis Kucinich also offer this tool. Those who feel passionately about their politics have a direct line of communication with the campaign.

Social networking tools have been embraced by most if not all candidates in one form or another. The only candidate not using social networking tools is Giuliani. Links to the major social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, Meetup, and Flickr) are all prominently displayed on the main pages of candidate sites. In the report “Election 2008: Candidate Web Sites, Propaganda or News?” the authors found that “social networking sites like MySpace (the most popular), Facebook, YouTube, Meetup and Flickr facilitate interaction among people who have something in common — in this case, interest in a particular candidate. Users who register on one of these sites can then ‘meet and network’ with any other registered user, including the presidential candidates.”<sup>6</sup> John Edwards's campaign site wins the award for the most social networks — 23. I am not sure if this helps or hurts him. Social networking sites have to be kept fresh with new content (pictures, videos, and information about the candidate and the campaign). Failure to do so sends a

*(Text continued on page 36)*







## Democratic Party Candidates

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Barack Obama</i>	<i>Bill Richardson</i>
<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="http://www.barackobama.com">http://www.barackobama.com</a>	<a href="http://richardsonforpresident.com/home">http://richardsonforpresident.com/home</a>
<b>Blog</b>	Yes: <a href="http://www.barackobama.com/blog">http://www.barackobama.com/blog</a> All blogs on site searchable, including Community Headquarters blog.	Headquarters Blog: <a href="http://action.richardsonforpresident.com/page/community/group/Headquarters">http://action.richardsonforpresident.com/page/community/group/Headquarters</a>
Allows comments	Yes	Yes
Enables citizen-generated blog (start your own blog)	<a href="http://my.barackobama.com/page/user/login?successurl=L3BhZ2UvZGFzaGJvYXJkL3ByaXZhdGU=">http://my.barackobama.com/page/user/login?successurl=L3BhZ2UvZGFzaGJvYXJkL3ByaXZhdGU=</a> Set up: MyBarakObama.com. Many tools available.	Yes. Requires registration. Has an Action Center but it does not look as if you can set up your blog on the site.
Enables citizen-generated forums	See above	Start a Group: This allows you to set up a group and a blog for posting.
<b>Calendar</b>	Yes	Find an Event: <a href="http://action.richardsonforpresident.com/page/event/search_simple">http://action.richardsonforpresident.com/page/event/search_simple</a>
Where is the candidate?	Yes	No calendar of candidate's schedule but can use "Find an Event" to see where the candidate and other events appear in your area.
<b>Fundraising Tools</b>	Yes	Yes
Donations	Yes	Yes
Hold fundraising house parties	Volunteering opportunities available	Yes, as well as other volunteering opportunities
<b>Store</b>	Yes: <a href="http://store.barackobama.com">http://store.barackobama.com</a>	No
<b>Grass-Roots Tools</b>	Yes	Yes: <a href="http://www.richardsonforpresident.com/action_center">http://www.richardsonforpresident.com/action_center</a>
Blog for candidate	Yes	Yes
Fundraising events	Yes	Yes
Internships for undergraduate college students	Yes: <a href="http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/contact">http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/contact</a>	No
Meetup, door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, letter writing, community events	Yes	Yes
Voter registration	Yes: <a href="http://www.govote.org">http://www.govote.org</a>	No
<b>News About the Campaign</b>	Yes	Yes
News alerts	In the News: Right on front page; sign up for email alerts.	Yes
Press releases	Yes: <a href="http://www.barackobama.com/newsroom">http://www.barackobama.com/newsroom</a>	Yes
Speeches	Yes: <a href="http://www.barackobama.com/speeches">http://www.barackobama.com/speeches</a>	Yes
<b>On-Demand Access</b>	Yes	Yes
Email alerts	Yes	Yes
Search	No	Only for blogs
Mobile/wireless alerts	Yes: Text messages – txt go to Obama 62262	No
RSS feeds	Multiple RSS feeds	Yes
Podcasts	Yes: <a href="http://origin.barackobama.com/tv/podcasts.php">http://origin.barackobama.com/tv/podcasts.php</a>	No
<b>Social Networking Sites</b>	Yes	Yes
Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=500055852&amp;hiq=barack%2Cobama">http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=500055852&amp;hiq=barack%2Cobama</a>	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/person.php?id=2610375075">http://www.facebook.com/person.php?id=2610375075</a>
Flickr	<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/barackobamadotcom">http://www.flickr.com/photos/barackobamadotcom</a>	<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/richardson_06">http://www.flickr.com/photos/richardson_06</a>
MySpace	<a href="http://www.myspace.com/barackobama">http://www.myspace.com/barackobama</a>	<a href="http://www.myspace.com/richardsonforpresident">http://www.myspace.com/richardsonforpresident</a>
YouTube	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=BarackObamadotcom">http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=BarackObamadotcom</a>	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=Richardson4President">http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=Richardson4President</a>
Others	Party Builder: <a href="http://www.democrats.org/page/dashboard/public/gFdZp">http://www.democrats.org/page/dashboard/public/gFdZp</a> Eventful: <a href="http://www.eventful.com/barackobama">http://www.eventful.com/barackobama</a>	Party Builder: <a href="http://www.democrats.org/page/dashboard/public/gFKNL">http://www.democrats.org/page/dashboard/public/gFKNL</a>
<b>Multimedia</b>	Yes	Yes
Audio	Yes: <a href="http://origin.barackobama.com/tv/podcasts.php">http://origin.barackobama.com/tv/podcasts.php</a>	No
Video	Yes. Barack TV: <a href="http://origin.barackobama.com/tv">http://origin.barackobama.com/tv</a>	Yes: <a href="http://www.richardsonforpresident.com/multimedia">http://www.richardsonforpresident.com/multimedia</a>
Photos	Yes: <a href="http://www.barackobama.com/photos">http://www.barackobama.com/photos</a>	<a href="http://www.richardsonforpresident.com/multimedia/photos">http://www.richardsonforpresident.com/multimedia/photos</a>
<b>Spanish Translation</b>	Yes: <a href="http://www.barackobama.com/espanol">http://www.barackobama.com/espanol</a>	Yes: <a href="http://www.richardsonparapresidente.com">http://www.richardsonparapresidente.com</a>











★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **Republican Party Candidates** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Fred Dalton Thompson</i>
<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="http://www.imwithfred.com">http://www.imwithfred.com</a>
<b>Blog</b>	Yes. Campaign blog: FredFile: <a href="http://fredfile.imwithfred.com">http://fredfile.imwithfred.com</a>
Allows comments	Yes. Requires registration to make comments
Enables citizen-generated blog (start your own blog)	No
Enables citizen-generated forums	No
<b>Calendar</b>	No
Where is the candidate?	No
<b>Fundraising Tools</b>	Yes
Donations	Yes
Hold fundraising house parties	Yes
<b>Store</b>	No
<b>Grass-Roots Tools</b>	Yes
Blog for candidate	No
Fundraising events	Yes
Internships for undergraduate college students	No
Meetup, door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, letter writing, community events	Letter writing, phone calls to talk radio
Voter registration	Yes: <a href="http://www.imwithfred.com/PublicProfile/VoterReg.aspx">http://www.imwithfred.com/PublicProfile/VoterReg.aspx</a>
<b>News About the Campaign</b>	Yes
News alerts	Yes
Press releases	Yes
Speeches	Yes
<b>On-Demand Access</b>	Yes
Email alerts	Yes
Search	No
Mobile/wireless alerts	No
RSS feeds	Yes: <a href="http://www.imwithfred.com/Feeds/RSS.aspx">http://www.imwithfred.com/Feeds/RSS.aspx</a>
Podcasts	FedCast (audio)
<b>Social Networking Sites</b>	Yes
Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/person.php?id=2369087773">http://www.facebook.com/person.php?id=2369087773</a>
Flickr	<a href="http://flickr.com/photos/9313013@N04">http://flickr.com/photos/9313013@N04</a>
MySpace	<a href="http://myspace.com/freddthompson08">http://myspace.com/freddthompson08</a>
YouTube	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=freddthompson">http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=freddthompson</a>
Others	Twitter: <a href="http://www.twitter.com/fredthompson">http://www.twitter.com/fredthompson</a> del.icio.us: <a href="http://del.icio.us/freddthompson">http://del.icio.us/freddthompson</a>
<b>Multimedia</b>	Yes
Audio	Yes. FredCast: <a href="http://www.imwithfred.com/FredCast/FredCastSummary.aspx">http://www.imwithfred.com/FredCast/FredCastSummary.aspx</a>
Video	Yes: <a href="http://www.imwithfred.com/FredCast/FredCastSummary.aspx">http://www.imwithfred.com/FredCast/FredCastSummary.aspx</a>
Photos	Yes: <a href="http://www.imwithfred.com/PhotoGallery.aspx">http://www.imwithfred.com/PhotoGallery.aspx</a>
<b>Spanish Translation</b>	No

All candidate photographs were taken from their individual Web sites.



# MAINSTREAM MEDIA

## Campaign 2008 News Sites – Web Features

(Web sites surveyed July 28 – Aug. 5, 2007)

Table 2.

News Organization	CNN Politics and CNN Election Center 2008	CQ Politics.com
URL	<a href="http://www.cnn.com/POLITICS">http://www.cnn.com/POLITICS</a>	<a href="http://www.cqpolitics.com">http://www.cqpolitics.com</a>
News	Top political stories	CQPolitics.com Headlines: Breaking News
Contact reporter	Reporter listed, no contact email	Yes. Two ways to communicate with CQPolitics: Directly to Contributing Editor Craig Crawford [ <a href="mailto:ccrawford@cq.com">ccrawford@cq.com</a> ] or click on the reporter's name. General email address and the title of the article will appear in the subject line of the email (for Outlook).
Comments on news pieces	No	Yes
Share with community sites	No	Yes. Bookmark this article on <a href="http://del.icio.us">del.icio.us</a> or <a href="http://Newsvine.com">Newsvine</a> .
Email article	Yes	Yes
Tags	Yes	Yes
Blogs	CNN PoliticalTicker [ <a href="http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com">http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com</a> ]: Provides latest political news. Can also have a twice daily email sent on political news and events.	CQPolitics.com is very much like a blog, with posts in chronological order. Multiple reporters contributing to the site.
Enable comments	Yes	Yes
<b>On-Demand Access</b>	Yes	Yes
From other blogs	Yes. Powered by Sphere Quick. List of blogs as it relates to the different news stories. Clicking on a story will give you a bottom link to "From Other Blogs."	Yes. Partnership with Craig Crawford's Trail Mix [ <a href="http://www.crawfordsl.com/blog">http://www.crawfordsl.com/blog</a> ].
Email alerts	Yes, twice daily updates	Yes: <a href="http://www.cq.com/corp/show.do?page=products_cqpolitics">http://www.cq.com/corp/show.do?page=products_cqpolitics</a>
Mobile alerts	CNN.com has mobile options for multiple cellular phones. Breaking News Alerts – Verizon only [ <a href="http://www.cnn.com/mobile">http://www.cnn.com/mobile</a> ].	No
RSS feeds	Yes: <a href="http://rss.cnn.com/rss/cnn_politicalticker.rss">http://rss.cnn.com/rss/cnn_politicalticker.rss</a>	Yes: <a href="http://www.cqpolitics.com/aboutrss.html">http://www.cqpolitics.com/aboutrss.html</a>
Podcast feeds	Race to 08 podcasts (main Politics page). Also has a video and podcasting page: <a href="http://www.cnn.com/services/podcasting">http://www.cnn.com/services/podcasting</a>	No
Video	Yes: <a href="http://www.cnn.com/video/#/politics">http://www.cnn.com/video/#/politics</a>	No
<b>Customization</b>	Yes	Yes
Search the site	Yes (powered by Google). Options: Search the Web (default); Search CNN; Search Video	Yes
News	Search CNN (news)	Yes. Limited to CQPolitics.com.
Blogs	No way to search blogs.	Includes Craig Crawford's Trail Mix.
Video	Yes	No
Podcasts	No	No
<b>Audio and Video Features</b>	Yes	No
Podcasts	Yes	No
Streaming video — live video	Yes, available on mobile.	No
Video	Yes	No
Tools	Yes: CNN Election Center 2008 [ <a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008">http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008</a> ]. Separate section from the main CNN Politics page.	Yes
<b>Election Guide — Candidates</b>	Yes: <a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/candidates">http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/candidates</a> . Provides information about the candidates: Bio, Career, and Other Facts. Also provides Money, Polls, Supporters, and Advisors (source: FEC).	Yes: <a href="http://www.cqpolitics.com/presidential_candidates.html">http://www.cqpolitics.com/presidential_candidates.html</a>
Tracking money for candidates	Yes: <a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/money/dems.html">http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/money/dems.html</a> , <a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/money/gop.html">http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/money/gop.html</a> . Also provides Money Raised, Money Spent, Total, as well as money raised and spent by the Republican and Democratic National committees.	Direct Link to CQ's Moneyline: <a href="http://moneyline.cq.com/pml/home.do">http://moneyline.cq.com/pml/home.do</a>
Issues	Yes. Section on issues such as abortion, immigration, laq, same-sex marriage, Social Security, taxes: <a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/issues/issues.abortion.html">http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/issues/issues.abortion.html</a> .	No
Presidential debates	Yes: <a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/debates">http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/debates</a> . Includes dates and times, along with Scorecard, Analysis, Audience Questions, Behind the Scenes, Money, Debate Downloads, States to watch, and Debate Transcripts.	Yes: <a href="http://www.cqpolitics.com/2008_timeline.html">http://www.cqpolitics.com/2008_timeline.html</a>
Calendar	No	No
Primaries and maps	Path to the Presidency: <a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/path.presidency">http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/path.presidency</a>	Yes: <a href="http://www.cqpolitics.com/2008_timeline.html">http://www.cqpolitics.com/2008_timeline.html</a>
Polls and surveys	Yes	No
States to watch	Yes: <a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/states/iowa.html">http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/states/iowa.html</a>	No
Scorecard	CNN/YouTube debate. Provides users to rate the candidates in the debate: <a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/debates/scorecard/youtube.debate">http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/debates/scorecard/youtube.debate</a>	No

News Organization	MSNBC Politics: Politics Powered by NBC News and National Journal [ <a href="http://election.nationaljournal.com">http://election.nationaljournal.com</a> ]	NYTimes Politics
URL	<a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032553">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032553</a>	<a href="http://www.nytimes.com/pages/politics/index.html">http://www.nytimes.com/pages/politics/index.html</a>
News	Headlines. Can be sorted by Importance, Title, Date, and Source.	Latest news
Contact reporter	No	Yes. Click on the reporter's name. Page will list other articles written by reporter. Form provided to email reporter.
Comments on news pieces	No	No
Share with community sites	No	Yes: Digg, Facebook, Newsvine
Email article	Yes	Yes
Tags	No	No (tag cloud on side bar)
Blogs	Bloglike. First Read is NBC News analysis of the day's political news [ <a href="http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com">http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com</a> ]. Not called a blog.	Yes. The Caucus — Political Blogging from The New York Times [ <a href="http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com">http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com</a> ]. Video embedded directly in blog posts.
Enable comments	Yes	Yes
<b>On-Demand Access</b>	Yes	RSS: <a href="http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/rss2.xml">http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/rss2.xml</a> Atom: <a href="http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/atom.xml">http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/atom.xml</a>
From other blogs	No. List of links to political links. Links to MSNBC's other blogs.	NYTimes Blogroll, general political blogs, Election 2008 political blogs, campaign cash
Email alerts	Yes: <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7422971">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7422971</a>	Yes. To sign up for political email news, click on a political story. Top right of page will allow you to sign up for daily email alerts of top news stories.
Mobile alerts	Mobile access for all of MSNBC. News not limited to political news: <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16192026">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16192026</a> .	No
RSS feeds	Yes. Multiple options for political news via RSS [ <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5216556/?page=2&amp;#Politics">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5216556/?page=2&amp;#Politics</a> ]. RSS feed also available for FirstRead Blog [ <a href="http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com">http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com</a> ].	Yes. General RSS feeds, Washington, RSS feed for blog.
Podcast feeds	Yes. Podcasts are available. No one specifically identified as political: <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8132577">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8132577</a> .	Many podcasts. None completely focused on election 2008: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/multimedia/podcasts.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/multimedia/podcasts.html</a> .
Video	Yes. Video is available for the different shows on NBC: <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032553">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032553</a> .	Yes. Dispersed throughout the site in both the news section and in the blog.
<b>Customization</b>	Yes	Yes
Search the site	Yes. Search is available for MSNBC and for Web.	Yes. Search All of NYTimes
News	Search available for MSNBC and the different shows on MSNBC.	Search US
Blogs	Search is available on FirstRead. Can search the blog, the Web, or MSNBC.	Search the blog
Video	Video is browsable.	Browseable video collection arranged by topic [ <a href="http://video.on.nytimes.com/index.jsp">http://video.on.nytimes.com/index.jsp</a> ]: Election 2008, Campaign Ad, Candidates
Podcasts	No	No
<b>Audio and Video Features</b>	Yes	Yes
Podcasts	Yes	Podcasts available but not searchable
Streaming video — live video	No	No
Video	Yes	Yes
Tools	Yes	Yes
<b>Election Guide — Candidates</b>	Yes. Page down to see the list [ <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18970417">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18970417</a> ] for news stories, biographical information, video, on the issues.	Yes. Links to who is running and links to candidate profiles: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/2008candidates.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/2008candidates.html</a>
Tracking money for candidates	No	Yes: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/2008_EG_FINANCES.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/2008_EG_FINANCES.html</a> . Includes links to candidates and an interactive map showing where the money is coming from based on demographic information (source: FEC).
Issues	Critical Issues, Critical Races. Links to Chris Matthews' Blog, Hardblogger: <a href="http://hardblogger.msnbc.msn.com">http://hardblogger.msnbc.msn.com</a>	Yes: Iraq [ <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/IRAQPOSITIONS.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/IRAQPOSITIONS.html</a> ]; healthcare [ <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/HEALTH_POSITIONS_2.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/HEALTH_POSITIONS_2.html</a> ]; abortion [ <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/washington/ABORTIONPOSITIONS.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/washington/ABORTIONPOSITIONS.html</a> ]; immigration [ <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/washington/IMMIGRATIONPOSITIONS.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/washington/IMMIGRATIONPOSITIONS.html</a> ]
Presidential debates	Yes: <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18296908">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18296908</a>	No
Calendar	Yes: <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14708421">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14708421</a>	Yes. Limited weekly schedule: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/2008-schedules.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/2008-schedules.html</a>
Primaries and maps	Minimal listing of primaries. No maps corresponding to where primaries to be held or when.	No
Polls and surveys	Yes. Wall Street Journal polls available by date (pdf).	Yes. New York Times Polls: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/polls_index.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/polls_index.html</a>
States to watch	No	No
Scorecard	Yes. Rating the Candidates: <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12304248">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12304248</a>	No
Miscellaneous	MSNBC News on your desktop — Yahoo! Widget <a href="http://widgets.yahoo.com/gallery/view.php?widget=40663">http://widgets.yahoo.com/gallery/view.php?widget=40663</a>	Politics Navigator: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/politics/POLI_NAVI.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/politics/POLI_NAVI.html</a> ; news from Congressional Quarterly

News Organization	Politico.com	USA Today Politics
URL	Main Page: <a href="http://www.politico.com">http://www.politico.com</a> Election 2008 Page: <a href="http://www.politico.com/politics08">http://www.politico.com/politics08</a>	Campaign 2008: <a href="http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/default.htm">http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/default.htm</a>
News	Yes	Yes
Contact reporter	Yes. Click on reporter's name. Your email is required to contact reporter.	No. Most of the stories are from AP.
Comments on news pieces	Yes	Yes
Share with community sites	Yes: Digg, del.icio.us, Technorati, Reddit, Recommendation Tool	Yes: Digg, del.icio.us, Newsvine, Reddit, Facebook
Email article	Yes	Yes
Tags	No	Yes
Blogs	Yes. Dems 08 — Ben Smith's Blog [ <a href="http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith">http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith</a> ]. Provides Smith's blogroll of favorite political blogs. Republicans 08 — Jonathan Martin's Blog [ <a href="http://www.politico.com/blogs/jonathanmartin">http://www.politico.com/blogs/jonathanmartin</a> ]: Provides Martin's favorite political blogs.	Yes. On Politics: <a href="http://blogs.usatoday.com/onpolitics">http://blogs.usatoday.com/onpolitics</a>
Enable comments	Yes. Share blog posts: Digg This, del.icio.us, Reddit, Yahoo!, Facebook, Google, Technorati	Yes
<b>On-Demand Access</b>	Yes. RSS feeds for individual blogs: Ben Smith's Blog [ <a href="http://www.politico.com/rss/bensmith.xml">http://www.politico.com/rss/bensmith.xml</a> ], Jonathan Martin's Blog [ <a href="http://www.politico.com/rss/jonathanmartin.xml">http://www.politico.com/rss/jonathanmartin.xml</a> ]	Yes. Election 2008 RSS Feed [ <a href="http://asp.usatoday.com/marketing/rss/rsstrans.aspx?feedId=news26">http://asp.usatoday.com/marketing/rss/rsstrans.aspx?feedId=news26</a> ]; Washington Feed [ <a href="http://asp.usatoday.com/marketing/rss/rsstrans.aspx?feedId=news3">http://asp.usatoday.com/marketing/rss/rsstrans.aspx?feedId=news3</a> ]. Subscribe to On Politics (blog) feed: <a href="http://asp.usatoday.com/marketing/rss/rsstrans.aspx?feedId=news25">http://asp.usatoday.com/marketing/rss/rsstrans.aspx?feedId=news25</a> .
From other blogs	Politico's map of the political blogosphere [ <a href="http://www.politico.com/blogosphere">http://www.politico.com/blogosphere</a> ]: Top stories from partners. Includes blogs and mainstream media.	Yes. Headlines from Politico.com and from Across the Web, which gives selected list of blogs and mainstream news on Election 2008. Read the editor's selection of feeds or make your own selections.
Email alerts	Yes. General Politico news. Scroll to bottom of page: <a href="http://dyn.politico.com/login.cfm">http://dyn.politico.com/login.cfm</a> . Sign up for email from Jonathan Martin's Blog [ <a href="http://www.politico.com/blogs/jonathanmartin">http://www.politico.com/blogs/jonathanmartin</a> ] and Ben Smith's Blog [ <a href="http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith">http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith</a> ].	General email alerts not specifically for politics.
Mobile alerts	Yes: Daily Digest for your PDA.	Yes. General: <a href="http://www.usatoday.com/mobile/index.htm?POE=FOOTER">http://www.usatoday.com/mobile/index.htm?POE=FOOTER</a>
RSS feeds	Yes. General: <a href="http://www.politico.com/rss">http://www.politico.com/rss</a>	Yes. Multiple RSS feeds.
Podcast feeds	No	No
Video	Yes. Politico and user-generated videos.	Yes: <a href="http://usatoday.feedroom.com/index.jsp?fr_chl=a93b9f5b1b99429de82a966023114bf83e1917c0">http://usatoday.feedroom.com/index.jsp?fr_chl=a93b9f5b1b99429de82a966023114bf83e1917c0</a>
<b>Customization</b>	Yes. MyPolitico Profile. Requires registration.	Yes
Search the site	Yes. Search entire site.	Yes. Search USA Today political news and Web (search powered by Yahoo!).
News	See above	Latest news archives
Blogs	Yes. Can search specific blogs.	No
Video	Browseable collection of videos and user-generated video. Browseable collection of photographs.	Search photos and videos. RSS feed for videos: <a href="http://public-xml.feedroom.com/public_rss/usatodaytv_feeds.html">http://public-xml.feedroom.com/public_rss/usatodaytv_feeds.html</a>
Podcasts	No	No
<b>Audio and Video Features</b>	Video and live chat	Yes
Podcasts	No	No
Streaming video — live video	Live chat discussions	No
Video	Yes	Yes
Tools	Yes	Yes
<b>Election Guide — Candidates</b>	Yes. Republican Candidates: <a href="http://www.politico.com/candidates2008/gopcandidates/mitt_romney_candidate.html">http://www.politico.com/candidates2008/gopcandidates/mitt_romney_candidate.html</a> Democratic Candidates: <a href="http://www.politico.com/candidates2008/demcandidates/joe_biden_candidate.html">http://www.politico.com/candidates2008/demcandidates/joe_biden_candidate.html</a>	List of candidates. Click on drop-down list for candidates. Provides a candidate timeline.
Tracking money for candidates	No	No
Issues	No. Issues covered in articles.	No. Includes stories, photos, and videos of candidates.
Presidential debates	No	No
Calendar	Yes: <a href="http://www.politico.com/campaigncalendar/index.html">http://www.politico.com/campaigncalendar/index.html</a>	No
Primaries and maps	Yes: <a href="http://www.politico.com/campaigncalendar/index.html">http://www.politico.com/campaigncalendar/index.html</a>	No
Polls and surveys	Yes. RealClearPolitics: Dems [ <a href="http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2008/president/us/democratic_presidential_nomination-191.html">http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2008/president/us/democratic_presidential_nomination-191.html</a> ]; GOP [ <a href="http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2008/president/us/republican_presidential_nomination-192.html">http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2008/president/us/republican_presidential_nomination-192.html</a> ]	No
States to watch	No	No
Scorecard	No	No
Miscellaneous	Political 08 links include The Living Room Candidate, RealClearPolitics, Politics1, Federal Election Commission, Taegan Goddard's Political Wire, Pew Research, Talking Points Memo, Election Law Blog, The Campaign Finance Institute	

News Organization	Wall Street Journal Politics	Washington Post Politics
URL	Politics and Policy: <a href="http://online.wsj.com/page/2_0008.html">http://online.wsj.com/page/2_0008.html</a> Election 2008: <a href="http://online.wsj.com/public/page/election2008.html">http://online.wsj.com/public/page/election2008.html</a> . Requires subscription.	Main politics page: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics</a> Election 2008: <a href="http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/?nid=roll_08campaign">http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/?nid=roll_08campaign</a> Elections: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/elections">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/elections</a>
News	Yes	Yes
Contact reporter	Yes. Email address for reporter is provided.	Yes. Form provided to contact reporter.
Comments on news pieces	No	Yes
Share with community sites	Related articles and blogs (powered by Sphere). Question of the Day.	Yes: Digg, del.icio.us, Reddit, Facebook, Google, Yahoo!
Email article	Yes	Yes
Tags	No	No
Blogs	Yes. Washington Wire: <a href="http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire">http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire</a> . Tags included.	Yes. The Trail a Daily Diary of Campaign 2008: <a href="http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail">http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail</a>
Enable comments	Yes: Share, Facebook, del.icio.us, Digg	Yes
<b>On-Demand Access</b>	Yes. Politics and Policy [ <a href="http://online.wsj.com/xml/rss/3_7087.xml">http://online.wsj.com/xml/rss/3_7087.xml</a> ]; Washington Wire RSS Feed [ <a href="http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/feed">http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/feed</a> ].	Yes. RSS feed for blog: <a href="http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/index.xml">http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/index.xml</a>
From other blogs	Yes. Links to other blogs that have posted on this topic or on this article (powered by Sphere).	Yes: Best of the Web, RealClearPolitics, Washington Wire, WSJ, Newsweek.com, The Gaggle
Email alerts	No	Yes: Political news and analysis, Federal Insider, breaking news alerts
Mobile alerts	Mobile services are provided: <a href="http://mobile.wsj.com">http://mobile.wsj.com</a>	Yes: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/contents/devices.htm">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/contents/devices.htm</a> Politics Alerts: Up to 7 alerts per week. The best and latest in politics news from The Post. Text POLITICS to WPOST (97678).
RSS feeds	Yes	Yes. Multiple RSS feeds: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/rss/index.html">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/rss/index.html</a> .
Podcast feeds	Yes	Yes: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/mmedia/podcastfront.htm">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/mmedia/podcastfront.htm</a> . Specific political podcast available: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/mmedia/p3podcast.xml">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/mmedia/p3podcast.xml</a> .
Video	No	Yes. Video podcasts available: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/mmedia/podcastfront.htm">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/mmedia/podcastfront.htm</a>
<b>Customization</b>	Yes	Yes
Search the site	Yes	Yes, search politics
News	Yes	Search news
Blogs	Yes	Use general search
Video	No	Use general search
Podcasts	Yes	Use general search
<b>Audio and Video Features</b>	Yes	Use general search
Podcasts	Yes	Use general search
Streaming video — live video	No	No
Video	Yes	Yes
Tools	Yes	Yes
<b>Election Guide — Candidates</b>	Yes. Candidate sites.	Yes: <a href="http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates">http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates</a>
Tracking money for candidates	Yes. The Money Race. 2008 Presidential Donor Database: <a href="http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-donors07.html?s=90210&amp;k=ZIP_CODE&amp;c=all&amp;n=50&amp;q=all">http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-donors07.html?s=90210&amp;k=ZIP_CODE&amp;c=all&amp;n=50&amp;q=all</a>	Yes: <a href="http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/finance/2007/q2">http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/finance/2007/q2</a> . Browse totals by candidate, report, state.
Issues	No	No
Presidential debates	No	See calendar
Calendar	Yes. Link to Washington Post.com: <a href="http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/tracker">http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/tracker</a> .	Yes: <a href="http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/tracker">http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/tracker</a> . Browse events by candidate, date, state, RSS feeds
Primaries and maps	Link to Washingtonpost.com: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/interactives/campaign08/primaries">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/interactives/campaign08/primaries</a> .	Yes: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/graphic/2007/03/16/GR2007031600173.html">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/graphic/2007/03/16/GR2007031600173.html</a>
Polls and surveys	Yes	Yes: <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/polls">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/polls</a>
States to watch	No	No
Scorecard	Yes	No

# Political Blogs

(Blogs surveyed July 28 – Aug. 5, 2007)

Table 3.

Blog	Daily Kos	The Huffington Post	Talking Points Memo
URL	<a href="http://www.dailykos.com">http://www.dailykos.com</a>	<a href="http://www.huffingtonpost.com">http://www.huffingtonpost.com</a>	<a href="http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com">http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com</a>
Founder	Markos Moulitsas Zúniga	Arianna Huffington is the co-founder and editor in chief of The Huffington Post.	Joshua Micah Marshall
Description	Started in 2002. One of the most important progressive/liberal blogs in the political blogosphere. Very active with a cast of writers. YearlyKos is the annual conference that has gained mainstream notice. This year's conference was held in Chicago and all but one of the Democratic presidential candidates attended [ <a href="http://www.yearlykosconvention.org">http://www.yearlykosconvention.org</a> ].	The Huffington Post was launched in 2005 and has become a popular site for news and opinion on political news and events. Many guest contributors to the site; never a dull moment from this site.	Talking Points Memo is the flagship blog of TPM Media LLC, which also published TPMuckraker, TPM Election Central and TPMCafe. Josh Marshall began publishing Talking Points Memo in November 2000, during the Florida recount. TPM launched its second site, TPMCafe.com, in 2005 and TPMuckraker.com and TPM Election Central in 2006 [ <a href="http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/about.php">http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/about.php</a> ].

Blog	Andrew Sullivan – The Daily Dish	Instapundit.com	Patrick Ruffini.com
URL	<a href="http://www.andrewsullivan.com">http://www.andrewsullivan.com</a>	<a href="http://www.instapundit.com">http://www.instapundit.com</a>	<a href="http://www.patrickruffini.com">http://www.patrickruffini.com</a>
Founder	Andrew Sullivan started this blog in 2000 and teamed with <i>Atlantic Monthly</i> in February 2007 to post daily on a wide range of topics.	Site is run by University of Tennessee law professor Glen Reynolds. His chief interest is the intersection between technology and individual liberty.	Patrick Ruffini runs this blog.
Description	Thoughtful and interesting blog from a conservative perspective. Includes some commentary and links to news sites, articles, and other blogs.	I like this blog. Reynolds does not concentrate solely on politics, but you will get a daily dose of political news and links to news articles, reports, and surveys.	Ruffini has been actively involved in Republican politics and was the e-campaign director at the Republican National Committee from 2005 to 2007. He was responsible for overseeing the party's online strategy for the 2006 election cycle. His site is a combination of links to blogs, news sites, candidate news, and his own commentary on topics of interest.

## Aggregator Tools and Blogs

Table 4.

Name	Memeorandum.com	Teagan Goddard's Political Wire	RealClearPolitics.com
URL	<a href="http://www.memeorandum.com">http://www.memeorandum.com</a>	<a href="http://www.politicalwire.com">http://www.politicalwire.com</a>	<a href="http://www.realclearpolitics.com">http://www.realclearpolitics.com</a>
Who Runs the Site	Gabe Rivera	Taegan D. Goddard is the creator of Political Wire, a political column updated around the clock with interesting news, buzz and commentary.	Founded in 2000 by John McIntyre and Tom Bevan. Publishes commentary, news, and polling data and provides tools and resources from around the political blogosphere and mainstream media.
Description	This is one of my favorite aggregator sites. It refreshes every 5 minutes, posting new news from blogs and mainstream media. Rivera set up this site in 2005 because he was having a hard time tracking blog posts on political topics. If you have only a few minutes to check up on political news via the blogosphere, this is the place to go.	This is also one of the sites that offers a really nice collection of breaking news, and news on Republicans (Wingers) and Democrats (South Paws). Links to polling data is also provided.	RealClearPolitics is another aggregator site that can help you filter through blogs, mainstream media, and other less-well-known sites.

## Technology/Political Blogs

Table 5.

Blog	PrezVid.com	TechPresident.com
URL	<a href="http://www.prezvid.com">http://www.prezvid.com</a>	<a href="http://www.techpresident.com">http://www.techpresident.com</a>
Who Runs the Site	Jeff Jarvis and Peter Hauck run the site.	TechPresident was started by Andrew Rasiej and Micah Sifry as a new group blog that covers how the 2008 presidential candidates are using the Web and how content generated by voters is affecting the campaign.
Description	Jarvis and Hauck are interested in the role video can play in the upcoming presidential election. Jarvis firmly believes that video and YouTube can be important communication resources for both presidential candidates and for voters and citizens who want to participate in the election by making their questions heard.	The site provides commentary, links to news, and blogs. The list of contributors is clearly a who's who of bloggers, who have participated in the 2004 and 2006 campaigns. In the spirit of welcoming opposing viewpoints and opinions, TechPresident.com is one of those sites where thoughtful discourse and thoughtful debate happens. Completely and totally refreshing.



You can track the top presidential candidates on Hitwise.com.

(Text continued from page 21)

message to “friends” that the candidates cannot afford the time or resources or the site isn’t very active. It remains to be seen if the social networking tools will have an impact on the primaries and the general election, but “presumably, social networking creates enthusiasm, drives traffic, and might translate into both fundraising and votes. In theory, it might be particularly helpful in caucus states, such as Iowa, where getting someone to actually turn out involves more than just going to a polling place for a few minutes to cast a quick vote.”<sup>7</sup>

In terms of grass-roots activity, the campaigns provide a quick way to donate money and other tools to help develop community involvement. Some campaigns provide tools to host fundraisers and house parties; others provide email form letters for supporters to send out. One underrepresented feature is helping citizens sign up to vote. Three Democrats (Clinton, Edwards, and Obama) provide a link for registering to vote; on the Republican side, only Fred Thompson has a register to vote link. This seems like a no-brainer, but most of the candidates — Republican and Democrat — clearly give it low priority. In terms of fundraising, several of the campaigns provide a “build your own” fundraising campaign with goals. Contributors agree to raise money on behalf of the candidate, set their own goals, and watch their progress right on the campaign site. This is a powerful motivator.

The top Democratic candidates appear to be doing well with the new tools. According to Hitwise.com [http://www.hitwise.com/political-data-center/key-candidates.php], a service that tracks the surfing behavior of 10 million Americans across 1 million sites, “online interest in Democrats is way ahead of the Republicans. For example, for the week ended Aug. 4, the Democrats drew a whopping 66 percent of all the traffic to candidate websites.”<sup>8</sup> Democratic candidates are raising record sums of money online and signing up thousands via social networking sites. In early August, Barack Obama “led the pack ... with

about 122,000 Facebook contacts — more than twice the combined total of all the Republican candidates combined — and more than 158,000 MySpace friends.”<sup>9</sup> In terms of raising money, the Democrats appear to be winning at this as well. “mall contributions via the Internet have given Obama, who is the fundraising leader, and Edwards about one-third of their funding. Candidates prefer small donors (usually defined as those giving less than \$200) because they can be tapped repeatedly without violating giving limits.

The tools are available; how well the candidates use them, incorporate them, and embrace them — only time will tell. Democratic consultant Zack Exley hit the nail on the head when he remarked, “Online politics will not reach its potential until overall campaign strategy is planned with the Internet in mind.” Likewise, Patrick Ruffini, the former online strategist for the Republican National Committee and Webmaster for the 2004 Bush-Cheney campaign, put it this way, “The campaign manager should be the Internet director and understand the Internet as the essential platform for communication.”<sup>10</sup> By 2012, the Internet will be so essential and mainstream to presidential politics, it probably won’t even warrant an article like this.

## Mainstream Media and the Presidential Campaign

These days mainstream media faces attacks from many directions. In its “State of the News Media 2007,” the Project for Excellence in Journalism found that newspapers were suffering from declining circulation, flat revenues, dropping earnings, and deep newsroom cuts and layoffs.<sup>11</sup> Television news also has suffered from a declining audience and cable news “is beginning to lose its claim as the primary destination for what was once its main appeal: news on demand.”<sup>12</sup> To top it off, a recent Pew Research Center poll found that the American public has a negative view of the press. Many Americans criticize the press “for political bias, inaccuracy and failing to acknowledge mistakes.” The Pew Research Center poll also found that “some of the harshest indictments of the press now come from the growing segment that relies on the Internet as its main source for national and international news.” In fact, the poll found that “as many as 38% of those who rely mostly on the Internet for news say they have an unfavorable opinion of cable news networks such as CNN, Fox News Channel and MSNBC, compared with 25% of the public overall, and just 17% of television news viewers.”<sup>13</sup> Coupled with the decline in readership of newspapers, the media has taken a hit in both its pocketbook and its credibility. Ouch!

The only bright spot, it would appear, is the Internet and online news. News organizations are moving the focus towards online and instant news. Online news sites have

begun offering a whole range of tools — RSS feeds, podcasts, online video, etc. But even with these cool new bells and whistles, “it is not clear if the Web will ever make enough money to support journalism as we know it in print.”<sup>14</sup> The Project for Excellence has identified one of the main criticisms of digital journalism as the failure of news sites to really tap into the power and depth of the Web — “to enrich coverage by offering links to original documents, background material, additional coverage and more.”<sup>15</sup> However, I think that with the upcoming presidential election, we will see a change — we already have. The online news sites are trying to reach out to those who spend most of their time on the Internet by offering useful, interesting, fun, and dynamic tools for the presidential campaign. These sites are trying to stay relevant and important for this campaign and, in so doing, have begun offering some pretty amazing Internet resources, ones that should appeal to just about any political/news junkie.

On July 23, 2007, CNN and YouTube teamed to hold the first ever presidential debate in which Democratic candidates were asked questions by YouTubers, questions submitted via video (CNN–YouTube questions for Democratic Candidates [<http://youtube.com/democraticdebate>]). The Republican version of the CNN–YouTube debate is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 28, 2007. Questions for the Republican debate are also available [<http://youtube.com/republicandebate>]. Many bloggers and political observers hailed this first attempt at a video debate as an innovative and creative use of technology and online video to give “real people” all over the country (well, all over the Net) to ask presidential candidates their questions. The debates were televised; CNN has made the complete transcript available [<http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/07/23/debate.transcript/index.html> and <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/07/23/debate.transcript.part2/index.html>]. CNN and YouTube have also agreed, as have ABC and NBC, to allow the video footage to be used, blogged, remixed, and posted on the Internet.<sup>16</sup> What does this mean? As Greg Sterling blogged, “[T]his debate and the related videos and commentary will have a long afterlife that political debates have not had historically. Archiving of these questions and responses will allow millions of people who didn’t tune in to watch CNN to see the video. We’ve entered the era of ‘debates on demand.’”<sup>17</sup>

Not to be left out, The Huffington Post teamed with Yahoo! and Slate.com to host the first ever online-only presidential candidate mashup. The event was scheduled for Sept. 12, 2007, with moderator Charlie Rose. All the Democratic candidates have agreed to participate. A Republican candidate mashup is in the planning for Nov. 28. After the debates, the videos will be coded and made available on the Net.<sup>18</sup>

These are some of the offerings mainstream media is serving up for viewers, political supporters, candidates,



*Politico.com's Politics '08 also has extensive information on the presidential candidates.*

and the voting public. What else is mainstream media doing to be relevant and useful in this upcoming presidential election of 2008? We have chosen eight news sites (CNN.com, CQPolitics.com, MSNBC.com, NYTimes.com, Politico.com, USA Today.com, WSJ.com, and Washingtonpost.com) to examine the tools offered in the daily coverage of the presidential campaigns. (See Table 2 beginning on page 31.) How well do the mainstream sites provide news, interactive tools (comments to the reporters, comments on news blogs), sharing tools (Digg, Newsvine, Facebook, del.icio.us), email, mobile, and RSS alerts, and election guide tools — information about the candidates (biographical information, careers), candidate fundraising activities, campaign issues, calendar of scheduled events, and polls and surveys of the candidates?

## Findings

All of the news organization sites listed use what the Internet has to offer by providing their own blogs, on demand resources (RSS feeds, podcasts, email and mobile alerts), and lots and lots of video. CQPolitics.com, NYTimes.com, Politico.com, WSJ.com, and Washingtonpost.com let readers contact reporters with questions or comments; some (CQPolitics.com, Politico.com, USA Today.com, and Washingtonpost.com) allow comments on regular news pieces — not just blog entries. All the sites provide RSS feeds for both news and blog posts, and five of the eight offer podcasts of the campaign. The really interesting and useful tools come in the form of the election guides. The Washingtonpost.com has “Campaign Tracker” — a mashup up of the candidates’ official schedules and Google Maps [<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/tracker>]. Money and fundraising dominate the news; both *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* have provided innovative tools

to chart the fundraising race. *The New York Times* shows a map of the U.S. for each candidate and the amount of money raised for each candidate by ZIP code. An interactive time line (a slider) shows where the candidate has raised money across the U.S. [[http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/2008\\_EG\\_FINANCES.html](http://www.nytimes.com/ref/us/politics/2008_EG_FINANCES.html)]. *The Wall Street Journal* has its own 2008 Money Race that provides a chart of the money raised by some of the candidates, the money spent, and cash on hand [[http://online.wsj.com/page/politics\\_policy.html?mod=2\\_0008](http://online.wsj.com/page/politics_policy.html?mod=2_0008)]. Combine this tool with its “Candidate Scorecard,” an interactive tool that presents the candidates, the money they have raised, and a timeline of significant events relevant to each campaign.

If you really want to track the money race, take a look at CQ’s Moneyline.com [<http://moneyline.cq.com/pml/home.do>] and The Center for Responsible Politics Open Secrets.org [<http://www.opensecrets.org>]. Both use Federal Election Commission (FEC) data, but in different and creative ways. Polling data is also provided by CNN.com, MSNBC.com, NYTimes.com, Politico.com, WSJ.com, and Washingtonpost.com.

I expect that you will see mainstream news sites using more and more user-generated mashups, videos, pictures, and audio incorporated into the very fabric of online news sites. The interested public is using these tools, and the news sites which take advantage of these resources will be the place to go. This is what mainstream media wants and needs.

## Political Blogs

You know blogs have come a long way when all the Democratic candidates agree that, if elected, they will have an official White House blogger. Political blogs are increasingly an important staple for finding, sharing, learning, and reporting on political news. Out of all the many political blogs, we have selected links to a few (both conservative and liberal) to get you started. (See Table 3 on page 35.) Probably the best known of the political blogs is DailyKos.com, started by Markos Moulitsas Zúniga in 2002. Daily Kos is the top-rated political blog in NZ Bear’s the Truth Laid Bear Blogosphere Ecosystem, averaging more than 500,000 visitors a day [<http://truthlaidbear.com/showdetails.php?host=http://dailykos.com>]. It ranks number three in Hitwise’s Top Ten Political Web sites [<http://www.hitwise.com/political-data-center>]. This liberal/progressive blog shows its partisan nature clearly. Depending on the way you see the world, you might like or dislike its view points, but make no mistake, this blog, along with its followers, has had a tremendous impact on political discourse, political blogging, and the rising “net-roots” movement. YearlyKos held its second convention in Chicago this year, and all the Democratic candidates save one attended and participated in the event.

Talking Points Memo (TPM), run by Josh Marshall, is a one of the most useful and interesting political blogs. It combines news, blog posts, investigative reporting, and campaign news. Though campaign news abounds at the main site, Marshall has provided TPM Campaign Central for news about the political campaigns. (If you want more investigative reporting check out TPM Muckraker. Marshall led the political blogosphere and the mainstream media with his reporting on the firing of the U.S. attorneys.)<sup>19</sup>

I particularly like (and highly recommend) Patrick Ruffini’s political blog [<http://www.patrickruffini.com>] where he combines both blog posts and links to blogs and news stories. I find Ruffini’s posts thoughtful and insightful for his take on the Republican and Democratic campaigns and their use of technology. His passion for politics is refreshing, and his commentary is valuable. Check out his “2008 Presidential Wire” [<http://www.patrickruffini.com/2008wire>]. He has done a great job of providing a single place for political news.

## Aggregator Tools

Following the candidates, the campaigns, the money race, the issues, the debates, the primaries, etc., can be a daunting task. Three aggregator tools have become essential when tracking political candidates, news, blog news, transcripts, documents, videos, and polling data: Memorandum, Teagan Goddard’s Political Wire, and RealClearPolitics (RCP) are valuable tools. (See Table 4 on page 35.) Each one has something useful to offer: Political Wire has political news divided into three categories — “Breaking News,” “Southpaws,” and “Wingers,” and Goddard offers links to all the major polls and surveys. Memorandum has links to both blogs and mainstream news, updates every 5 minutes, and covers political news from bloggers to experts to mainstream news sites. RCP provides links to both blogs and mainstream news, as well as editorials and commentary — all in one place. RCP also provides its own up-to-date polling information and data. No doubt, a political junkie’s “died and gone to heaven” set of tools.

## Technology/Election 2008 Blogs

Two important blogs cover the technology of politics specifically — TechPresident.com and Prezvid.com. (See Table 5 on page 35.) TechPresident.com, started by Andrew Rasiej and Micah Sifry, is a “new group blog that covers how the 2008 presidential candidates are using the Web, and vice versa, how content generated by voters is affecting the campaign.”<sup>20</sup> Prezvid.com, launched by Jeff Jarvis and Peter Hauck, tracks the 2008 presidential campaigns through the use of online video and YouTube. They plan

to use PrezVid to showcase the “videos we think that matter — from candidates, from citizens, and from remixers. We will look at how Internet video affects the campaign and the country.”<sup>21</sup> Together, these two blogs provide a valuable and essential window to how the campaigns use technology. The commentary challenges some pretty basic assumptions, provides stimulating discussion, and identifies new, innovative, and creative technologies used by the campaigns, the mainstream media, the blogosphere, and those individuals and organizations creating useful tools to monitor and track the upcoming election. If nothing else, you will see how innovation, creativity, and passion play out in this upcoming presidential election.

## The 51st State: The State of Online

The presidential election of 2008 will be the first true “Internet election.” Tools, resources, mainstream media sites, blogs, Web sites, mashups, video, podcasts, online debates, and social networking sites are all available for the interested citizen to learn as much as they can about the individuals running for president, their philosophies and vision, the problems they see and the solutions they offer. After all is said and done, we, the voting public, have the responsibility to cast our vote for that candidate who seems best suited to the difficult and exciting task of leading the nation through challenging and increasing complex situations. The technology tools can help us identify our next president — use them, embrace them, and then make your choice when you have the chance. ♦

Future articles in this series will cover nonpresidential campaigns, political issues, and other aspects of the technological revolution in American politics.

### Endnotes

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