TECHNOLOGY-INTENSIVE CAMPAIGNING

Daniel Kreiss
School of Media and Journalism
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
@kreissdaniel
AGENDA

• The new technological basis of campaigning

• Differences in technological adoption between the two U.S. political parties, 2004-2012

• 2016: Party networks and digital opportunities

• Digital retail politics
THE TECHNOLOGICAL BASIS OF CAMPAIGNING
“THE WORLD MOVES ON US”

“I was like what is the plan because at that point I knew he (Obama) was going to run and you know he asked me to help come up with a plan, right. Like what should we be doing, how should we be thinking about it, what is different, should we just stand up ‘08 and do it all over again? The answer is really no - there were things about the campaign that weren’t perfect the first time and the world moves on us and so we need to sort of be thoughtful about setting up a campaign to win 2012.” - Michael Slaby, Chief Technology Officer Obama 2008, Chief Integration and Innovation Officer Obama 2012
This seat's taken. OFA.BO/c2gbfi, pic.twitter.com/jgGZTb02
U.S. PARTY DIFFERENCES IN TECHNOLOGICAL ADOPTION
Tech Staffers and Presidential Campaigns
2004-2012

Number of Staffers

- Republican Party
- Democratic Party
- Total
PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN HIRING IN TECHNOLOGY, 2008 AND 2012 CYCLES

- Obama 2008:
  - Total Staffers: 131
  - Political Field: 26
  - Technology Field: 11

- McCain 2008:
  - Total Staffers: 15
  - Political Field: 5
  - Technology Field: 0

- Obama 2012:
  - Total Staffers: 342
  - Political Field: 73
  - Technology Field: 48

- Romney 2012:
  - Total Staffers: 87
  - Political Field: 17
  - Technology Field: 7
“Democrats had the clear edge on new media and ground game, in terms of both reach and effectiveness....the president’s campaign significantly changed the makeup of the national electorate and identified, persuaded, and turned out low-propensity voters by unleashing a barrage of human and technological resources previously unseen in a presidential contest. Marrying grassroots politics with technology and analytics, they successfully contacted, persuaded and turned out their margin of victory. There are many lessons to be learned from their efforts, particularly with respect to voter contact.”

GOP Growth and Opportunity Report, 2013
2016: PARTY NETWORKS AND DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES
WASHINGTON – Today the Republican National Committee launched Data Center 2016, a completely revamped version of GOP Data Center with an enhanced easy-to-use User Interface and new features allowing users of all levels to access, manipulate, and utilize more of the RNC’s data, tools, and resources.

Data Center 2016 is a powerful query and data management tool that interfaces with the RNC’s 300+ terabytes of data and over 20 years of voter contact data to provide campaigns and organizers with on-demand access to the RNC’s expansive voter warehouse. Data Center 2016 now empowers users with vastly increased access to the full scope of the RNC file in order to give them every resource needed to elect Republicans in 2016 and beyond.
DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES

- Capacity for digital mobilization shaped by the political environment:
  - Political and issue contexts
  - Party factions and media use
  - Features of the candidate and position in the field
  - Staffers who recognize and can leverage opportunities
Dr. Ben Carson added a new photo.

Yesterday at 8:11 am
I believe America is ready for a new path to the future. Join our campaign for president at berniesanders.com.
Call Your Friends

Contact each person in the list. Click on their name and fill in their responses to the questions in the script. Make sure you are only calling your friends between 9AM and 9PM in their time zone! Earn 5 points for each call.

Amanda

Were you able to contact this person?  ○ Yes  ○ No

Hello __________, this is ___(YOUR NAME)___, you may remember me from __________. I am volunteering to elect Democrats to Congress in 2014. How are you?

We’re calling voters in the area about the upcoming congressional election.

[Q1]

Can we count on your support for Congressman Enyart and Democrats up and down the ticket on November 4th?

[IF NO SUPPORT, end call; IF UNDECIDED, share personal reason]

[IF STRONG OR LEANING SUPPORT] Great! We are calling people in the Southern Illinois area because it’s going to be a close race and your vote can make the difference.

□ Will you commit to vote in the November midterm elections?

[Q2] VOLUNTEER ASK: Turning out voters this year is going to be challenging but very impactful, and we could really use your help.
CONCLUSIONS

- The new technology-intensive basis of campaigning
- Importance of party network infrastructure and digital opportunities
- Democracy and digital retail politics