Information Technology and Selective Attention

New Forms of Political Campaigning
Why Media Campaigns Fail

• Market pressures
• Combat stories
• Pundits instead of candidates
• Voter turnout
Why CDs and not the Web?

- Limited online access, problem of multimedia downloads
- User friendly, interactive format
- More organized, fewer distractions
- Greater capacity to monitor usage
IN THEIR OWN WORDS

SOURCEBOOK FOR THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
CD Content

- TV ads, Aug. 1 - Oct. 7
- Party platforms
- Speeches, July 1 – Oct. 7
- First televised debate
- Post-Oct. 7 material on PCL website
CD Table of Contents

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Chapter Formats

Economic Issues

Wages and Employment
Bush       Gore

Farm Policy
Bush       Gore

Technology
Bush       Gore

Energy
Bush       Gore

Regulation of Business
Bush       Gore
Multimedia: Audio

felt your enthusiasm. And to walk out here and have the chance to greet many of you and shake hands with you and to tell you thanks personally. I just want you to know it couldn’t possibly be any better as a way to start the convention activities that Tipper and I are going to be able to enjoy.

And along with the Liebermans, we are looking forward to being here in Los Angeles.

The future starts in California. The victory starts in California. With your help we’ll win. I need your help to fight for you.

Al Gore
Democratic National Convention 2000
Los Angeles, California
August 17, 2000
Nomination Acceptance Speech (Audio)

... For almost eight years now, I’ve been the partner of a leader who moved us out of the valley of recession and into the longest period of prosperity in American history. I say to you tonight, millions of Americans will live better lives
Presidental Debates

Presidential Debate (October 3, 2000)

Boston, Massachusetts
October 3, 2000
Moderated by Jim Lehrer

Gore, and the Republican candidate, Governor George W. Bush of Texas.
The debates are sponsored by the Commission on
Presidential Debates, and they will be conducted within
formats and rules agreed to by the commission and the
two campaigns.

Tonight's will have the candidates at podiums. No answer
to a question can exceed two minutes. Rebuttals are
limited to one minute. But as moderator, I have the
option to follow up and to extend any particular give
and take another three and a half minutes. But even
then, no single answer can exceed two minutes.
The candidates, under their rules, may not question each
other directly. There will be no opening statements, but
each candidate may have up to two minutes for a
closing statement. The questions and the subjects were
chosen by me alone. I have told no one from the two
campaigns or the commission or anyone else involved
what they are.

There's a small audience in the hall tonight.

(LEHRER): They are not here to participate, only to listen.
I have asked and they have agreed to remain silent for the
next 90 minutes, except for right now, when they will

(LEHRER): Good evening from the Clark Athletic Center at
the University of Massachusetts in Boston. I'm Jim
Lehrer of "The NewsHour" on PBS. And I welcome
you to the first of three 90-minute debates between the
Democratic candidate for president, Vice President Al
Multimedia: Video

Health Insurance - Gore

Al Gore
June 20, 2000
TV Ad: "Patients"

[Announcer]:
The Al Gore plan ensures patients access to specialists, safeguards to make sure doctors -- not bureaucrats -- make medical decisions, stops HMOs from withholding information on treatment options to save money.

Taking on the insurance companies to pass a patients’ bill of rights once and for all.

(On screen: The Gore Plan: A Real Patients’ Bill of Rights; www.1-877-hadnow.com; Paid for by the Democratic National Committee)

[Announcer]:
The issue is a real patients’ bill of rights.

[Gore]:
You better believe that there are insurance companies out there that don’t want to see changes that will give the decisions on your health care back to the doctors and the nurses.
Multimedia Properties

Audio:
- "The Sky’s the Limit"
  - Bush
- Debate
  - October 3, 2000
  - Gore Bush
- Nomination Acceptance Speech
  - Gore

Other images:
- "Before"
- "The Issue"
Distribution Channels

• Ads: USA Today, US News, Voter.com
• “Free” media: Washington Post, NPR
• Online Yahoo store
• “Freebie” websites
• Toll-free phone line
Orders

August: 2500
Sept.: 5000
Oct.: 7500
Nov.: 10000
Distribution of Orders

![Bar chart showing distribution of orders by state: CA, FL, TX, IL, MI, NC, PA, VA, OH, NY, WA. The chart indicates that CA has the highest number of orders, followed by FL and TX, with the others having significantly fewer orders.]
Research Methods

- Controlled experiment
- Online representative sample sent CD two weeks before the election
- Actual CD usage instead of self reports
Partisan vs. Issue-Based Selectivity

Rise and fall of the “partisan selectivity” hypothesis; “de facto” exposure dominates partisan exposure.

Media politics renewed the interest in selectivity, but an issue-based selectivity by which people tune in depending on the personal relevance of campaign issues.

Evidence on issue-specific attention among audiences. Iyengar (1990) found traces of specificity; Price and Zaller found the opposite – a general audience for news.
Partisan and Ideological Selectivity in CD Use:
Gore and Bush Page Ratios
Partisan/Ideological Selectivity in CD Use: Page Differences (Gore-Bush Pages Visited)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>.052 (.04)</td>
<td>.21*** (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rep.</strong></td>
<td>.05** (.02)</td>
<td>-.03 (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dem.</strong></td>
<td>.03 (.03)</td>
<td>.00 (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adj. R^2</strong></td>
<td>.27 (N=196)</td>
<td>.20 (N=196)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>.02 (.03)</td>
<td>.23*** (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cons.</strong></td>
<td>.05** (.02)</td>
<td>-.07** (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lib.</strong></td>
<td>.00 (.03)</td>
<td>-.03 (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adj. R^2</strong></td>
<td>.272 (N=196)</td>
<td>.223 (N=196)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Issue-Based Selective Attention

- Healthcare and Education as target issues
- Defining membership in the healthcare and education publics

- Health: HMO members
  Elderly parents
  Health-related job
  Discontinuous health insurance coverage

- Education: Mothers
  Two or more children in household
  Family income
  Urban residence
  Frequency of church attendance
Issue-Based Selectivity in CD Use

- Health: < .05
- Educ.: < .10

Health/Educ. Page Ratios vs. Member Status

- Non-member
- ISSUE PUBLIC
- Member
Selective Attention to Healthcare: Components of I.P. Index

![Bar chart showing selective attention to healthcare components.](chart.png)
Issue-Based Selectivity in CD Use: Number of Pages Instead of Proportions

- Health: < .01
- Educ.

Graph showing the number of health and education pages for non-members, members, and public.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Health Prop.</th>
<th>Education Prop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>.016 (.029)</td>
<td>.028 (.033)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College Grad.</strong></td>
<td>.015 (.014)</td>
<td>.032** (.016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest</strong></td>
<td>-.011* (.006)</td>
<td>-.017*** (.006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CD Sessions</strong></td>
<td>-.010* (.006)</td>
<td>.003 (.006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Log Pages</strong></td>
<td>.026*** (.007)</td>
<td>.030*** (.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Log Time</strong></td>
<td>.001 (.007)</td>
<td>-.011 (.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PID</strong></td>
<td>-.015 (.010)</td>
<td>.016 (.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue Public</strong></td>
<td>.021** (.010)</td>
<td>.023** (.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adj. R^2</strong></td>
<td>.110 (N = 196)</td>
<td>.121 (N = 196)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Partisan Differences in Issue Attention

- HIP Member
- HIP Non-M
- EIP Member
- EIP Non-M

Legend:
- Red: Dem.
- Green: Ind.
Session Analysis of Issue Publics

![Graph showing the proportion of pages for different sessions and HPUB, ~HPUB, EDPUB, ~EDPUB categories.](image)
Specificity of Issue Attention:
Education vs. Other Issues

Members' - Nonmembers' Page Ratios

- Soc. Sec.
- Defense
- Unemp.
- Health
- Trade
- Energy
- Crime
- Race
- For. Policy
- Envir.
Specificity of Issue Attention: Health vs. Other Issues

Members' - Nonmembers' Page Ratios

And So . . .?

- Information Technology and User Control

- Information Overload ➔ Selectivity ➔ Increased Endogeneity of Exposure

- Partisan Preference vs. Personal Interests as basis for Selectivity: pessimism or optimism re I.T.??