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The Maximization of Presidential Campaigning by Encouraging Political  
Membership and Action: Political Engagement and Electronic Social Networking

Because social networking websites reach out to young and first-time voters, provide a sense of membership in a community, and increase campaign donations, only those presidential candidates who use this Web 2.0 functionality effectively to attract a large number of supporters, group members and donations, will have a chance of getting elected, given that this technology, embraced by a majority of young voters, actively engages and influences this large demographic that traditionally has the lowest voter turnout.

The purpose of this paper is to present the evidence for why it is imperative for presidential political candidates to use social networking sites by exploring the young voter demographic, what engages them politically and how a candidate can take advantage of social networking functionality to appeal to their support through social network site group memberships and friendships, to encourage participation, volunteerism and monetary donations.

Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to (i) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (ii) articulate a list of

other users with whom they share a connection, and (iii) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. There are hundreds of social network sites, but most take advantage of mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing (Boyd).

Facebook and MySpace are two of the most popular social network sites in the United States. Facebook, which has been active since 2004, was initially only open to Harvard University students, and within several months began adding other college networks. Facebook continued to open its virtual doors to high school and corporate networks. Then in September 2006, after opening registration to allow anyone with a valid e-mail address to join, the number of visitors to the site increased from approximately 14 million per month to 26.6 million (*see Figure 1*), which represents an 89 percent increase compared to the number of unique visitors one year prior in May of 2006 (ComScore.com). The site now boasts over 58 million active users (with over half who return daily).

<b>Facebook.com Visitation Trends</b> <b>May 2006 - May 2007</b> <b>Total U.S. - Home/Work/University Locations</b> <b>Source: comScore Media Metrix</b>			
<b>Month</b>	<b>Facebook.com</b>		
	<b>Unique Visitors (000)</b>	<b>Pages Viewed (MM)</b>	<b>Average Minutes Per Visitor</b>
May 2006	14,069	6,530	138
June 2006	13,752	6,093	127
July 2006	14,365	6,108	130
August 2006	14,782	6,463	134
September 2006	13,341	7,161	175
October 2006	15,108	9,437	187
November 2006	16,695	9,039	172
December 2006	19,105	9,064	150
January 2007	18,961	10,360	170
February 2007	16,737	10,779	200
March 2007	20,896	12,179	180
April 2007	23,042	14,997	196
May 2007	26,649	15,841	186
<b>Percent Change (May 2007 vs. May 2006)</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>143%</b>	<b>35%</b>

**Figure 1: Facebook Visitation Trends Between May 2006 and May 2007**  
 (Source: <http://www.comscore.com>)

With open user registration, Facebook also saw a dramatic increase in other age groups outside the traditional 18-24 range, particularly among 12-17 and 25-34 year olds (see Figure 2). Additionally, Facebook released its development platform, enabling developers to develop applications for Facebook, which expanded the number of available applications of interest to its users.

<b>Facebook.com Demographic Profile</b> <b>Unique Visitors (000)</b> <b>May 2007 vs. May 2006</b> <b>Total U.S. – Home/Work/University Locations</b> <b>Source: comScore Media Metrix</b>			
<b>Age Segment</b>	<b>Facebook.com</b>		
	<b>May-06 (000)</b>	<b>May-07 (000)</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>Total Audience Unique Visitors (000)</b>	14,069	26,649	89%
Persons: 12-17	1,628	4,060	149%
Persons: 18-24	5,674	7,843	38%
Persons: 25-34	1,114	3,134	181%
Persons: 35+	5,247	10,412	98%

**Figure 2: Facebook Visitation Trends by Age Between May 2006 and May 2007**  
 (Source: <http://www.comscore.com>)

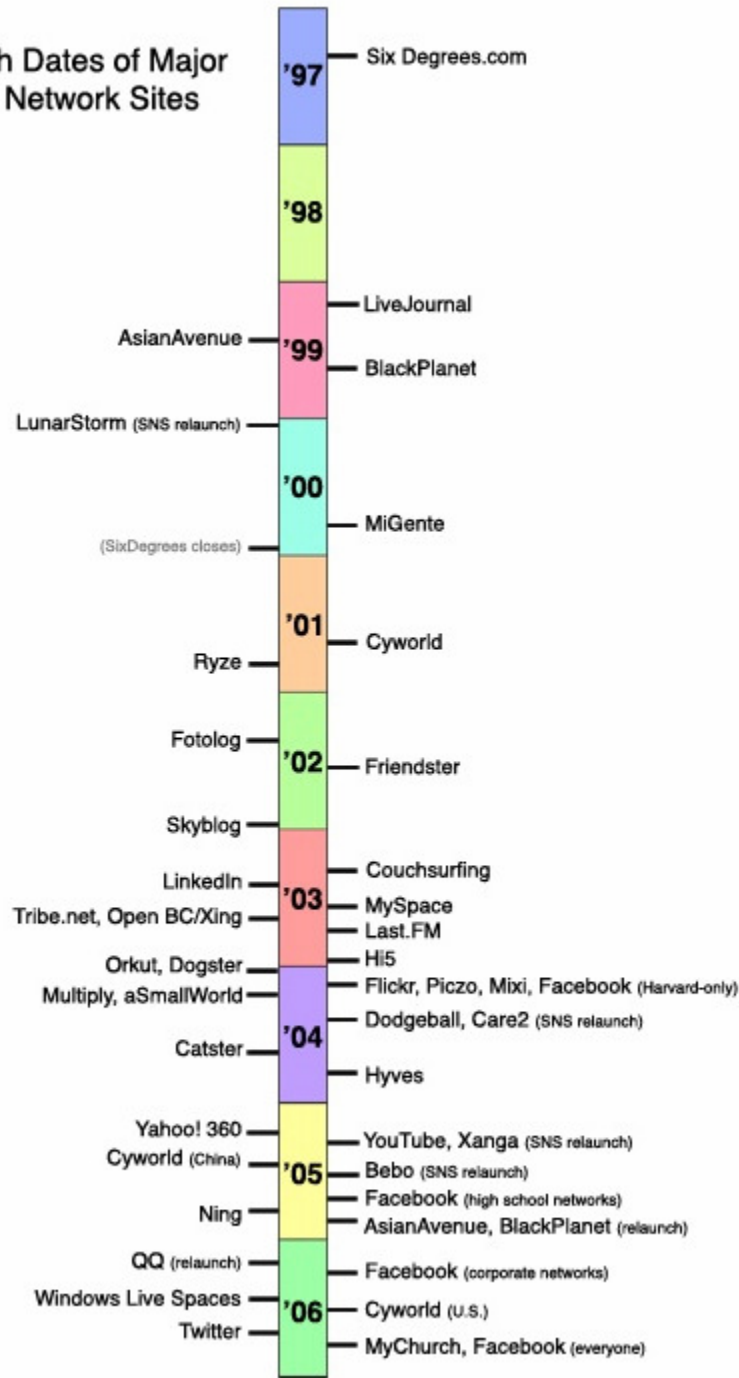
MySpace’s popularity (see Figure 3) raised the interest of Rupert Murdoch, whose company, News Corporation, purchased MySpace in July 2005 for \$580 million (Boyd). Eighty-five percent of teens (12-17 years of age) who use social networking sites say the profile they use or update most often is on MySpace. (Lenhart & Madden). Approximately 36 per cent of MySpace users are aged 35-54, according to the ComScore Media Matrix in Figure 2 above.

Visitation to Selected Social Networking Sites by Worldwide Region June 2007 Total Worldwide Home/Work Locations Among Internet Users Age 15+ Source: comScore World Metrix						
Social Networking Site	Share (%) of Unique Visitors					
	Worldwide	North America	Latin America	Europe	Middle East-Africa	Asia Pacific
MySpace	100.0%	62.1%	3.8%	24.7%	1.3%	8.1%
Facebook	100.0%	68.4%	2.0%	16.8%	5.7%	7.1%
Hi5	100.0%	15.3%	24.1%	31.0%	8.7%	20.8%
Friendster	100.0%	7.7%	0.4%	2.5%	0.8%	88.7%
Orkut	100.0%	2.9%	48.9%	4.6%	0.6%	43.0%
Bebo	100.0%	21.8%	0.5%	62.5%	1.3%	13.9%
Tagged	100.0%	22.7%	14.6%	23.4%	10.0%	29.2%

**Figure 3: Unique Social Networking Site Visits by Global Region as of June 2007**  
(Source: <http://www.comscore.com>)

The number of social network sites created has increased over the last ten years (see Figure 4), but judging by the number created in the last four years (25 out of the 37), it has become more popular than ever.

**Launch Dates of Major Social Network Sites**



**Figure 4: Timeline of the Launch Dates of Many Major Social Networking Sites 1997 - 2006**  
 (Source: <http://jcmc.indiana.edu>)

It is interesting to note that although social network sites support global networks of people in which to meet new people, typically, Facebook is used to support pre-existing social relations, and most users search for people they already know. Pew Internet & American Life Project reports that 91 percent of US teens use social network sites to connect with friends (Boyd).

What does the popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace mean for presidential candidates? First, it's important to understand who this population of voters is and what they are looking for in a candidate. According to the Harvard University Institute of Politics (IOP), 18-24 year olds are more concerned with the values of a candidate than with specific issues ("Campaign For President 2004"). They want to know what makes a candidate "tick." They want candidates to be willing to expose their personal inadequacies – to be authentic. Young voters tend to feel anxious about their lack of knowledge about the candidates and the issues, so candidates are encouraged to recognize the value of their personal involvement and engage young people in a dialogue – asking what they think and believe about their country; and ask them to get involved.

Young voters tend to get involved in political campaigns if they are asked to do so, and when resources are committed to mobilizing them, the results have been successful. Young people tend to be willing to dedicate time and efforts to community service. A political candidate should recognize that these are "online communities" in which s/he can reach a higher number of people than they could door-to-door by engaging young voters to join his/her group and solicit volunteers for the campaign. Traditionally, getting volunteers and building campaign teams have been expensive

endeavors, but with the ability to gather personal data and contact information through social networking sites, this has become easier to do. The Harvard University IOP also states that in order to reach young people in particular, campaigns and organizations must go where young people spend their time. As shown in Figures 1-3, they are spending their time on social networking sites.

Since 1971, 18-20 year olds have been eligible to vote under the new amendment that changed the minimum voting age to 18 years of age. In 1972, the first presidential election they were eligible to cast a vote in, approximately 55 percent of 18-24 year olds voted (“The Youth Vote Fact Sheet”). Since then, the number of 18-24 year olds casting a vote in presidential elections has decreased, with only a slight spike in 1992. In the 2000 presidential election, only 36.1 percent of eligible 18-24 year olds voted (“Are You Talking to Me?”). However, in the 2004 presidential election, this age group saw an increase of 11 percent, as 47 percent of them voted. The increased turnout for this group was higher than any other age group in that year’s election (“The Youth Vote Fact Sheet”). This was the first significant increase, which may be attributed to an increased interest on the part of the presidential candidates in the youth voters than we had before. There was a stronger use of data, research, and common message (“Campaign for President 2004”). This may represent that candidates are recognizing that young people are a “hot political commodity” who need to be in the forefront of campaign concerns.

Additionally, the 2004 election was notable for significant expansion of Web campaigning (Foot & Schneider 4). Howard Dean became a serious contender in late 2003 (for the 2004 election) – demonstrating legitimacy as a candidate largely on the basis of his campaign’s Web Strategy. “The Dean campaign dramatically altered the

landscape of the political Internet. The Dean campaign demonstrated, on a national level, how a political organization could use the Web as a platform for a large-scale national movement. In just ten years, some campaign organizations had moved beyond thinking of the Web as an electronic brochure to viewing it as an electronic headquarters” (Foot & Schneider 10).

The Harvard University IOP’s “Lessons Learned” report identified four basic items needed to create the “cycle of engagement” in which young people are voting, politicians are paying attention, young people are engaged in the policy process, and politicians are paying attention to young people’s concerns. First, there needs to be an increase in voter registration in young people; second, engage them on issues by mobilizing them; third, engage them more often, not just every four years during an election. This is difficult to do because in off-cycle election years, voting and engagement decrease in general. Political parties should continue the engagement and with profiles and groups remaining active on social networking sites before and after a campaign, to have a more effective vehicle in which to continue this engagement. Finally, the Harvard University IOP report suggests that political campaigners need to be out there talking to every constituency group possible and acknowledge that young people will make a difference in the election and to ignore them, they do so at their own peril (“Campaign For President 2004”).

Recently, in Harvard University IOP’s “Are you Talking to Me” report, states that despite the low voter turnout, young voters are not apathetic and they volunteer in their communities more than any previous generation (“Are You Talking to Me?”). In the IOP’s recommendations on how to talk to young voters, they suggest keeping the issues

relevant to their concerns, to be authentic and genuine, engage young voters, allow young voters to be heard, and give them an opportunity to participate. Social networking profiles provide candidates the ability to speak in a more informal way (*to be genuine and authentic*) and enable supporters to participate (*by creating and joining groups*) in the campaign online with social network “friends” lends itself to following these suggestions.

Meetup.com, an online social networking site that facilitates offline group meetings around the world, allows members to find and join groups unified by a common interest such as politics (Tucci). As former US Senator Bill Bradley suggests, campaigns “should call supporters, thank them for their money and ‘make history’ by asking them to organize weekly online meetings with voters.” As Bradley points out, “If 5,000 people each convened 200 people to meet weekly to help set the political agenda, that’s 1 million people putting their heads together over how to change the status quo. And there is software that allows you to share opinions (Tucci).” Does Meetup.com really work to mobilize campaign supporters? Presidential candidate Ron Paul’s campaign certainly thinks so. His campaign, which recently announced that it raised \$9.7 million in three months via the Internet notes that the site “lets its potential supporters, such as the 61,000 people and more than 1,000 groups on Meetup.com, come to them. Meetup.com allows people with common interests to find one another. Paul supporters have used the Web site to organize rallies across the country” (Stann). This demonstrates that online social networking sites can mobilize people and funds, even “offline” in a way that means participation, support, and campaign dollars.

Using traditional media may not be working with this young age group. Being 21 in 2004 meant that you had been exposed to 3,000 marketing messages per day, 23 million since birth. Consequently, young people are more resistant to commercial messages (“Are You Talking to Me?”). Candidates should take advantage of the Internet in their campaigns. The Internet provides young people with a sense of community and with the ability to interact and control their experience. According to the Institute for Politics, Democracy and the Internet, while young people between the ages of 18 and 34 comprise 24% of the US Population, they are 36 percent of the “online political citizenry (“Are You Talking to Me?”). The Harvard University IOP’s surveys also found that not all online strategies are effective. Young voters view online chat rooms, issue-specific e-mails, blogs, and meet-up events favorably. Get-out-the-vote e-mails, banner ads, weekly e-mail updates, and weekly text messages are not well received. Young people prefer online strategies that give them the chance to opt-in rather than those that are imposed on them. Strategies that allow for participation are also favored by young people (“Are You Talking to Me?”).

Another Web 2.0 technology, “web logs,” commonly known as “blogs,” played an important role in a presidential election for the first time in 2004. Howard Dean was successful in gathering support for his campaign using a blog as his primary mode for publishing his “dispatches” to his followers. Blogs not only offer insight into a presidential candidate’s thoughts, vision and character, but they’re also used as a compliment to mainstream media by breaking news stories or fact checking them (Ademic & Glance). They have indeed found a place in mainstream media and are in the

forefront of political candidates' approach to campaigning. Blogs are now part of every 2008 presidential campaign, and are often linked through social networking sites.

YouTube, a popular video sharing Web site has also gotten into the political game. In partnership with CNN, YouTube held the first user-generated video debate. Thirty-nine debate questions were generated from 3,000 videos submitted on YouTube ("Questions, Not Answers"). CNN Political Director Sam Feist states, "It [the quality and quantity of submissions] tells you that people want to connect with the candidates and they want to personalize them, and I think that's what this debate does, personalizes the questions, and it personalizes the answers in a way that journalists don't" ("CNN/YouTube Debate Questions"). According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, as of February 2007, 21 million Americans watched political videos online and the number of Americans using the internet for politics news, information, and activity, which has grown steadily since 1996, and will likely continue to do so through several more election cycles (Rainie). Pew also reported that 20 percent got news and information about the campaign from Web sites created by candidates. These sites were disproportionately used by civically engaged young voters and voters who felt that the Internet is a good source of information that is unavailable elsewhere. They were also important to people who see the internet as a place to get local perspectives (Rainie).

Josh Levy, associate editor of techPresident.com, feels that "online video will continue to be the most influential aspect of 'social media' being used in the 2008 cycle, in part because of its innate immediacy (Stutzman)." Presidential campaigns are smartly taking to the video streaming platform for campaigning. Mindy Finn, eDirector for Mitt Romney's campaign, states, "It looks like YouTube has, and will continue to have, the

most prominent role in communications and interactivity related to the 2008 presidential campaign. YouTube videos are disseminated via so many other mediums--cable news, blogs, e-mail, candidate, and third-party Web sites, Facebook, and MySpace, among others." (Stutzman)

CNN is not the only major news organization aligning itself with Web 2.0 technology for the presidential election. ABC News announced a joint effort with Facebook in which Facebook members can electronically follow ABC reporters, view reports and video and participate in polls and debates within the "US Politics" category ("Questions, Not Answers"). Both parties consider this a mutually beneficial effort, so much so, that no money was exchanged for the deal. When the Democratic and Republican debates occur in January in New Hampshire before the primary there, it will be jointly sponsored by Facebook and ABC News. They hope that this will extend the dialogue before and after the debate. Some major newspapers, such as the New York Times and the Washington Post also produce some pages for use on Facebook. MySpace was purchased in 2005 by News Corporation and since then has launched their "Impact" channel dedicated to the 2008 political election. Clearly, news organizations are trying to capitalize on this popular medium and use it to its full potential in the 2008 campaign. They would not make this investment if it were not going to be a major component in the 2008 campaign coverage.

How can presidential candidates use this Web 2.0 technology and how can they do so effectively to get a large number of supporters, group members, and campaign donations? According to Fred Stutzman, "Social networks offer unique opportunities for political candidates." People use social networking sites to make an identity statement.

Stutzman makes the point that it makes sense that we will turn our network profiles into places of support for candidates, as this is very much like putting a bumper sticker on your car or a political sign on your lawn, with the exception that a social networking site offers interactivity. Candidates gather “friends” on social networking sites; how much this will mean for votes is still to be determined. Becoming a friend or joining a group is an easy thing to do, requiring a simple click to join.

Matt Bai of the New York Times recently stated, “In the new and evolving online world, the greatest momentum goes not to the candidate with the most detailed plan for conquering the Web but to the candidate who surrenders his own image to the clicking masses, the same as rock guitarist might fall backward off the stage into the hands of an adoring crowd” (Bai). Mr. Bai touches on a key question in Web 2.0 politics – Who is in control of the campaign? In a business model, the Web represents fundamental shift in the once static relationship between producer and consumer. It is by nature a participatory medium in which customers demand a more personal stake in the products they consume (Bai). He also states “Perhaps in Washington, where so few people have dominated so much for so long, is this trend viewed as inherently negative. That’s because, for decades, presidential campaigns have been the exclusive province of a small bevy of ad makers and strategists who profited from the illusion that they, and only they, could foresee the electorate’s every reaction to everything. The results of that period are now in: a marked decline in voter participation, an uptick in cynicism toward public service and a heap of critical policy challenges that have gone unaddressed. So why should we fear a new day when ordinary voters, through their own creativity and passion, can suddenly influence the direction of a campaign with a Web site or a video? These are, after all, our

campaigns, for too long dominated by the professionals who made of them a gray and tepid industry” (Bai).

Web 2.0 functionality empowers the every-day citizen to create a blog, create a group in Facebook, or post their homemade video on YouTube. Given that young people tend to look to their peers (whether or not they know them personally) to decide what is desirable (products, people, etc.), this can help boost support for candidates. When people join social networking sites, they first locate the people they know in real life and make them friends. However, this soon means the addition of friends of friends, and then they are likely to join various groups, which provide a list of tens or tens of thousands of “friends” who share the interest of that group. Because of the nature of social networking, one individual can reach many people with a message. Bai raises an important point about relinquishing control of the campaign to the masses through Web 2.0 sites. How can a campaign carefully shape the image of a candidate when it can easily be tarnished through the ease of Web 2.0? Anyone can create a group on Facebook or post a video on YouTube. Even those who do so in supposed support of a candidate can shake up a campaign. For example, as reported on ABC News (Vargas), “An amusing, risqué music video, featuring a nubile young woman breathlessly singing her love for presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., appeared on the Web. Titled ‘I Got a Crush on Obama,’ the song and video took the Obama campaign by surprise and further demonstrated how the democratic nature of the Internet — specifically Internet video on sites such as YouTube — is affecting politics in unpredictable ways.”

As much as candidates may have to face unwanted support like “Obama Girl,” it is outweighed by the benefit from the support of positive organized groups on social

networking sites. For example, when Barack Obama officially announced he was exploring a run for the presidency (through online video), Farouk Olu Aregbe created a group on Facebook called “One Million Strong for Barack.” He had 100 members in the first hour. In less than five days, 10,000. By the third week, nearly 200,000 (Vargas). (*As of 14 December 2007, the group has 405,111*). Not all groups have this kind of success, but several factors could contribute to it, such as timing (created at a point when the interest in Obama peaked after his announcement), and as an advisor of student government at the University at Missouri at Columbia, Aregbe may have a good number of real life connections to get it started. There are more than 500 Obama groups on Facebook. “Students for Obama,” one of the first of the groups started out with one person at Bowdoin College who thought of a Facebook group, as a better alternative than getting a petition signed, to encourage Obama to run. “Now, it’s a political action committee with nearly 62,000 members and chapters at 80 colleges, the most structures grass-roots student movement – there’s a director of field operations, an Internet director, a finance director and a blog team director – in the presidential campaign so far” (Vargas).

The success of “Students for Obama” is just one example of how social networking sites have mobilized young people into action. As noted earlier, young people are not apathetic as some may think. They like to participate, volunteer, and be part of something; social networking sites provide the platform on which to do this. In March 2007, MySpace launched its *Impact Channel*, “a portal featuring candidate-created profiles as well as voter-registration tools, job listings, videos, ‘friends’ pages and other political content” (Aun). Users can also search for volunteer opportunities, take polls, as

well as read and participate in blogs. According to MySpace representatives, a recent poll (*open only to MySpace users who will be eligible to vote in the 2008 presidential election*) “revealed a few key facts: that MySpace's young user base is more politically engaged and active than the U.S. population at large, that they tend to be politically independent, and that they plan to vote in the 2008 election. Eight-six percent of those responders said that they were "extremely likely" or "likely" to vote in '08. They're not too keen on traditional party affiliations, either; 27 percent consider themselves ‘independent,’ compared to 8 percent of the general population.” MySpace stressed that the social network is politically active at the core. “Responses showed that MySpace users are 139 percent more likely than the population at large "to have visited an online chat room with public officials or political candidates in the last 30 days. They were also 29 percent more likely to have searched online for political information the day before the poll was taken, and 16 percent more likely to have read news online” (McCarthy).

Barack Obama also launched his own social networking site, <http://www.barackobama.com>. Those who register on the site receive e-mail updates and solicitations as well. The e-mails are brief, but stress the character of Mr. Obama, which we know appeals to what young voters more than specific issues. The e-mails detail the latest goings-on with Mr. Obama, including the expression of outrage at “attacks” on his character, along with a plea for a donation to support the campaign to “fight the attacks.” This must be working. The last e-mail from the *Obama for America* group reported that Obama was a clear winner in the last debate in Iowa before the caucuses and provided a video of attendees’ reaction after the debate. Also included was a link to allow the receiver to donate money towards his campaign. The e-mail states that since the last e-

mail of this kind, 5,000 people responded with donations in less than 24 hours. As the director for the Obama for America campaign states, “The donations were given “in response to the egregious attacks on Barack's character -- demonstrating once and for all that negativity will have a cost for our rivals. You can still help raise the cost of negativity for our opponents by making a donation of \$25 now.” The message of the e-mails attempt to accentuate his good character and ask for a small donation. This approach is apparently working.

A Washington Post article reporting Obama’s early (April 2007) fundraising efforts had surpassed \$25 million (nearly matching Clinton’s record-breaking total). The article states, “Obama surpassed Clinton in several areas that could be critical to their competition: He reported donations from 100,000 individuals, double the 50,000 people who gave to the former first lady. More than half of those donors, largely giving in small increments, sent money over the Internet. He raised \$6.9 million online, compared with Clinton's \$4.2 million. The fact that many Obama donors contributed relatively small amounts also means that he will be able to appeal to those donors for contributions later in the campaign” (Komblut & Mosk). Not only did Obama reign in more donors than the front-runner in campaign funds did, but over half of them came in through the Internet. Without a doubt, campaign efforts over the Internet, of which many are solicited through friends and group members on social networking sites, makes a significant difference to the amount a candidate raises.

Clearly, social networking is adding to the campaign funds, which is important to every candidate. Republican candidate Ron Paul recently announced that he raised \$9.7 million in three months via the Web (Stewart). Mr. Paul also has the most MySpace

friends among his Republican counterparts. Will this get him elected? Perhaps not. Despite his surge in online friends, he rates low in the polls as a presidential candidate. One theory, according to Colin Delany of techpresident.com, his positions, and his background make him a perfect Web candidate. But, they'll also ultimately doom his candidacy. Delany believes that “(i)The Web loves Libertarians (he ran for president 1988 on the Libertarian ticket), (ii) The other candidates are disappointing, (iii) The pre-existing support (Paul's congressional service and his 1988 presidential race are a secret weapon), and (iv) The Web loves a purist (In an online world where we can speak our opinions and act on our convictions without having to consider the practical difficulties of getting political work done, Paul fits right in) (Delany).

So, it still comes down to being the best candidate in character and issues; simply having the highest number of friends on a social networking site will not, in and of itself, get a candidate elected. However, the popularity of social networking sites among young people (and increasingly older age groups), and how the candidates are using these sites to build their campaigns and support are clearly making the case that they are of top importance. The youth vote is on an upswing after decline since 1972. In the 2004 presidential election, the 18-24 year votes increased by 11 percent, which is a significant increase with 47 percent of them voting. In 2006, 18-25 year olds made up 14 percent of the population of eligible voters in the US; 18-29 year olds made up 21 percent of the voting eligible population (“Young Demographics”). This significant percentage of votes shouldn't be overlooked if a presidential candidate hopes to win the election.

From what we have learned about the youth population of voters, they are interested in a candidate's character (*often above specific issues*), prefer a candidate who

is authentic and genuine, they like to be active members of groups, and they volunteer more than any other generation. It is apparent that the tenets of social networking sites appeal to the qualities and desires of youth voters. These sites allow them to participate through groups and blogs, they can easily view and interact with the candidate through profiles and groups, candidates post volunteer opportunities on their sites, and sites such as Meetup.com enable them to congregate in real life and online with others who share their political interests.

The youth of today doesn't respond to traditional media like television advertisements as earlier generations might. This young demographic has been bombarded in volumes with ads and commercials that has caused them to be ineffective. Young voters simply do not respond to them as they do to online interactivity with their peers. The popularity of social networking sites is witness to the desire for membership and interactivity. Presidential candidates must take advantage of this medium to harness these important votes. The young voters will learn and participate to make a campaign successful through these means. As demonstrated by Ron Paul, Barack Obama and others, online campaign donations are also critical to campaign funding.

Are social networking sites the only way to get votes and campaign dollars? Absolutely not. However, this interactive Internet activity does translate into raising awareness for a candidate, participation in his/her campaign, and increased campaign funds. It is simply the effective medium of our time to reach voters, particularly younger ones. We will see in the upcoming election how the number of friends a candidate has will translate into actual votes. Regardless of who wins or loses, one thing is certain, social networking sites are an effective way to increase support and campaign funds.

Ignore this important medium in your campaign strategy will surely mean a significant number of lost votes.

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