# Deploying E-mail Lists in the 2004 Presidential Campaign:

# Simple Enhancements or New Necessities?

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*"It really was a huge grassroots uprising for the president. And was the Internet a part of it? Yes. Several hundred thousand of our volunteers were recruited online and recruited by other volunteers using email. … what we tried to accomplish with that strategy is to give people the tools to best accomplish that…. the Internet is going to make those social networks of individual people connect much better, and use the Internet to mobilize more people – something we were just starting to do (in this election.)."* (Chuck DeFeo, Bush-Cheney '04 eCampaign manager)[1]

## I. Introduction

This study presents a content analysis of e-mail communications that major party candidates and national party organizations used to mobilize supporters and to raise money during the 2004 presidential primary and general election campaigns. While studies about how the Internet is used for campaign purposes have usually focused on websites, our work focuses on the campaign e-mails that were sent to individuals who signed up to receive them. We believe that studying the content of campaign e-mails may reveal the candidates' or parties' purposes, expectations, and strategies in a more straightforward manner than does studying their websites. Websites are designed to attract the uncommitted as well as to reinforce supporters,

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[1] http://www.ohmynews.com. "<Interview> OhmyNews talks with Bush-Cheney '04 eCampaign manager Chuck DeFeo. (12/20/2004)

but mailing lists are composed largely of individuals for whom the act of joining already

signifies their support. (Bimber and Davis; Gibson, Römmele and Ward; Schwartz).

The quotation excerpted from Chuck DeFeo's interview affirms the growing importance of

the Internet for presidential campaigns, and it anticipates candidates and parties making even

greater use of it in the future. (Gibson, Ward and Nixon, chapters 1 and 3). Indeed, the

Republican National Committee (RNC) put together a new e-campaign team shortly after their

2004 victory, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) website introduced media action tools

and a new blog under Howard Dean's chairmanship, and presidential hopefuls like John Kerry,

Wesley Clarke, John Edwards and Dennis Kucinich maintain active political websites from

which they can easily mobilize supporters for an election campaign.[2]

This paper extends our previous study that tracked usage of e-mail lists in the presidential

nomination period.[3] Here we focus on competition between the two national party organizations

and their respective candidates following Kerry's formal nomination at the Democratic Party

Convention through Election Day, November 2.

When we analyzed the contents of campaign e-mails during the 2004 presidential

nominating period, we found that candidates' patterns of e-mail campaigning became more

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[2] "Republican National Committee (RNC) Chairman Mehlman Selects New Staff Members to Join his Team," http://www.gop.com/News/Read.aspx?ID=5090 (1/25/05); DNC: www.democrats.org; Kerry: www.johnkerry.com; Clarke (WesPAC): www.securingamerica.com; Edwards (One America Committee): www.oneamericacommittee.com; Kucinich: www.kucinich.us.

[3] Our previous work, "What they did online: Campaign e-mail in the 2004 Presidential Nomination Contests," covered July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004. APSA Political Communication Pre-conference, University of Illinois, Chicago, September 1, 2004.

similar to one another over time and that soliciting monetary support became the most common

action item contained in their campaign e-mails. In this paper we turn to the main presidential

contest between Bush and Kerry to find out whether the patterns we found in the primary period

lasted through the fall contest or whether new patterns emerged in the latter period.

Why study the content of campaign e-mails that are restricted to relatively small cohorts

who are generally more active politically than ordinary citizens? Quite simply, national parties

and candidates have generally practiced "top-down" communication strategies via the Internet

to encourage activists to recruit, organize and mobilize other supporters. This study, therefore,

aims to enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of using the Internet for electoral

campaigns.

## II. Data Collection and Analysis

We analyzed campaign e-mails that the two major party candidates and their national

committees sent mailing lists of supporters during the final months of the 2004 presidential

campaign, July 1 through November 2. We used a coding scheme of 34 categories that we had

developed in our previous study of e-mail content in order to classify and compare these new

emails with those sent prior to and after Super Tuesday.[4]

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[4] We derived the 34 categories from e-mails sent from June through October 2003. We subsequently created an SPSS dataset, in which each e-mail is represented as a single case consisting of 34 dichotomous variables.

Content analyses of candidates' and parties' websites usually focus on the types of information presented and on the sophistication, clarity and user-friendliness of the Web pages. A website's contents may encourage particular types of Information and Communication Flows (ICF) such as downward, upward, lateral, or interactive (Gibson and Ward). Downward ICFs are most common.

The campaign e-mails that we analyzed differed in content from the websites, however, especially in direction of information flow. Even though the e-mails were initiated as downward ICFs, most were designed to motivate upward, lateral, and interactive activities from their recipients. Also the activities called for were not limited to those online; rather, they were expected to occur in the real world. The aims of the campaign e-mail are twofold: first to provide recipients with information and second to solicit reactions from them both online and offline.

We divided the contents of e-mails into two main categories: ICF items that provide general information, and ICF items that ask recipients to help the campaign by responding online or by taking action offline. These are summarized below.[5]

| |
|---|
| **i. General ICF Items**<br>  ① Campaign news/update<br>    • provide general campaign news such as phase/status of the race, what is at the stake, what campaign/candidate did or plans to do, etc.<br>  ② Event/schedule<br>    • provide information about scheduled events, such as speeches, debates, forums, |

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[5] See Appendix 1 for the full coding scheme.

fundraisers, house parties or online chats with the candidate or prominent supporter.

③ Agenda
  • show the vision of governing
  • introduce policy agenda and explain why it is important
  • explain why the candidate should be elected in relation to the policy agenda

④ Position on the issues, Comments on/Critiques of current political situations
  • explain the candidate's position/view of current issues or political situation
  • critique other candidates' positions/perspectives/activities

⑤ Speeches/Statement(including video/audio source/Ads)
  • provide the candidate's or campaign team's speeches, statements, or advertisements, attaching the material in the e-mail or including direct link to it
  • include not only written material, but also video/audio sources

⑥ Endorsement
  • notice of endorsements by groups, celebrities, or other notables
  • attach material from the endorsers explaining why they support the candidate or urging others to support for the candidate

⑦ News coverage
  • report important news coverage
  • explain why it is important and/or its expected effect
  • attached on e-mail or included as direct link

⑧ Polling information
  • provide polling results from diverse sources
  • explain their meaning and/or their expected effect

⑨ Personal message from the candidate
  • letter or video/audio message from the candidate

⑩ Website update
  • introduce what is in the campaign website
  • new contents or important new categories

**ii. ICF Items Soliciting a Response**

① Contribution/support
  • explicit request for contribution, not just direct link for it

② Mobilize/persuade others
  • ask for online actions to mobilize/persuade others to support the candidate or party

③ Participation
  • ask individuals to participate physically in campaign related events offline.
  • ask individuals to volunteer for campaign teams

④ MeetUp
  • provide information on organizing or selecting locations for meetups
  • ask individuals to attend local meetups

⑤ Blog
  • provide information about the blog

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[6] Although forwarding e-mail does involve an action, it requires little or no new input and usually consists of forwarding trivia, such as the latest joke, gossip, or entertaining link. We chose not to treat it as a political action item in our content analyses below.

> • ask individuals to use the blog to express support or persuade others
> ⑥ Forward e-mail to others[6]
>    • ask to forward the e-mail to others
> ⑦ Media events
>    • ask individuals to watch scheduled media event, such as an interview with the candidate
>    or member of campaign team, or a specific program that relates to the race
>    • ask supporters to recruit others to watch and/or to follow up on the event.
> ⑧ Petition/pledge/polling/opinion
>    • direct individuals to sign a petition online
>    • ask to write a letter or e-mail, make a call or pledge to take some action
>    • participate in an online poll
>    • suggest ideas/actions for campaign team

We focused upon official campaign e-mails from four campaign organizations: 1) the Democratic National Committee (DNC); 2) the Republican National Committee's (RNC) GOP Team Leaders (GOP);[7] 3) John Kerry's Campaign (Kerry); and 4) George W. Bush's campaign (Bush). These were sent during the 125 days from July 1, 2004 through November 2. As members of these lists, we received 254 e-mails during this period.

### 1. Frequency of E-mails

The data in Table 1 indicate that candidates were more active in sending e-mails to supporters than were their parties. Kerry was the most prodigious e-mailer, sending messages more than once in every two days on average; Bush was second, sending nearly three e-mails

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[7] Even though the RNC maintained an active official website (www.gop.com) it used 'GOP Team Leaders' instead of RNC in online headers. The avowed purpose was for the Team Leaders to build separate teams whose members would be receptive to campaign information and to calls for action. These teams in turn might build other teams. Thus, the GOP could deploy the online equivalent of a telephone tree, by means of which supporters would receive campaign messages not from a distant party committee, but from someone whom they already knew.

weekly. Both party organizations sent e-mails less frequently than did their candidates. The

Democrats averaged roughly 2.5 e-mails weekly, and the GOP averaged just fewer than two.[8]

**<Table.1> Frequency of E-mails**

|  | Total number of E-mails | Average number of days between e-mails* |
|---|---|---|
| **Kerry** | 99 | 1.26 |
| **Bush** | 73 | 1.71 |
| **DNC** | 53 | 2.36 |
| **GOP** | 29 | 4.31 |

*e-mailing period: 7/1/2004 – 11/2/2004(125days)

Comparing Table 1 with Table 2 shows that the overall frequency of e-mails from all but

the GOP increased relative to the prior 120 days (from Kerry's clinching the nomination the day

after Super Tuesday until June 30). We can see that as the campaign moved toward a

competition between two major candidates, the use of e-mail lists increased, especially for the

DNC, which had maintained a formal neutrality during the earlier period. Its e-mail frequency

jumped from once in 3.87 days to once in 2.36, after Kerry's nomination appeared certain.

**<Table 2> Frequency of e-mails by Candidate and Party from 3/3/04 to 6/30/04**

|  | total number of e-mails | Average number of days between e-mails* |
|---|---|---|
| **Kerry** | 72 | 1.67 |
| **Bush** | 50 | 2.40 |
| **GOP** | 42 | 2.86 |
| **DNC** | 31 | 3.87 |

*e-mailing period: 3/3/2004 to 6/30/2004 (120days)

## 2. Frequently used Items

Table 3 indicates that the most frequently used items in the e-mails changed as the

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[8] Both party organizations' e-mails were usually newsletters from the campaign chairmen, although some
DNC e-mails included messages from the regional (OHIO) campaign staff.

campaign became a two-man contest. Four action items, **VOLUNTEER, MOBILIZING,**

**ONLINE-CHAT** and **PARTICIPATE PHYSICALLY** were used more frequently in this

period than previously, but requests to *FORWARD_E-MAIL* or to send a *CONTRIBUTION*

dropped off. Three items that distinguished the party or candidate from its counterpart,

*COMMENT/CRITIQUE, ISSUE POSITION* and *EVENT/SCHEDULE* appeared with

relatively unchanged frequencies, but embedded **LINK**(S) to particular websites increased.

. **<Table. 3> Comparison of Most frequently used Items between Period 2 and Period 3***

| Rank | ITEM: Period 3 | FREQUENCY | ITEM: Period 2 | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *GENERAL_NEWS* | 188 | *FORWARD_ E-MAIL* | 169 |
| 2 | **LINK** | 177 | *GENERAL NEWS* | 155 |
| 3 | **VOLUNTEER** | 96 | *CONTRIBUTION* | 106 |
| 4 | *COMMENT/CRITIQUE* | 81 | *COMMENT/CRITIQUE* | 72 |
| 5 | *PARTICIPATE PHYSICALLY* | 69 | *ISSUE POSITION* | 56 |
| 6 | *EVENT/SCHEDULE* | 58 | *EVENT/SCHEDULE* | 54 |
| 7 | *CONTRIBUTION* | 57 | **VOLUNTEER** | 53 |
| 8 | *ISSUE POSITION* | 51 | SCRIPT | 49 |
| 9 | **MOBILIZING** | 51 | **LINK** | 39 |
| 10 | **ONLINE CHAT** | 39 | LETTER FROM CANDIDATE | 33 |
| 11 | ENDORSEMENT | 31 | *PARTICIPATE PHYSICALLY* | 31 |
| 12 | LETTER FROM CANDIDATE | 30 | ENDORSEMENT | 30 |
| 13 | *FORWARD_EMAIL* | 28 | VISION | 28 |
| 14 | RESPOND_TO | 27 | *MULTIMEDIA MESSAGE* | 28 |
| 15 | WEB_UPDATE | 25 | PETITION | 27 |
| 16 | NEWS_COVERAGE | 24 | WEBSITE UPDATE | 26 |
| 17 | POLICY_AGENDA | 21 | POLICY AGENDA | 25 |
| 18 | VISION | 18 | **MOBILIZING** | 19 |
| 19 | BLOG | 14 | RESPOND TO | 17 |
| 20 | POLL_RESULT | 13 | NEWS COVERAGE | 14 |
| 21 | SCRIPT | 13 | MEDIA SCHEDULEI | 13 |
| 22 | ONLINE_POLL | 12 | *MEETUP* | 12 |
| 23 | MEDIA_EVENT | 9 | POLL | 12 |
| 24 | FEEDBACK | 8 | **ONLINE CHAT** | 7 |
| 25 | PETITION | 8 | NEW SITES | 5 |
| 26 | NEW_SITES | 6 | FEEDBACK | 4 |
| 27 | N/A | • | ONLINE POLL | 3 |
| 28 | N/A | • | BLOG | 1 |

*Period 2: **3/3/04 - 6/30/04** (includes e-mails from Dennis Kucinich, who remained active after Super Tuesday)

Period 3: **7/1/04-11/2/04**

### 3. Similarities and Differences between Candidates and Party Organizations

The frequencies displayed in Tables 4 and 5 permit comparisons of item usage among the candidates and party organizations during the fall campaign (Period 3). The frequencies in Tables 6 and 7 permit similar comparisons from Super Tuesday through the formal nominations (Period 2). We had found that after Super Tuesday the rank order correlations among candidates' and parties' e-mail items increased, indicating that the remaining candidates (Kerry, Kucininch and Bush) and their parties had begun to address similar campaign issues and to employ similar campaign tactics (Kim and Margolis, Tables 14-1 and 14-2). Although specific items might differ between periods, we expected this similarity to continue or to increase during the fall campaign period.

A perusal of Table 4 does show general similarities in items among all four groups, as well a few exceptions. For example, Bush and the GOP requested far fewer contributions than did the DNC and Kerry, while Kerry's e-mails contained more direct links to other Websites. Table 5 contains overlaps among the top 10 items. We find that both candidates and their party organizations had the same six items: ***GENERAL NEWS, VOLUNTEER, COMMENT/CRITIQUE, MOBILIZING, ISSUE POSITION*** and ***LINK*** in their top 10. Overlaps among items in the top 10 priorities affirm that the DNC and KERRY put stress on soliciting ***CONTRIBUTION[s]*** while in contrast, the GOP and BUSH encouraged

*ONLINE_CHAT*. Table 7 shows that all the above items except *LINK* had been among the top

10 for these four groups in previous period. Moreover, of the items listed in Table 7, only

*FW_EMAIL* and *SCRIPT* showed less overlap in the third period than in the previous one.

**<Table 4> Frequencies of items for Candidates and Parties for Period 3**

|  | DNC | Kerry | GOP | Bush |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BLOG | 1 | 3 | 10 | 0 |
| LETTER FROM CANDIDATE | 5 | 19 | 0 | 6 |
| COMMENT | 14 | 27 | 22 | 18 |
| CONTRIBUTION | 17 | 26 | 0 | 4 |
| ENDORSEMENT | 4 | 8 | 6 | 13 |
| EVENT | 18 | 27 | 3 | 10 |
| FEEDBACK | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| FW_EMAIL | 11 | 7 | 2 | 8 |
| GENERAL_NEWS | 45 | 63 | 26 | 54 |
| ISSUE_POSITION | 8 | 16 | 17 | 10 |
| LINK | 37 | 83 | 23 | 34 |
| MEDIA_EVENT | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| MOBILIZING | 9 | 15 | 11 | 16 |
| NEW_SITES | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| NEWS_COVERAGE | 2 | 5 | 10 | 7 |
| ONLINE_CHAT | 5 | 3 | 15 | 16 |
| ONLINE_POLL | 7 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| PARTICIPATE | 17 | 32 | 4 | 16 |
| PETITION | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| POLICY_AGENDA | 9 | 9 | 1 | 2 |
| POLL_RESULT | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| RESPOND_TO | 7 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| SCRIPT | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| VISION | 2 | 8 | 2 | 6 |
| VOLUNTEER | 21 | 34 | 20 | 21 |
| WEB_UPDATE | 1 | 6 | 18 | 0 |

**<Table 5>Overlap of items among Top 10 priorities (Period 3)**

| No. of Overlaps | Item | Including candidates/parties |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | GENERAL NEWS<br>VOLUNTEER<br>COMMENT/CRITIQUE<br>MOBILIZING<br>ISSUE POSITION<br>LINK | ALL |
| 3 | EVENT/SCHEDULE<br>PARTICIPATE PHYSICALLY | DNC, KERRY, BUSH<br>DNC, KERRY, BUSH |
| 2 | CONTRIBUTION<br>ONLINE CHAT | DNC, KERRY<br>GOP, BUSH |

**<Table 6> Frequencies of Items for candidates and party organizations from 3/3/04 to 6/30/04***

| | Kerry | Kucinich | Bush | GOP Team Leaders | DNC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GENERAL NEWS** | 42 | 52 | 26 | 21 | 14 |
| **EVENT/SCHEDULE** | 11 | 21 | 12 | 7 | 3 |
| **VISION** | 8 | 15 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| **POLICY AGENDA** | 2 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 0 |
| **ISSUE POSITION** | 13 | 19 | 7 | 7 | 10 |
| **COMMENT/CRITIQUE** | 26 | 1 | 10 | 12 | 23 |
| **LETTER FROM CANDIDATE** | 8 | 20 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| **MULTIMEDIA MESSAGE** | 0 | 25 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| **SCRIPT** | 9 | 12 | 6 | 14 | 8 |
| **LINK** | 4 | 5 | 12 | 15 | 3 |
| **WEBSITE UPDATE** | 1 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 0 |
| **NEW SITES** | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **CONTRIBUTION** | 48 | 32 | 7 | 0 | 19 |
| **PARTICIPATE PHYSICALLY** | 8 | 12 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| **VOLUNTEER** | 15 | 15 | 13 | 7 | 3 |
| **MOBILIZING** | 7 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| **MEDIA EVENTS** | 0 | 3 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| **PETITION** | 4 | 15 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| **RESPOND TO** | 3 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 1 |
| **ONLINE POLL** | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| **FEEDBACK** | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| **ONLINE CHAT** | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| **FORWARD THE E-MAIL** | 36 | 57 | 47 | 8 | 21 |
| **BLOG** | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **ENDORSE** | 20 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| **MEETUP** | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| **NEWS COVERAGE** | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| **POLL** | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

*Content analysis based upon 261 messages*

**<Table 7> Overlap of items among Top 10 priorities for candidates and party organizations from 3/3/04 to 6/30/04**

| No. of Overlaps | Item | Including candidates/parties |
|---|---|---|
| **5** | GENERAL NEWS<br>EVENT/SCHEDULE<br>VOLUNTEER<br>FORWARD THE E-MAIL | all |
| **4** | ISSUE POSITION<br>COMMENT/CRITIQUE<br>SCRIPT<br>CONTRIBUTION | Kerry, Kucinich, GOP, DNC<br>Kerry, Bush, GOP, DNC<br>Kerry, Bush, GOP, DNC<br>Kerry, Kucinich, Bush, DNC |
| **3** | VISION<br>LETTER FROM CANDIDATE<br>LINK | Kerry, Kucinich, Bush<br>Kerry, Kucinich, DNC<br>Bush, GOP, DNC |
| **2** | PETITION<br>ENDORSE | Kucinich, DNC<br>Kerry, DNC |

## 4. Correlations among Rank Orders of Items

We already observed the distribution of items sent by the parties and the candidates. At this

point we examine the extent to which the rank orders of these items are similar. Messages

should reflect the parties' and the candidates' own preferences, aims, or strategies. If we find

significant positive correlations among the order of items for most candidates and parties, we

can support the hypothesis that they used similar strategies in their campaign e-mails. To this

end, we ran Spearman's rho correlations among the two candidates and the two party

organizations for the fall campaign and the post-Super Tuesday primary period.

The results for the fall campaign, shown in Table 8, indicate that:


1) Candidates shared similar patterns of e-mailing with their own party's organization.

DNC and Kerry show a very high correlation in their item rank-orders (.789); the GOP

and Bush show .664, also quite high, but this is overshadowed by a .698 correlation

between Bush and the DNC. Kerry's items correlated with the GOP at a more

modest .447 (statistically significant nevertheless, p<.05).

2) The candidates' e-mails also shared common priorities.  Their e-mail items' rank

orders correlated at .681.

3) Only the party organizations' e-mails showed no significant correlation.


These results are remarkably similar to the pattern of the previous period shown in Table 9.

The three correlations between the candidates' items and between the candidates and their own

party organizations' items were .625 or greater. Bush and the DNC were less strongly correlated

than in the later period (.443 versus .698), but the relationship was still statistically significant

(p<.05). The two parties showed no significant correlation. The only remarkable difference was

that Kerry's and the GOP's items also had no significant correlation.

**<Table 8> Rank-order correlation in items (N=26) among Candidates and Party Organizations—**

**July 1-November 2, 2004**

| Spearman's rho | | DNC | Kerry | GOP | Bush |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DNC | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | | | |
| Kerry | Correlation Coefficient | .789** | 1.000 | | |
| GOP | Correlation Coefficient | .292 | .447* | 1.000 | |
| Bush | Correlation Coefficient | .698** | .681** | .664** | 1.000 |

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

**<Table 9> Rank-order Correlations in items (N=28) among Candidates and Party Organizations—March 3-June 30, 2004**

| Spearman's rho | | Kerry | Bush | GOP | DNC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kerry | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | | | |
| Bush | Correlation Coefficient | .627(**) | 1.000 | | |
| GOP | Correlation Coefficient | .288 | .625(**) | 1.000 | |
| DNC | Correlation Coefficient | .769(**) | .443(*) | .250 | 1.000 |

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

*  Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

As we noted in our discussion of Tables 4 and 5 above, ***CONTRIBUTION*** and ***ONLINE***

***CHAT*** revealed differences along party lines. Thus, we ran additional correlation tests by

excluding those items in three different steps to check the extent to which their presence

affected the overall results.

**<Table 10> Rank-order correlation in items between units in different configurations**

|  | overall | Without 'contribution' | Without 'online chat' | Without both 'contribution' and 'online chat' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **DNC - GOP** | .292 | .365 | .297 | .369 |
| **KERRY - BUSH** | .681** | .716** | .758** | .797** |
| **DNC - BUSH** | .698** | .755** | .720** | .777** |
| **GOP - KERRY** | .447* | .512** | .497* | .566** |

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

As the Table 10 shows, removing *CONTRIBUTION* and *ONLINE CHAT* tended to increase the correlation among units. However, the changes in magnitude remained small-- approximately 0.1. When *CONTRIBUTION* was removed, the GOP-Kerry correlation crossed the threshold of $p < .01$, and it increased by .054 when both items were removed. No other notably significant changes took place.

## 5. Relationships among Items

As we discussed in section II, we divided the contents of e-mails into two main categories: ICF items that provided general information, and ICF items that asked recipients to help the campaign by responding online or by taking action offline. We can examine relationships between items by analyzing the co-occurrence of information items sent with the items asking for activities or reactions. In Table 11 we compare the differences in frequencies among information provision items while controlling for activities/reactions items.

**<Table 11> Frequencies that each Item appears in e-mails (Period 3)**

| | Total appearance | all activity requesting items excluded | all activity requesting items excluded, except 'contribution' | contribution excluded |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BLOG | 14 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| LETTER FROM CANDIDATE | 30 | 7 | 11 | 22 |
| COMMENT | 81 | 12 | 27 | 63 |
| CONTRIBUTION | 57 | 0 | 31 | 0 |
| ENDORSEMENT | 31 | 3 | 10 | 22 |
| EVENT | 58 | 2 | 4 | 50 |
| FEEDBACK | 8 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| FW_EMAIL | 28 | 0 | 0 | 23 |
| GENERAL_NEWS | 188 | 24 | 46 | 146 |
| ISSUE_POSITION | 51 | 7 | 13 | 43 |
| LINK | 177 | 18 | 46 | 126 |
| MEDIA_EVENT | 9 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| MOBILIZING | 51 | 0 | 0 | 41 |
| NEW_SITES | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| NEWS_COVERAGE | 24 | 6 | 7 | 23 |
| ONLINE_CHAT | 39 | 0 | 0 | 37 |
| ONLINE_POLL | 12 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| PARTICIPATE | 69 | 0 | 0 | 61 |
| PETITION | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| POLICY_AGENDA | 21 | 6 | 7 | 19 |
| POLL_RESULT | 13 | 2 | 4 | 10 |
| RESPOND_TO | 27 | 0 | 0 | 27 |
| SCRIPT | 13 | 7 | 7 | 13 |
| VISION | 18 | 5 | 7 | 15 |
| VOLUNTEER | 96 | 0 | 0 | 79 |
| WEB_UPDATE | 25 | 2 | 2 | 25 |
| | among 254 | among 34 | among 65 | among 197 |

First, we compared the total number of messages with the number of messages that contained items requesting no activity (columns 1 and 2). This shows that only 34 messages among 254 provided pure information to supporters without asking for activities or reactions. This pattern of decrease is seen more dramatically in particular items. For instance, *GENERAL NEWS* fell from 188 to 24, *COMMENT/CRITIQUE* fell from 81 to 12, and *EVENT/SCHEDULE* fell from 58 to 2. In total, 86.6% of messages (220 messages among 254) contained items that solicited activities or reactions. That candidates and party organizations paired information and action items comports with our expectation that they intended such

information to mobilize supporters.

Second, among those 220 messages that requested activity, we found only 57 messages

that included requests for monetary support. In other words, 25.9% of messages that encouraged

campaign activities solicited financial support alone or in combination with other campaign

activities. As shown in Table 12, this is a drastic decrease from the two previous periods, where

*CONTRIBUTION* was the most frequently asked activity/reaction item.

**<Table. 12> Comparison of item types in three separate periods of the campaign**

|  | Period 1 (Summer 2003~ Super Tuesday) | Period 2 (Super Tuesday ~ Jun.30, 2004) | Period 3 (Jun.30, 2004~ Nov.2, 2004) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pure information messages | 18.8% | 21.5% | 13.4% |
| Activity/reaction messages | 82.2% | 78.5% | 86.6% |
| % of *CONTRIBUTION* requests among activity/reaction messages | 60.4% | 51.7% | 25.9% |
| % of *CONTRIBUTION* requests among all messages | 49.6% | 40.6% | 18.5% |

Table 12 reveals that the relative importance of requesting monetary support decreased

continuously from the early and pre-primary periods to the fall competition period. This does

not mean that raising money is no longer a priority during the fall competition, but it does

suggest that the short front- loaded primary schedule makes it especially important in the pre-

primary and primary periods.  Most candidates need to use mass media to call voters' attention

to themselves and to what they stand for. Using these media is expensive. By necessity,

therefore, fund-raising has become a top priority in the early stages of the campaign.

As the campaign changes into a two-person contest, however, the relative importance of

candidates' and parties' hard money may be reduced. The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of

2002 (BCRA) prevents presidential candidates and their national parties from raising and

spending soft money for federal contests in the fall, but it allows for myriad activities on the

part of independently organized committees that fall under particular categories of sections 501

and 527 of the Federal Tax Code. That appears to be where most donors directed their

presidential campaign contributions in the fall. (Magelby, Patterson and Monson).

### 6. Comparing each Candidate and Party across Periods 2 and 3

We suggested that after the presidential campaign had effectively become a two-person

contest, each party organization and its respective candidate emphasized certain items, such as

*CONTRIBUTION* or *ONLINE CHAT*, more strongly than did its adversary. Comparing the

rank orders of the items of each candidate and party organization before and after the onset of

the main contest should provide another indication of the extent to which the priorities in usage

of items changed. The data in Table 13 provide this comparison. A large positive correlation

would indicate little change; a small positive or a negative correlation would suggest a

substantial revision.

The results indicated that party organizations have relatively low (DNC .381) or modest

(GOP .535) correlations between before and after, while candidates' correlations are

relatively large (Kerry .755; Bush .653). This suggests that both candidates carried their

previous e-mailing strategies into the main competition and that their party organizations

adjusted their e-mailing strategies to make them more similar to those of their candidates.[9].

**<Table 13> rank order correlations in items for each candidate and party organization before and
after the Nomination competition (N=28)**

Correlations

| Spearman's rho | | | Bush3 | DNC3 | GOP3 | Kerry3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Bush2 | Correlation Coefficient | .653** | .798** | .492** | .721** |
| | DNC2 | Correlation Coefficient | .398* | .381* | .117 | .497** |
| | GOP2 | Correlation Coefficient | .386* | .399* | .535** | .467* |
| | Kerry2 | Correlation Coefficient | .599** | .661** | .232 | .755** |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Comparisons of the top 10 priorities of each candidate and party organization between

period 2 and period 3 show the following overlaps:

•Kerry2 with Kerry3--6 of top 10

•Bush2 with Bush3—7 of top 10

•GOP2 with GOP3—5 of top 10

•DNC2 with DNC3—6 of top 10

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[9] See Appendix 2 for rank order correlations of all items for Bush, Kerry, DNC and GOP across all three
periods.

Although from 30 to 50 percent of the top priorities changed, this comparison does not imply sharp differences between the party organizations and their respective candidates. New entries in the top 10 priorities show similarity within party lines. For instance, **EVENT/SCHEDULE** entered the DNC3's top 10 priorities, but this item had been among the top 10 for Kerry2 and remained there for Kerry3. In addition, **LINK, PARTICIPATE PHYSICALLY, POLICY AGENDA**, and **MOBILIZING** remained in the top 10 priorities for both DNC2 and DNC3 and for Kerry2 and Kerry3. For the Republicans' part, GOP3 got a new entry of **ISSUE POSITION,** but this item had been in the top 10 priorities for Bush2 and also remained there for Bush3. Meanwhile, **ONLINE CHAT and MOBILIZING** entered into the top 10 priorities simultaneously for both GOP3 and Bush3. This short comparison indicates that as the campaign moved toward its climax the party organizations and their respective candidates adopted more similar e-mailing strategies that complemented or reinforced one another's efforts.

Lastly, while our content analysis based on frequency of items cannot measure it, we got the impression that the "action item" messages revealed stylistic differences along party lines. The DNC seemed concerned with persuading supporters to act by presenting goals or justifications for their requests. The GOP often presented requests without elaboration, directing team leaders to do something as though it were an order. A sophisticated content

analysis program could be used to test this impression, but that remains a project for the

future.

**III. Campaign E-mails: Simple Enhancements or New Necessities? A Brief Speculation**

One Saturday in August of 1990 members of the Ohio Committee for Party Renewal,

mostly political scientists from colleges and universities across the state, spent the day

visiting the Democratic and Republican party headquarters in Columbus. Arranged by

Professor Samuel Patterson of Ohio State University, the visits gave members the

opportunity to speak with state party officials and to observe the "high tech" operations they

had instituted in anticipation of the fall elections.[10] The nonpartisan Committee, whose title

summarized its mission, had counterparts in several other states. These committees reflected

concern over revelations that increasing proportions of citizens distrusted politicians,

identified with neither major party, and failed to turn out for elections. American political

scientists ordinarily expressed greater regard for the party system than did their fellow

citizens in general and popular political pundits in particular. Most scholars whose research

specialties included parties or elections would endorse E.E. Schattschneider's widely quoted

statement: "democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties." (Schattschneider 1942, p.1).

Two officials greeted us at Democratic Headquarters, which consisted of a suite of

rooms on a lower floor in a building a few blocks from the Capitol. The place had the

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[10] This narrative is based upon Margolis's recollection of the visits.

familiar air of a functioning campaign office: shelves stacked with books, papers and

computer tapes, walls of filing cabinets, drab furniture, and somewhat old-fashioned light

fixtures. The officials were old hands at campaign organization. As we sat sipping a morning

coffee around the table in the low-ceilinged conference room, our hosts outlined their

operations. Democrats held the governorship and a majority of the House at the time, and the

state party's main job was to support the efforts of the county (and larger city) party

organizations to maintain those majorities. This included providing standard services like

maintaining computerized lists of registered voters by legislative districts, facilitating direct

mailings, helping with fund-raising and registration drives, and working to coordinate the

auxiliary activities of supportive organizations, such as labor unions, with those of the party

regulars. The mainframe—an IBM or a DIGITAL— looked up to date, but it wasn't in

operation this quiet Saturday morning.

The afternoon visit to Republican Headquarters was palpably different. The Office

Manager and his secretary greeted us in the front room of what turned out to be a brighter

suite in a somewhat nicer downtown building located a little closer to the Capitol than

Democratic Headquarters. After a brief introduction we were escorted inside to observe the

operations. We would discuss them with the Office Manager afterwards. The inside rooms

were literally a whirr of energy: young men moved about quickly, loading and unloading

tape drives for a large mainframe. They spoke loudly to one another to be heard above the

clacking of fast printers cranking out the data they had processed. The young men spoke

enthusiastically about their programs' abilities to identify voters not only by where they were

registered, but also by their demographic characteristics, the socio-economic characteristics

of the census tracts within which they resided, even the turnouts and voting rates of their

precincts. They seemed to have an "I know something you don't know" look in their eyes,

and they expressed confidence in their party's ability to win the upcoming gubernatorial

election. Our subsequent discussions made clear that the state party expected their database

would facilitate their locating new donors and activists in addition to performing customary

services in support of county and city party efforts. While they could not match the auxiliary

manpower that unions routinely provided the Democrats at this time, they intended that new

activists recruited that fall would become the core of political action groups would challenge

the democratic manpower on the ground in the near future.[11]

The impression we derived from recent telephone interviews with members of the RNC

and DNC "eCampaign" teams resembles what we came away at the state level 15 years

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[11] The Republican Party won the governorship in the 1990 election, and in 1994 they reelected the governor, retained their Senate majority, the won a majority in the House. They remain far more adept technologically than the State Democratic Party, and they credit much of their success to State Chairman Robert (Bob) Bennett, who assumed office in 1988. See http://www.ohiogop.org/Accomplishments.aspx?Section=82.

ago.[12] Although both teams were technologically adept, the Republican team seemed better

integrated with the regular party operation, more sophisticated politically, clearer about their

goals, and more professional and forthcoming about their plans,

First of all, the RNC lists the eCampaign team's telephone and fax numbers on its

"Contact Us" page and its team members' names can be found using the website's search

engine under "news releases." In contrast, the DNC's website lists no eCampaign team nor

does its search engine uncover one. Initial contact can be made only through the central

switchboard, and names can be inferred only from postings on the blog.

Second, the RNC Director could describe the 2004 eCampaign's strategies and goals

and give more detailed examples of results more easily than could our DNC informants.

Even though these differences in sophistication could merely reflect their positions in the

hierarchy, the Republicans clearly placed more emphasis on using the Internet for targeted

messaging and selective mobilization than did the Democrats. They had a core of 1.5 million

team leaders with 6 million team supporters. The former were mobilized primarily for efforts

that required action offline; the latter mainly for online actions and fund-raising. On the last

weekend of the campaign, for instance, the eCampaign e-mailed 25,000 reliable team leaders

ten names and numbers of targeted voters in competitive states to call using the excess (or

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[12] Interviews took place on September 12, 2005 with RNC eCampaign Director Mike
Turk, and with DNC eCampaign staffers, Josh McConaha and Jesse Berney.

unlimited) minutes on their personal cell phone. These included 75,000 from critical areas in

Ohio and 65,000 from Florida. The DNC e-mail list contained about 3 million voters. Our

interviewees' best example of mobilization was a successful campaign to inundate every

"instant" national poll with the "people's" judgment that John Kerry had won the first

presidential debate. Nevertheless, the DNC eCampaign did raise more money than the

Republicans via the Internet. The RNC estimates that only $19 of the $258 million it raised

came via the Internet. The DNC estimates that it raised $19 million via the Internet in

October alone. As in 2000, there is no reliable way to estimate how much money that the

Committees received by post or by other means was actually in response to solicitations via

e-mails.

Finally, the RNC Director explained that because of the prevalence of spam e-mails are

becoming less effective campaign tools. In future campaigns the RNC eCampaign plans to

place more reliance on newer information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as

instant messaging online, text messaging to cell phones, or possibly even "podcasts," in lieu

of e-mails. The eCampaign team is currently testing some of these techniques, not only for

content but also for effective styles of presentation. Indeed, those currently on RNC mailing

lists have been receiving different presentations of the same content over the course of this

year. A true professional, Mike Turk reported he has discussed various options with other

eCampaign professionals, including members of John Kerry's personal campaign team. The DNC staffers were more reticent about their plans. They would only say that the eCampaign team is exploring new tools and is seeking more recognition for itself as a distinct agency within the DNC.[13]

The evidence suggests that eCampaigns have become necessities rather than simple enhancements for nearly every competitive election for a major office. Whether or not e-mail will remain a principal tool for the next two presidential election campaigns remains to be seen. We do know that e-mail will fade away only when some new—and widespread—ICT can take its place. The versatility of the Internet and its ability to integrate ICTs, however, assures that eCampaigns are here to stay.

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[13] We have made numerous unsuccessful attempts to reach Joe Rospars, who heads the DNC eCampaign team.

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## APPENDIX 1: Coding Scheme

| 10 | | *Campaign news/update* |
|----|----|----|
| | 11 | **\<general news>**providing general campaign news such as phase/status of the race or camp, what is at the stake, what camp/candidate did or going to do, and etc |
| | 12 | **\<event/schedule>**providing information about upcoming National/Local event of the camp or Party organizations such as debate, forum, fundraising party, house party, local party events and etc. |
| | 13 | **\<endorsement 1>**noticing the endorsement of coalition groups, celebrities, and individuals for candidacy or issue position |
| | 14 | **\<endorsement 2>**presenting letters from the person or group that make endorsement about why he/she support the candidate and notion of asking support for the candidate |
| | 15 | **\<news coverage 1>**presenting news coverage that is important for the overall race or candidate |
| | 16 | **\<news coverage 2>**explaining the meaning/importance of the news and expected effect from it |
| | 17 | **\<news coverage 3>**Attaching news document or multimedia source in e-mail or present direct link to it (*3rd party news item only*) |
| | 18 | **\<poll result 1>**Providing polling result from diverse sources |
| | 19 | **\<poll result 2>** Explaining the meaning of the poll result or expectation from it |
| **20** | | *Issue position / policy agenda* |
| | 21 | **\<vision>**Presenting the broad vision of Presidency / Governing (consist of 100 words or over) |
| | 22 | **\<policy agenda>**Introducing specific policy agenda and explain why it is important |
| | 23 | **\<issue position>**explaining the candidate's position/view on current issues or political situation |
| | 24 | **\<comment/critique>**A comment/critique on the issues, political situation/event, of opposition candidates, or their supporters. |
| **30** | | *Speeches/Statement* |
| | 31 | **\<Letter from candidate>**Letter/message written by the candidate |
| | 32 | **\<multimedia message>**Message from the candidate that is presented in multimedia format (video/audio streaming) |
| | 33 | **\<script>**Attaching candidate's/campaign team's speech, statement, advertisement, news release with raw material in the e-mail |
| | 34 | **\<link>**direct link to the candidate's/campaign team's speech, statement, advertisement, news release(without long/further explanation) |
| **40** | | *website* |
| | 41 | **\<website update>**noticing new contents, link, or important subjects on campaign website |
| | 42 | **\<new sites>**Introducing independent website(s) that relate to the candidate or campaign |
| **50** | | *Participation* |
| | 51 | **\<contribution>**asking contribution to the candidate |
| | 52 | **\<participate physically>**asking to participate directly in campaign related events – physical presence/activity |
| | 53 | **\<volunteer>**asking to volunteer for campaign team, take leading role e.g., unpaid organizer or intern |
| | 54 | **\<mobilizing>**asking individual online/offline to persuade others to join/advocate for the candidate |
| | 55 | **\<Meetup 1>**providing local Meetup information |
| | 56 | **\<Meetup 2>**asking to participate in local Meetup event |
| | 57 | **\<Media events>**Informing of media events for specific program(s) that relate to candidate, campaign team or race, and asking to watch/observe the media program and/or tell others to watch/observe |
| **60** | | *Activities in online or any other communication method* |
| | 61 | **\<Blog 1>**providing information about/on the blog |
| | 62 | **\<Blog 2>**asking to use blog as another way of supporting /persuading others |
| | 63 | **\<petition>**Asking to sign a petition |
| | 64 | **\<Response TO>**Asking to send letters/e-mail or make a call to Editors/Officials responding to particular items in media, statement, speech, etc |
| | 65 | \<online poll>Asking to participate in online poll |
| | 66 | **\<feedback>**Asking to give idea/opinion to campaign team (with direct link) |
| | 67 | **\<online chat>** Asking to participate online chat with the candidate |
| | 68 | **\<forward the e-mail>** asking to forward the e-mail on get from the campaign team to others who may not already be receiving it |

APPENDIX 2: Rank Order **Correlations Across Three Periods (N=28 categories)**

| Spearman's rho | | Bush1 | Bush2 | Bush3 | DNC1 | DNC2 | DNC3 | GOP1 | GOP2 | GOP3 | Kerry1 | Kerry2 | Kerry3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bush1 | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .600** | .330 | .449* | .478* | .455* | .348 | .325 | .199 | .465* | .488** | .432* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .001 | .086 | .016 | .010 | .015 | .070 | .091 | .309 | .013 | .008 | .022 |
| Bush2 | Correlation Coefficient | .600** | 1.000 | .653** | .483** | .443* | .798** | .173 | .625** | .492** | .496** | .627** | .721** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 | . | .000 | .009 | .018 | .000 | .377 | .000 | .008 | .007 | .000 | .000 |
| Bush3 | Correlation Coefficient | .330 | .653** | 1.000 | .424* | .398* | .746** | .060 | .386* | .695** | .296 | .599** | .728** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .086 | .000 | . | .025 | .036 | .000 | .763 | .042 | .000 | .127 | .001 | .000 |
| DNC1 | Correlation Coefficient | .449* | .483** | .424* | 1.000 | .764** | .472* | .331 | .469* | .397* | .396* | .614** | .542** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .016 | .009 | .025 | . | .000 | .011 | .085 | .012 | .037 | .037 | .001 | .003 |
| DNC2 | Correlation Coefficient | .478* | .443* | .398* | .764** | 1.000 | .381* | .046 | .250 | .117 | .487** | .769** | .497** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .010 | .018 | .036 | .000 | . | .046 | .817 | .199 | .552 | .009 | .000 | .007 |
| DNC3 | Correlation Coefficient | .455* | .798** | .746** | .472* | .381* | 1.000 | .038 | .399* | .395* | .384* | .661** | .831** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .015 | .000 | .000 | .011 | .046 | . | .849 | .035 | .037 | .043 | .000 | .000 |
| GOP1 | Correlation Coefficient | .348 | .173 | .060 | .331 | .046 | .038 | 1.000 | .560** | .402* | .236 | -.133 | -.008 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .070 | .377 | .763 | .085 | .817 | .849 | . | .002 | .034 | .226 | .500 | .967 |
| GOP2 | Correlation Coefficient | .325 | .625** | .386* | .469* | .250 | .399* | .560** | 1.000 | .535** | .222 | .288 | .467* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .091 | .000 | .042 | .012 | .199 | .035 | .002 | . | .003 | .257 | .137 | .012 |
| GOP3 | Correlation Coefficient | .199 | .492** | .695** | .397* | .117 | .395* | .402* | .535** | 1.000 | .248 | .232 | .528** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .309 | .008 | .000 | .037 | .552 | .037 | .034 | .003 | . | .204 | .235 | .004 |
| Kerry1 | Correlation Coefficient | .465* | .496** | .296 | .396* | .487** | .384* | .236 | .222 | .248 | 1.000 | .469* | .515** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .013 | .007 | .127 | .037 | .009 | .043 | .226 | .257 | .204 | . | .012 | .005 |
| Kerry2 | Correlation Coefficient | .488** | .627** | .599** | .614** | .769** | .661** | -.133 | .288 | .232 | .469* | 1.000 | .755** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .008 | .000 | .001 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .500 | .137 | .235 | .012 | . | .000 |
| Kerry3 | Correlation Coefficient | .432* | .721** | .728** | .542** | .497** | .831** | -.008 | .467* | .528** | .515** | .755** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .022 | .000 | .000 | .003 | .007 | .000 | .967 | .012 | .004 | .005 | .000 | . |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed