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Blog's Growth in Presidential Candidates Campaign Coverage During the Democratic and Republican Nomination Process

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Running head: BLOGS' GROWTH IN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN COVERAGE

**Blogs' Growth in Presidential Candidates Campaign Coverage
during the Democratic and Republican Nomination Process**

By

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ABSTRACT

Blogs' growth has made them become useful media sources where people go to read the news. This research sought to examine what blogs offered to readers during the early part of the 2008 presidential nomination campaign from January 1 to March 5 by asking if the issues raised in the blogs elicited responses and comments in 2008 presidential candidates' *own* blogs during this same time period. In addition, I examined what issues raised in the new media blogs elicited response and coverage in well-known media blogs.

All posts on the following presidential candidates' blogs were analyzed: Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator John McCain, Senator Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. The following blogs were reviewed for posts that mentioned these candidates: *Daily Kos*, *The Huffington Post*, *The New York Times The Caucus*, *The Washington Post The Fix* and *The Washington Post The Trail*.

After analyzing over 7,600 posts from these five blogs, researched determined that the same topics were discussed on all these blogs. It also determined that the blogs did not reference one another within their posts. Based on the number of comments received on all posts these blogs proved to be a useful news source for individuals who wanted to stay abreast of the candidates' campaigning efforts for their party's nomination.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	6
Chapter 1: Blogs and their Importance.....	6
Research Question.....	9
Chapter 2: Literature Review – History of Blogs, Their Influence on Past Presidential Campaigns and Perspectives on the Most Popular Political Blogs.....	10
History of Blogs.....	10
Influence of Blogs in Past Political Campaigns.....	12
Political Blogs.....	13
Chapter 3: Research Components.....	18
Chapter 4: Research Findings.....	21
Candidates’ Blogs.....	21
Comments on Candidates’ Blogs’ Posts.....	22
Candidates Blogs’ Purpose.....	22
Positive vs. Negative.....	23
Major Articles that the Candidates Responded to on Their Blogs.....	25
Media Blogs Mentioned in the Candidates’ Blogs.....	28
Well-known Media Blogs.....	28
Well-known Media Blogs’ Posts.....	29
On the Candidates.....	29
Subject Matter of Posts.....	30
Positive vs. Negative.....	30

Major Articles that were Covered in Well-known Blogs.....	33
New Media Blogs Mentioned in Well-known Blogs.....	35
New Media Blogs.....	36
On the Candidates.....	36
Subject Matter of the Posts.....	38
Positive vs. Negative.....	38
Major Articles that were Covered in New Media Blogs.....	41
Well-known Media Blogs Mentioned in New Media Blogs.....	42
Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusion.....	43
References.....	45
Appendix A.....	48

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, political candidates and their campaigns are discussed every second on the Internet due to the advances of new media. Albert Rollis (2006) said "New media has changed the way people receive and engage with information, allowing those outside the centers of power the opportunity to challenge both corporate and political authorities, all while sitting in front of their computer terminals." Examples of new media are online videos, e.g., YouTube; podcasts – "a Web-based audio broadcast via an RSS feed, accessed by subscription over the Internet" (Merriam-Webster OnLine, 2007); wikis – "A collaborative website whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to it" (Merriam-Webster OnLine, 2007) and blogs, the focus of my research.

CHAPTER 1: BLOGS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

Blogs were chosen by Merriam-Webster as one of the ten most popular words of 2004. They defined a blog as "a Web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments and often hyperlinks provided by the writer."

According to a Pew Internet Study (Torio, 2005) one in ten Internet users have their own blog, posted a blog or commented on a posted blog. As of May, 2006, there were 42 million blogs on the Internet (Jost & Hipolit, 2006). Political blogs were created as an opportunity to speak out about national issues. Many were created after the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001. However, the 2004 presidential nomination campaign was pivotal for the legitimacy of blogs. Blogs and their followers captured attention as Howard Dean emerged as a presidential hopeful by fundraising for him and creating awareness of his candidacy. Yet, they were apparently unsuccessful in turning these efforts into actual votes to win him the Democratic presidential nomination. Further detail of the Dean blog campaign and its influence will be given in chapter two.

As the saying goes, history repeats itself. In these elections, blogs and social media have created a word-of-mouth and virtual marketing campaign for Republican candidate Ron Paul similar to the phenomenon that was created in 2004 for Howard Dean's campaign.

Ron Paul is a 72 year old, born in Pennsylvania but is a congressman from Texas. He attracted a multi-cultural, ageless, fan base and whose following can be attributed to the fact that he was the only Republican candidate who opposed the war in Iraq. A November 8, 2007, *USA Today* article stated, his followers "see themselves as the anti-establishment movement of 2008." The article also stated that Paul was able to raise in one day a total of \$4.3 million online, the largest sum ever collected online by a Republican candidate (N.A., 2007). Continuing Howard Dean's initiatives in 2004, Ron Paul's success has prompted every political candidate to create his or her own website. They all now in some way participate in social media outlets to gain awareness and have people attend their rallies.

But blogs are known to cut both ways. They bring to light fiercely and vehemently the good as well as the bad found in the candidates. They tend to focus on the negative and do not let an issue die until it has been addressed by the existing media and a response from the government given. A perfect example can be when Glen Reynolds from *Instapundit* and Josh Marshall from *Talking Points Memo* would not let Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott's comments go away without repercussion. On December 5, 2002, at former Senator Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday party, Senator Trent Lott praised his segregationist views (Kline & Burstein, 2005). These bloggers focused on this story bringing to light new information and soon afterward *Meet the Press* covered the story and eventually others in mainstream media did too; leading Lott to step down from becoming Senate Majority Leader in 2003.

In some instances, they set the record straight. When CBS' *60 Minutes II* aired a story on September 8, 2004, stating that President Bush had received special treatment during his service in the National Guard (Jost & Hipolit, 2006), it was bloggers who proved that these documents provided to CBS News were not completely accurate. There was information that

could not be verified or explained. By January 2005, CBS News had to admit that they did not fact check the documents. This resulted in the firing of the story's producer, the demotion of three executives that worked on the program and ultimately Dan Rather stepped down as the anchor of CBS' *Evening News*.

Finally, the recent media storm created by Senator Larry Craig's arrest and guilty plea is another way to demonstrate how blogs are perceived as powerful. Craig said he was innocent of any wrong doing and that his guilty plea came from being afraid of the media's investigation and what they were going to write about him. He blamed the story breaking from a blog though mainstream media credits a Washington D.C. newspaper, *Roll Call*, breaking the story on August 27 (Russell, 2007). *Roll Call* was indeed the one that broke the story but what Senator Craig referred to was a blog called *Blogactive* which published allegations that the Senator was gay back in October 2006 (Karnowski, 2007). Since then the Senator has had to respond to *Blogactive* and by doing so has given the blog more credibility.

Blogs are becoming a way people read their news. They no longer trust the media so they look to blogs for additional answers to get the complete story. They look to those who they feel do not have a hidden agenda, though most bloggers are bluntly biased. Blogs are so successful in covering politics because they go into further detail about the candidates and their platforms regarding all issues, not just the ones the major networks pick. They also allow people to post their comments and create a discussion. As an example, *The New York Times* *The Caucus* post entitled "Live Blogging the March 4 results" posted on March 4, 2008 created over 990 comments over the timeframe of three days.

Research Question

Blogs' growth has made them become trusted and tested media sources. Therefore, I was particularly interested to see how blogs covered the 2008 presidential campaign for the Democratic and Republican nominations.

My goal was to examine what blogs offered readers during the 2008 presidential campaign by asking if the issues raised in the new media blogs elicited responses and comments in 2008 presidential candidates' *own* blogs during the time period between January 1 and March 5. In addition, I reviewed what issues raised in these same blogs elicited response and coverage in the well-known media blogs.

I also reviewed which blogs as a whole elicited the most responses and the least. This allowed me to see the growth these blogs had during this time period and to investigate whether the topics discussed on these blogs were the same as those covered in the major media outlets blogs. The goal was to measure any correlation between the blogs and the candidates' performance in the various primaries elections.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW – HISTORY OF BLOGS, THEIR INFLUENCE ON PAST PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE MOST POPULAR POLITICAL BLOGS

As we have discussed blogs are web pages which consist of text posts that are cataloged by date and presented on the page in reverse chronological order - most recent at the top. The content of these posts can be based on any subject and usually provide insight into the author's thoughts, feelings and observations regarding the topic.

History of Blogs

Blogs were first defined in 1997 by Jorn Barger (Mcbride & Cason, 2006). The original purpose of blogs was to have someone post on their personal blog an edited version of existing web content they thought was important. Then they would provide their opinion on the selected content. Early bloggers would link to each others site and then Peter Merholz playfully developed the term “blogging” (Mcbride & Carson, 2006) to describe their community thus baptizing the birth of a new communications tool.

Early blogs were written by people who know how to create web pages from scratch. By 1999, a number of tools were released such as www.pitas.com and www.blogger.com that allowed anyone to create their own blog by providing them with easy to use templates. At that time only 100 blogs were known to exist. The first blog to create a following was kausfiles, a political blog created on *Slate* in 1999 by Mickey Kaus (Kline & Burstein, 2005).

In 2001, after the terrorist attacks of September 11 the country needed to express their feelings. They reached out via blogs to show their pro-war anti-terrorists sentiments. By 2002, blogs were starting to make an impact as discussed previously in chapter one when bloggers would not let Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott's praise for Senator Strom Thurmond's segregationist views go away without repercussion.

In 2003, Myspace.com teen blog site brought blogs into a whole new level. A Pew Internet and American Life Project survey found that in 2004 more than two million Americans had their own blog (Kline & Burstein, 2005). By this time, blogs were impacting political candidate campaigns. According to a Pew Research Center study, there were over 33 million readers of blogs that November (Kline & Burstein, 2005).

According to a Gallup Poll in February 2005, Internet users between ages 18-29 read blogs more than any other age groups. The poll also said that more democrats, compared to Republicans or Independents, read blogs frequently (Jost & Hopolit, 2006). However this represents only one third of users, most Internet users (two-thirds) still do not read blogs.

By 2006, the blog-monitoring web site Technorati, said the blogosphere doubles every six months and said that there were over 42 million blogs in existence. It also states that by the end of March 2006, daily blog postings had passed 1.4 million per day (Jost & Hopolit, 2006). The postings are a response to major news of the day. For example, major spike increases were found after Hurricane Katrina and the Duke Lacrosse scandal.

Reporters now expand the content of the article they wrote for a mainstream media outlet on that outlet's blog or on their own privately written blogs. In its May 8, 2006 issue *Time* magazine said "The Age of the Blog, the interactive globally connected medium of communication with revolutionary potential to make politics more democratic, businesses more productive and knowledge and culture more diffuse" (Jost & Hopolit, 2006).

Finally, a report issued by the Pew Internet & American Life Project in July 19, 2006 said that 72% of bloggers go online for political news. It also states that 58% of all Internet users do so as well. Another Pew Internet & American Life Project report issued in August of 2006 said that 26 million Americans use the Internet to get their political news compared to only 11 million back in July 2002.

Influence of Blogs in Past Political Campaigns

In 2003, the world of presidential campaigns changed when on March 15 the first official blog for a presidential candidate was created - Blog for America, the official blog of the Howard Dean for America presidential nomination campaign (Stone, 2004). Dean's blog was updated and maintained by staff, guest writers and contributors. But what really made the blog set itself apart was the number of comments it received. On average, Dean's blogs received about 2,300 comments per day (Stone, 2004). These were all read by the staff and some of the ideas reflected in these comments were then incorporated into a new blog. This showed Dean's supporters that they had really been heard and made them feel part of the campaign. Dean's blog was both a virtual meeting space and a place to generate buzz and excitement for his campaign.

After seeing how successful Howard Dean was in creating awareness of his candidacy and raising money for his campaign, everyone started to get into the game. Both parties allowed bloggers to attend the convention and to register as media representatives to cover their campaign (Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005). In the end Dean did not win the democratic nomination but his efforts showed candidates there was a whole new way of communicating to voters.

Once the nominations had been set, both presidential candidates had blogs of their own. According to Bichard (2006), blog readership increased by 58% during the 2004 president election. A content analysis of 1,309 blog postings posted on Incumbent President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry's websites during the 2004 presidential election indicated major differences between the types of blogs posted on these websites. The overall results showed that those blogs featured on Kerry's site more likely had a negative tone versus the ones found on Bush's site which tended to be positive. Kerry's site had blogs that focused on the candidate's ideology and opponent attacks while the ones on Bush's focused on the campaign happenings and messages of support. Almost one forth of all blog entries for both sites included quotes from the mainstream media and photos or graphics (Bichard, 2006).

Political Blogs

A Pew Research Center poll said that at least 11 million blog readers were regular readers of political blogs (Kline & Burstein 2005). This poll went on to say that 45% of Americans believed little or nothing of what they read in their daily newspapers. This is because mainstream media tends to only cover a narrow range of issues and only some of the candidates not all of them. Various studies over the last 30 years, have shown that mainstream media determines what the important issues are and by doing so set the agenda for the political campaign and debates (Kline & Burstein, 2005).

Political blogs came to the scene as the public started to feel disenfranchised with the way mainstream media discussed politics. During the crucial August period leading up the 2004 presidential election, the ten most popular political blogs collectively had 28 million visits from readers, which rivaled traffic to the three 24/7 online cable news networks. One of those, the liberal blog *Daily Kos*, drew 7 million reader visits alone that month, which beat Fox News' 5.7 million online visits (Kline & Burstein, 2005).

I have shown examples of how these blogs have been able to uncover a news story before the mainstream media did and how they are respected by politicians because of this fact. In July of 2007, Bill O'Reilly, a Fox News talk show host, attacked verbally during his show a convention of liberal bloggers that was in session in New York. The convention had been organized by liberal blog *Daily Kos*, bringing together hundreds of bloggers, journalists, political party insiders, and Democratic presidential candidates. O'Reilly called *Daily Kos* a "vicious far-left web site," and a war of the words broke out between him and *Daily Kos* bloggers (Rogers, 2005). Within a day, the Clinton campaign launched a pro-Kos campaign on their site to gain some support showing how important blogs are to the presidential candidates.

Candidates know that they can use political blogs to test out their ideas and campaign slogans. It is an effective tool to research public opinion. A quote given by James P. Rubin, John Kerry's foreign policy adviser to a *New York Times Magazine* article sums this up quite

nicely “They’re [blogs] the first thing I read when I get up in the morning and the last thing I read at night” (Kline & Burstein, 2005).

Although there are many political blogs the ones that are most read and talked about are the following: *Daily Kos*, *The Huffington Post*, *Instapundit*, and *Talking Points Memo*.

Daily Kos, a liberal blog, first appeared on May 26, 2002. It is run by Markos Moulitsas a Gulf War veteran also known as “Kos”. The blog gained national recognition when the Iraq war broke. He was one of the first to be critical of the war. This blog has been known to be successful at fundraising for candidates and for correct fact-checking of news stories, political statements and political campaigns. It averages 15 million visitors a month. *Daily Kos* is run by a staff of two -- Moulitsas and a programmer. According to the website, “about a dozen contributing editors contribute content for the site, with 3-4 new editors being chosen from the *Daily Kos* community every year.” Based on a quick analysis of a week’s posts (November 13 – November 19, 2007), the site had 208 posts that generated 26, 916 comments - an average of 129 comments per post.

The Huffington Post is run by Arianna Huffington who in the 1970s was a columnist and critic in London, then moved to the United States in the 1980s and became an author. Her blog first appeared on May 9, 2005 and within a year rose to the top of the political blogs. It is estimated that more than 3.3 million visitors go to the site every month (Jost & Hopolit, 2006). Technorati states that *The Huffington Post* is the fifth most linked blog on the Internet (Graham, 2007). It is also considered a liberal blog; however, compared to the Daily Kos it is more conservative. Arianna’s blog is a little different from the other ones because it not only discusses politics but also topics such as business, entertainment, living and media. It also has a blog that is called *Off the Bus* which as the website states it focuses on “ground level coverage of campaign 08.” *Off the Bus* had 46 posts a week during the time span of November 13 through November 19, 2007. There were a total of 1,188 comments for these posts averaging 26 per post.

Huffington's main politics blog had a total of 248 posts, for the same time period, with 9,768 comments, averaging 39 per post.

Instapundit first appeared on August 5, 2001 and is run by Glenn Reynolds a law professor at the University of Tennessee. It is a conservative blog that has about 4 million visits each month. Glenn Reynolds, himself has noted "Prior to World War II, Big Media was countervailed by other institutions: political parties, churches, labor unions, even widespread political discussion groups. The weblog phenomenon may be viewed as the return of such influences – a broadening of the community of discourse to include, well, the community (Kline, D. & Burstein, D. 2005)." During the time frame November 13 - November 19, 2007, *Instapundit*'s Glenn Reynolds posted 322 blogs on his site. His site does not allow comments.

Talking Points Memo is run by Josh Marshall and was launched in November 2000 during the Florida recount. The blog has become so successful that it was able to offspring specific topic related blogs that have also become successful. These are *TPMCafe.com* launched in 2005, *TPMmuckraker* and *TPM Election Central* both launched in 2006. *Talking Points Memo*'s blog only had 108 posts during the same November 13 – November 19 week. This blog does not allow for readers to comment. However their sister blog dedicated fully to the election, *TPM Election Central*, does allow for commenting and it had 106 blogs during this time frame with 2,754 comments averaging 26 comments per post.

To keep up with the blog phenomenon some mainstream media have created their own political blog sites on their websites to compete. Based on the number of posts and comments they seem to have a strong following. However, in some instances they have chosen not to follow in the blog phenomenon and just report elaborate and detailed versions of their stories online such as Fox News.

The major mainstream media political influencers are CNN, Fox News, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Below is detailed information on their online 2008 political campaign coverage.

CNN's *Political Ticker*'s audience is primarily moderate. Found on CNN's website, the *Political Ticker* first appeared in September 2006. It describes itself as the "hottest destination for the latest political news with dispatches, behind-the-scenes reports, and expert commentary, 24-7" (*Political Ticker*, 2007). It had 158 blogs posted between November 13 and November 19, 2007. These blogs created 8,444 comments averaging 53 comments per blog.

FOX News' *You Decide 2008* is the website's section for the 2008 campaign coverage. This website does not have a blog. Fox News' website's audience is primarily conservative just like its television channel. The television network was launched on October 7, 1996 by Rupert Murdoch as a response to liberal media to create "fair and balanced" news (Wikipedia, 2007). The website is a companion to the television channel featuring in dept breaking news stories as well as more detailed information on the stories reported on television.

The New York Times is a daily newspaper that is distributed internationally. Known for its liberal media slant, the paper has a blog dedicated to the 2008 presidential campaign named *The Caucus*. This blog had 50 posts during the same week of November 13 through November 19, 2007. 3,030 comments were generated for the week averaging out 61 comments per post.

The Washington Post is the largest newspaper in Washington D.C and was founded in 1877 (*The Washington Post*, 2007). It is also known to be a liberal newspaper. *The Washington Post* hosts nine blogs on its site that deal with politics. They are: *Behind the Numbers*, *Capitol Briefing*, *Channel 08*, *The Fact Checker*, *The Fix*, *The Sleuth*, *Stumped*, *The Talk* and *The Trail*. The ones that are primarily about the election are: *Channel 08* - covering ads and TV coverage of the presidential campaign, *The Fix* – an opinion based blog written by Chris Cilliza and *The Trail* – offers day by day coverage of the 2008 campaign trail.

Chris Cilliza, blogger for *The Fix*, began his blog on September 25, 2005. Prior to joining Washingtonpost.com, he was at *Roll Call*, a newspaper covering campaign politics. His posts for the week of November 13 to November 19, 2007 were 15 blogs which created 1,373 comments an average of 92 comments per blog.

There is no specific date as to when *The Trail* began its blogs but the website's archives start as of July 24, 2007. For the week of November 13 to Monday, November 19 it had a total of 42 blogs with 743 comments. The average number of comments per blog was 18.

Channel '08 was created on May 3, 2007 with the purpose of looking at the 2008 presidential campaign through a video camera. The posts include multimedia blogs from various websites including those found on YouTube. *Channel 08* had a total of 16 blogs for the same period with a total of 154 comments averaging about 10 comments a blog.

If we were to combine the results for these three *Washington Post* blogs for this period, we would have a total of 73 blogs generating a total of 2,270 comments.

As previously stated in this chapter, blogs are a new media source for readers to get their news - especially politics. Political blogs showed how influential they were during the 2004 presidential election when both parties allowed bloggers to attend their conventions and to register as media representatives. During that election, blog readership increased by 58% cementing their importance. Since then blogs have continued to grow and have led the 2008 presidential candidates to have their own blogs to get their message out, fundraise and to influence the public to vote for them.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH COMPONENTS

A comprehensive content analysis of new media blogs as well as existing media blogs was done to make comparisons amongst these to see what has been written about the presidential candidates during the primary elections and what the presidential candidates felt they needed to respond to in an effort to either set the record straight or make their point of view heard.

This content analysis was done on blog postings between January 1, 2008 and March 5, 2008. During this time period 37 states conducted their primaries and have preliminarily elected their presidential nominations.

The new media blogs that were chosen to be reviewed during this period were:

- *Daily Kos*
- *The Huffington Post*

The well-known media blogs chosen were:

- *The New York Times The Caucus*
- *The Washington Post The Fix*
- *The Washington Post The Trail*

The political candidates that were followed at these blogs and websites were:

- For the Democratic Party – Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Barack Obama
- For the Republican Party – Senator John McCain and Mitt Romney

The categories that were chosen for the content analysis of each daily blog entry are as follows:

- Date
- Post Entry Number
- Post Title
- Post Author – Written by Blog Owner or Another Blogger

- Post Tone
 - Positive
 - Negative
- Number of Post Comments
- Primary Topic of Post
 - Campaign Trail
 - Ads
 - Endorsements
 - Fundraising
 - Campaign Wins
 - Attacking Opposition
 - Defending Attacks

A copy of the sample coding sheet can be found in appendix A. Once all blog posts were coded, the data was analyzed for the following:

- Candidates' blogs
 - Number of posts and comments
 - Purpose
 - Positive vs. negative
 - Major articles that the candidates responded to on their blogs
 - Media blogs mentioned
- Well-known media blogs
 - Number of posts and comments
 - On the candidates
 - Subject matter of posts
 - Positive vs. negative
 - Major articles that were covered in all blogs

- New media blogs
 - Number of posts and comments
 - On the candidates
 - Subject matter of posts
 - Positive vs. negative
 - Major articles that were covered in blogs
 - Major articles that were not covered in well-known blogs

Once the results were tabulated, the findings were reviewed to see what blogs offered readers during the 2008 presidential campaign for their parties' nomination and to establish if there was any correlation between the blogs and the candidates' performance in the various primaries elections.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

My topic could not have been timelier in this year's election. Who would have thought when I signed up to do this research in the fall of 2007 that we would have the most unpredictable electoral primaries since the 1960s? In March 2008 there was no clear nominee from the Democratic candidates, which was thought to have been determined by the Super Tuesday February 5 primaries. Meanwhile, the Republican nomination had a frontrunner since mid January when originally all the blogs and the candidates themselves thought that the Republicans would be the ones that would be in turmoil till the convention instead of the Democrats.

Candidates' Blogs

It was interesting to see the major differences on how the candidates used their blogs on their websites. Hands down the most impressive blog of them all was Senator Barack Obama's. However it had a great fault that it only archived two pages of posts a day the equivalent of one day's posts. So in the beginning I was unable to capture the first week of his posts. Since then his website now archives ten days of posts, the equivalent of one week's posts. He is the only candidate of the four followed that did not archive all of the blog posts.

Even with the fact that I was unable to find twelve days of Senator Obama's blogs, his campaign out posted the other candidates by at least 17% (compared to Senator Clinton) and by 97% (compared to Senator McCain). The candidates' total posts for the period between January 1 and March 5, 2008 were as follow:

Candidate	Total Posts
Hillary Clinton	153
John McCain	27
Barack Obama	897
Mitt Romney	43*

*Romney's campaign stopped blogging on 2/7/08

Comments on Candidates' Blog's Posts

It is truly amazing the number of comments that all these blogs created. If we combine the comments from all the candidates' blogs we have a total of 275,118; an average of 246 comments per post. However, if we look closely at each of the candidates we find the following: that the candidate with the most comments per post is Senator John McCain with 405 comments. In second place, is Senator Obama with an average of 268 comments per post followed by Senator Clinton with 157, and Romney with only 33 per post. The post that generated the most comments for Senator McCain was the one that confirms him as the presidential nominee for the Republican Party with 1,545 comments. Senator Obama's posts calling for volunteers create many comments however there was no one particular post that could be singled out as Senator McCain's did.

Candidates' Blogs' Purpose

Each candidate has used his or her blog differently. Senator Obama has used his blog to clearly create a grassroots campaign. His blogs main purpose was to organize people and to let them know what was happening on the campaign trail. Over 60% of the posts were created with this purpose. I grouped his posts into four main groups and the distribution was as follows: 22% of the posts were directed to his volunteers to call potential voters, to donate, to vote or to purchase merchandise. 39% discussed campaign trail events, campaign wins, new ads and television appearances. 31% discussed articles found in newspapers around the country about his candidacy, endorsements, debate and poll information. Finally, 8% focused on his platform, statements made towards attacks from the opposition or about major world events.

Senator Hillary Clinton's blog was unimpressive because it seemed that she never had a clear vision for it. With the exception of a daily post named the Hubdate all other posts were not consistent. The Hubdate was a mini capsule that had the following sections in it: making news today, if you watch one thing today, previewing today, recapping yesterday, and in case you

missed it. The majority of her posts, 37%, focused on her experience and mentioned the downfalls of her opponent. 30% focused on the campaign trail, 21% on endorsements and only 12% focused on volunteers.

Mitt Romney's blog entitled *Five Brothers* for his five sons, seemed to only exist with the purpose to say that it had a blog. The posts were written by his sons and they only discussed what they were doing on the campaign trail, wins, or television appearances – 70%. The blog was not used for direct requests for volunteers or donors with the exception of two posts selling t-shirts and two asking people to get out the vote (9%). One surprising post showed personal pictures of the family taken during the summer of 2007 (2%). I don't know what the purpose of that post was except to show that they seemed like a happy group. The rest of the posts focused on providing very limited debate and endorsement information – 19%.

Senator John McCain's blog was small in numbers yet it had a clear purpose. The posts were created to let his base know the key points of his campaign, the campaign trail and his campaign wins (41%) as well as debate results and endorsements (37%). Only two posts were used to rally for votes (7%). The rest of the posts were used to defend him against personal attacks from the press (15%).

Positive vs. Negative

In general, the candidates were very positive on their blogs. After reading all the posts, there was a clear leader that emerged not only from an inspirational point of view but also from being the least negative of all – Senator Barack Obama.

Senator Barack Obama's Blog

Posted February 28, 2008 at 12:48PM by Sam Graham-Felsen

“Here is Senator Obama’s statement on reaching one million donors: When I announced my candidacy a little over a year ago, I knew we wouldn’t be able to compete unless hundreds of thousands of ordinary people got involved and took a personal stake in this campaign. As of today, over one million people have donated – an extraordinary outpouring that has exceeded everybody’s expectations.”

Out of the 897 posts only ten posts show some negativity by responding to opponent’s attacks; the equivalent of 1.12%.

Senator Barack Obama's Blog

Posted February 22, 2008 at 1:58PM by Sam Graham-Felsen

“Barack Obama responds to McCain’s attack: John McCain would give us four more years of the same Bush-McCain policies that have failed U.S. interests and the Cuban people for the last fifty years. My policy will be based on the principle of liberty for the Cuban people...I am confident that the American people will choose the promise of the future over the failed policies and predictable political attacks of the past.”

On the contrary, Senator Hillary Clinton was much more negative in choice of words and singled out Senator Barack Obama directly in 30 of her 157 posts – 19.11%. The tone of the posts was cynical and at times belittling.

Senator Hillary Clinton's Blog

Posted March 3, 2008 at 9:19AM by Howard Wolfson

“HUBdate...In case you missed it – jury selection begins today in the political corruption trial of Antoin “Tony” Rezko, Sen. Obama’s “political patron” and friend of 17 years.”

Senator Hillary Clinton's Blog

Posted March 4, 2008 at 9:29AM by Howard Wolfson

“HUBdate...Making News – Nafta and Rezko weigh on Obama... Obama talks a lot, but answers little...Obama on the hot seat...”

On the Republican side both candidates attacked their opposition only a few times on their blogs: Romney twice (4.65%) and Senator McCain once (3.70%). Romney’s blog no longer exists online and Senator McCain’s blog stopped archiving. It now only hosts posts for a month.

Major Articles that the Candidates Responded to on Their Blogs

Of the candidates only two addressed major stories about them that appeared in the press: Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain.

After the February 21 debate in Texas, the media and opponents questioned the comments made during the debate by Senator Barack Obama regarding an anecdote about an Army captain. The campaign itself did not respond however it did post an article from *ABC News* that defended the comments made during the debate. The post generated 196 comments. Below is an excerpt from this post:

Senator Barack Obama's Blog

Posted February 22, 2008 at 02:17PM by Sam Graham-Felsen

“ABC News does a fact check....’The Captain has spoken to Sen. Obama, he says, but this anecdote was relayed to Obama through an Obama staffer. I find that Obama’s anecdote checks out...I might suggest those on the blogosphere upset about this story would be better suited directing their ire at those responsible for this problem...’”

In Senator John McCain’s case, *The New York Times*’ front page article of February 21 entitled “For McCain, Self-Confidence on Ethics Poses Its Own Risk” created a media storm.

“Mr. McCain’s confidence in his ability to distinguish personal friendships from compromising connections was at the center of questions advisers raised about Ms. Iseman. The lobbyist, a partner at the firm Alcalde & Fay, represented telecommunications companies for whom Mr. McCain’s commerce committee was pivotal. Her clients contributed tens of thousands of dollars to his campaigns...A former campaign adviser described being instructed to keep Ms. Iseman away from the senator at public events, while a Senate aide recalled plans to limit Ms. Iseman’s access to his offices. In interviews, the two former associates said they joined in a series of confrontations with Mr. McCain, warning him that he was risking his campaign and career. Both said Mr. McCain acknowledged behaving inappropriately and pledged to keep his distance from Ms. Iseman. The two associates, who said they had become disillusioned with the senator, spoke independently of each other and provided details that were corroborated by others.”

Senator McCain's campaign response was swift on their blog. That afternoon campaign manager, Rick Davis, posted a letter to McCain supporters:

Senator John McCain's Blog

Posted February 21, 2008 at 3:20PM by Michael Palmer

Letter from Rick Davis...“Well, here we go. We could expect attacks were coming; as soon as John McCain appeared to be locking up the Republican nomination, the liberal establishment and their allies at *New York Times* have gone on the attack. Today's front-page *New York Times* story is particularly disgusting – an un-sourced hit-and-run smear campaign designed to distract from the issues at stake in this election.....John McCain has a 24-year record of serving our country with honor and integrity. He has led the charge to limit the money and influence of the special interests in politics and stomp out corruption. His life and his record prove just how preposterous the smear by the *New York Times* really is... We are going to need your help today, and your continued help in the future to have the resources to respond. We'll never match the reach of a front-page *New York Times* article, but with your immediate help today, we'll be able to respond and defend our nominee from the liberal attack machine.”

As the above excerpt shows, it was an effective use of the blog to defend McCain as well as rally for support. The post generated 521 comments.

Media Blogs Mentioned in the Candidates Blogs

Of the blogs that were researched, although they are predominant in their field, they did not appear that heavily in the candidates' blogs. Senator Barack Obama mentioned once each of the following in his blog: *Daily Kos*, *The Huffington Post*, and *The Washington Post The Fix*. Senator Hillary Clinton mentioned *The Washington Post The Fix* twice in her blog. The Republican candidates did not mention any blogs at all.

Well-known Media Blogs

There were two well known newspapers' blogs that was the focus of my research: *The New York Times The Caucus* and *The Washington Post's The Fix* and *The Trail* blogs. Of these three blogs I was surprised to see that *The Caucus* was more respectful to the candidates in their posts compared to *The Trail* which was more sarcastic in tone.

The Washington Post The Trail

Posted January 2, 2008 at 6:44PM by Michael D. Shear

“Perhaps it's too late for Mitt Romney to make the press happy, but he's certainly giving it his all. This time with Blow Pops. Yes, those lollipops with bubblegum in the center. His campaign passed them out to exhausted reporters on the plane from Cedar Rapids to Mason City. I got cherry. Someone else got grape.

Somebody made a joke about how he thinks we're all suckers. Good point.”

The Fix was mostly neutral. Chris Cilizza, the author of the blog, never really gave a straight personal opinion. *The Trail* highlighted posts from *The Fix* but *The Fix* did not do the same for *The Trail* on its blog.

Well-known Media Blogs' posts

When these blogs were compared in sheer numbers of posts and comments, it was a mixed bag which blog came in first. If we only count total number of posts during the pre-determined period then *The Trail* came in first with 1001. In second place was *The Caucus* with 833 and in third was *The Fix* with only 159. If we were to compare by number of comments than first place would go to *The Caucus* with 79,628, second place for *The Trail* 31,112, and third was *The Fix* with 25,423. There was only one significant increase in posts per day and that was for *The Trail* which had a total of 114 posts for February 5 compared to the average 12 posts per day. We can attribute the spike in posts to February 5, Super Tuesday, when 21 primaries were held.

On the Candidates

In all the blogs, we noticed that a percentage of the posts were written to be all encompassing of the major candidates when discussing specific campaign trail events, covering the debates, primary polls and results as well as making comparisons between the candidates. These posts were a wash because they did not stand for something specific that could be tied to a particular candidate so although they pertained to the election coverage they were not reviewed in detail.

The following table shows the breakdown of coverage by candidate per blog:

Candidate	<i>NYT The Caucus</i>	<i>WP The Trail</i>	<i>WP The Fix</i>
Hillary Clinton	32.05%	28.70%	22.01%
John McCain	15.64%	21.53%	13.22%
Barack Obama	26.41%	30.27%	16.35%
Mitt Romney	11.54%	10.30%	3.77%

The above table shows that all three blogs covered the Democratic candidates more frequently than the Republican Candidates. As far as who got the most coverage it varies per blog. Senator Clinton was the favored candidate in *The Caucus* as well as *The Fix* but *The Trail* covered Senator Obama more in its blog. All blogs covered Romney the least.

Subject Matter of Posts

All three blogs focused mostly on covering the candidates' campaign trails as well as their primary wins. It seemed that all three blogs had the same particular interest when covering a candidate. For example, when covering Senator Obama they all focused mostly on the endorsements he received. The percentage of posts was higher for him on these at all three posts compared to the other candidates. Senator Clinton's focus was on her personality and whether or not she should give up. Senator McCain was portrayed as the comeback kid and most posts were questioning whether or not he could bring the Republican Party together. Mitt Romney was never really considered by the blogs with only a total of 117 posts of 1,190 the equivalent of 9.83%. Of these posts most focused on the few Romney wins and his withdrawal from the campaign.

Positive vs. Negative

Surprisingly, research has shown that only 20.47% of all posts found on these three blogs are negative. The rest were positive or neutral in nature. The negative posts mostly covered the negative attacks between the candidates on the campaign trail or issues surrounding the supporters of their campaign i.e. Antoin Rezko an Obama supporter getting indicted or Robert Johnson, supporter of Senator Hillary Clinton, questioning Senator Obama's positions.

The Washington Post The Fix

Posted January 6, 2008 at 9:49AM by Chris Cillizza

“Mitt Romney: The clearest loser from either of last night's debates was Romney, who watched in horror as every other candidate on stage (other than Rep. Ron Paul) decided to gang up on him. Huckabee took the first shots, claiming that Romney was distorting comments he had made about the "arrogance" of the Bush foreign policy, and it went downhill from there. McCain, Fred Thompson and Giuliani all attacked Romney at one time or another during the debate, an onslaught that left the former Massachusetts governor clearly rattled as he tried to fend off incoming from all directions. What was clear from last night's debate is that the other candidates in this race just don't like Romney all that much.”

The Washington Post The Trail

Posted January 13, 2008 at 6:24PM by Perry Bacon Jr.

“Clinton, Obama Campaigns Spar Over Remarks - Continuing what has become an escalating fight between the two camps over black voters in South Carolina, billionaire mogul Bob Johnson, one of Sen. Hillary Clinton's most prominent African American supporters, mocked Sen. Barack Obama's hopeful rhetoric and suggested Obama was "doing something in the neighborhood" at a time when Clinton and her husband Bill were working on civil rights issues... But while she [Clinton] criticized Obama on a television show she filmed from Columbia, her tone in public appearances here was markedly different, particularly when she appeared at a black church service, where she declared herself "proud" of Obama.”

The New York Times The Caucus

Posted February 19, 2008 at 8:20AM by Ariel Alexovich

“Mrs. Clinton lately has been attacking Mr. Obama in her stump speeches, accusing him of stealing lines in his speeches from his political supporters, as well as pressing him for more details on his real estate deal with the indicted Antoin Rezko.”

In order of most posts rated negative the blogs were ranked as follows: *The Caucus*, *The Trail* and *The Fix*. The candidate with the highest number of negative posts across all three blogs was Senator Hillary Clinton, followed by Senator John McCain, Senator Barack Obama, and Mitt Romney. However, if we were to look at the percentage of negative posts against total posts per candidate the order changes a bit.

The New York Times The Caucus

Candidate	Positive	Negative	Posts	% Positive	% Negative
Clinton	77	48	125	61.60	38.40
McCain	45	16	61	73.77	26.23
Obama	91	12	103	88.35	11.65
Romney	25	20	45	55.56	44.44

The Washington Post The Fix

Candidate	Positive	Negative	Posts	% Positive	% Negative
Clinton	26	9	35	74.29	25.71
McCain	14	7	21	66.67	33.33
Obama	18	8	26	69.23	30.77
Romney	5	1	6	83.33	16.67

The Washington Post The Trail

Candidate	Positive	Negative	Posts	% Positive	% Negative
Clinton	128	56	184	69.57	30.43
McCain	104	34	138	75.36	24.64
Obama	164	30	194	84.54	15.46
Romney	47	19	66	71.21	28.79

Major Articles that were Covered in Well-known Blogs

All three blogs covered the campaign trail robustly and in the same fashion. Only one major story was significant enough to receive extra coverage – *The New York Times* article “For McCain, Self-Confidence on Ethics Poses Its Own Risk.” *The Fix* mentioned the article three times while *The Trail* mentioned it five times. Interestingly *The New York Times The Caucus* only mentioned it twice.

The Washington Post The Trail

Posted February 21, 2008 at 3:52PM by Mary Ann Akers

“Just as the Clinton campaign used last summer's cleavage controversy to rally empathetic supporters to dig in their pockets, the McCain camp is doing the same in its attack against the New York Times, which was first to publish this week's explosive story about McCain's close ties to lobbyist Vicki Iseman...The bottom line, Davis wrote, "We need your help to counteract the liberal establishment and fight back against the New York Times by making an immediate contribution today." That line of the email conveniently provides a link to a page on McCain's campaign web site where one can donate generously to support the Arizona Republican's presidential quest.”

The New York Times The Caucus

Posted February 21, 2008 at 8:51AM by Ariel Alexovich

“Reaction has been swift to an article in The New York Times detailing John McCain's ties to Vicki Iseman, a Washington lobbyist who championed her clients' interests in front of the Senate commerce committee headed by Mr. McCain...While we're on the topic of ethics, Mr. McCain on Wednesday continued attacking Barack Obama, his potential rival in the general election, for engaging in what he calls 'Washington doublespeak'.”

The Washington Post The Fix

Posted February 21, 2008 at 4:20PM by Chris Cillizza

“What this incident may do – again assuming that nothing more damaging emerges over the coming days – is to energize conservatives behind McCain in a way they might not have been otherwise.”

New Media Blogs Mentioned in Well-known Blogs

Unfortunately, only one post from a new media blog, *Daily Kos*, was mentioned in *The Trail*. The post asks Michigan Democrats to vote for Mitt Romney during their primary since their votes do not count anyway.

The Washington Post The Trail

Posted January 12, 2008 at 11:54AM by Jose Antonio Vargas

“When it comes to the Democratic primaries, the liberal blogosphere – aka the netroots – is a divided house...Markos Moulitsas, founder of Daily Kos, has outlined a somewhat radical proposal: Since Michigan’s upcoming Democratic primary on January 15 is essentially meaningless – the Democratic National Committee stripped the Automotive State of its delegates – why don’t Democrats vote for...Mitt Romney?...In an email, Moulitsas told *The Trail*: ‘...The longer the GOP field remains fragmented, the longer these fault lines are exposed for all to see’.”

New Media Blogs

There are two new media blogs that were part of the research *Daily Kos* and *The Huffington Post*. *Daily Kos* had a total of 1,548 posts for the time period researched compared to *The Huffington Post*'s posts which almost doubled that of the *Daily Kos* with 3,028 for the same time period of January 1 through March 5, 2008.

Blog	Total Posts	Total Comments	Average Comments Per Blog
<i>Daily Kos</i>	1, 548	133,919	86.51
<i>The Huffington Post</i>	3,028	173,647	57.35

Although *The Huffington Post* had the most posts per the time period as well as comments, the average comment per post was less than that of the *Daily Kos*. *Daily Kos* averages per post 51% more comments than *The Huffington Post*.

On the Candidates

Both blogs focused on the Democratic candidates compared to the Republican ones. Overall, Senator Barack Obama was the candidate that was most covered by these blogs with Mitt Romney being the least covered. The table below shows the breakdown per candidate for the *Daily Kos* (DK) and *The Huffington Post* (HP) blogs:

Candidate	DK Posts	% DK Posts	HP Posts	% HP Posts
Hillary Clinton	61	24.21	327	38.93
John McCain	85	33.73	103	12.26
Barack Obama	92	36.51	384	45.71
Mitt Romney	14	05.55	26	03.10

As the results show Senator Obama consistently receives over a third of posts in both blogs and in *The Huffington Post* he captures almost half of the media coverage.

Daily Kos

Posted February 5, 2008 at 9:08PM by Kos

“Huge night for Obama. Obama has at this point, won 11 states of 22 in play. Worst-case scenario, he’s already won half. If he picks up Alaska, which I suspect he will, he wins the battle of the states.”

The Huffington Post

Posted January 3, 2008 at 9:30PM by Arianna Huffington

“...And the Clintons -- their Hillary-as-incumbent-strategy sputtering -- followed the Bush blueprint in Iowa and played the fear card again and again and again. Be afraid of Obama, they warned us. Be afraid of something new, something different. He might meet with our enemies. His middle name is Hussein. He went to a madrassa school. A vote for him would be like rolling the dice, the former president said on *Charlie Rose*. And the people of Iowa heard him, and chose to roll the dice. Obama's win might not have legs. Hope could give way to fear once again. But, for tonight at least, it holds a mirror up to the face of America, and we can look at ourselves with pride.”

Subject Matter of Posts

Both blogs showed similar interest in following the candidates on the campaign trail. Where *Daily Kos* focused more on covering individual state polling results and the candidates' wins, *The Huffington Post* focused more on why people were voting for one candidate versus another. Both blogs had a great number of blogs that did not directly cover the campaigns but instead on general political issues such as the mortgage crisis, the Iraq War and the economy.

One significant difference between both blogs was how much the bloggers who created the sites actually post blogs. Kos is still heavily involved in posting where Huffington has taken more of a leadership position and only posts occasionally. Kos posted 212 times where Huffington only posted 26 times during the same time period. Kos out-posted her 8 to 1.

Positive vs. Negative

Both blogs showed that their posts from an overall perspective show that positive posts on the candidates edged out the negative ones by only a few percentage points; mainly due to the positive blogging for presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama. Similar to the well-known media blogs, the negative posts mostly covered the negative attacks between the candidates on the campaign trail or issues surrounding the supporters of their campaign or disagreements with their platforms.

When the results are broken down by candidate both blogs show all the candidates in a significant negative light with the exception of Senator Obama.

Daily Kos Breakdown

Candidate	DK Positive	DK Negative	DK Posts	DK % Positive	DK % Negative
Clinton	22	39	61	36.07	63.93
McCain	25	60	85	29.41	70.59
Obama	77	15	92	83.70	16.30
Romney	10	4	14	71.43	28.57

Daily Kos

Posted January 11, 2008 at 11:28AM by Kos

“Let me answer some feedback on the Mitt for Michigan campaign we've started here. This isn't a pro-Romney effort. We're not saying, "Romney is the best of their lot". Now granted, Romney is pretty much anything to everyone, the guy has no core principles, and he'll sell out his kids (the way he's selling out their inheritance) in a heartbeat if it meant a few more votes. His record makes that clear. So who knows what he believes? I doubt he himself knows. But that's irrelevant to this effort...we're pushing Romney because at the end of the day, Romney is spending a lot of money on ads trashing his fellow Republicans. We *want* more of that money spent trashing his fellow Republicans. We want an unsettled field with Republicans fragmented and fighting.”

Daily Kos

Posted January 30, 2008 at 1:09PM by Kos

“It’s a bit pathetic seeing Hillary Clinton’s campaign desperately trying to attach significance to her Florida “victory”, and she’s pinned those efforts on the claim that Obama broke a pledge to campaign in the state by running a national ad that just so happened ran in Florida, give that the state is part of our nation.”

As you can see from the above table, Senator Clinton and Senator McCain both had over two-thirds of negative posts compared to Senator Obama who barely had a fifth. When compared to *The Huffington Post* these results are basically the same as shown below.

The Huffington Post Breakdown

Candidate	HP Positive	HP Negative	HP Posts	HP % Positive	HP % Negative
Clinton	128	199	327	39.14	60.86
McCain	33	70	103	32.04	67.96
Obama	315	69	384	82.03	17.97
Romney	8	18	26	30.77	69.23

The Huffington Post

Posted January 7, 2008 at 3:49PM by Arianna Huffington

“Hillary Clinton has apparently decided on which lines of attack to use against Barack Obama in New Hampshire: all of them...Clinton and her surrogates are attacking from every direction, hoping something will stick...Let’s take a look at the dirty laundry list. Put on your galoshes, the mud is very thick...”

Major Articles that were Covered in New Media Blogs

Research showed that again all issues covered in the well-known media blogs were also found in the new media blogs. The only article that jumped out was again *The New York Times* article “For McCain, Self-Confidence on Ethics Poses Its Own Risk.” The *Daily Kos* blog referenced the article nine times in its posts – none attributed to Kos himself.

Daily Kos

Posted February 20, 2008 at 6:01PM by Scout Finch

“McCain may have just been side-swiped. The NY Times is reporting that several former aides claim that McCain was suspected of having an intimate relationship with telecom lobbyist, Vicki Iseman during his 2000 campaign for President. The Maverick may have been cheating on his wife *and* voters ---- all at the same time. How long before McCain is forced to make a ‘I did not have sex with that woman’ type statement? Or worse yet.....a confession? As of now, they are both denying the story. Regardless of whether they were having an intimate affair or not, didn't John McCain realize that it was inappropriate for a telecommunications lobbyist to be ‘turning up with him at fund-raisers, in his offices and aboard a client’s corporate jet?’”

Meanwhile, *The Huffington Post* blog referenced the article 15 times almost the same amount of posts the *Daily Kos*, *The New York Times* *The Caucus*, *The Washington Post* *The Trail* and *The Washington Post* *The Fix* had combined – a total of 19.

The Huffington Post

Posted February 23, 2008 at 12:59PM by Arianna Huffington

“Given the week he's just had, you have to figure John McCain is looking for a story -- any story -- to come along and take the media spotlight off him (at least until the next well-polished lobbyist shoe falls). And what better distraction than America's favorite celebrity engorge-athon, the Academy Awards? But a quick glance at my Oscar scorecard tells me this year's Best Picture noms have McCain reminders written all over them: *There Will Be Blood* (aka McCain's foreign policy), *Atonement* (see recent conversations with wife Cindy), *Michael Clayton* (McCain could certainly use a "fixer" right about now), *No Country for Old Men* (hello November preview!). Not sure where *Juno* fits in, unless someone has recently spotted Vicki Iseman guzzling SunnyD at a convenience store.”

Well-known Media Blogs Covered by New Media Blogs

Unfortunately the research showed that neither the *Daily Kos* nor *The Huffington Post* mentioned the well-known media blogs (*The New York Times The Caucus*, *The Washington Post The Trail*, *The Washington Post The Fix*) in their posts.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In summary in the 2008 presidential campaign, blogs were a news source for individuals interested in what the candidates had to say and what others were saying about the candidates. The candidates' blogs, with the exception of Senator Barack Obama's, need to improve their site and encourage more participation from their staff. A correlation can be made between Obama's blog and the momentum his campaign has had this year. He is the only candidate that truly used it to inspire people to volunteer, make calls, donate to the campaign and simply get out and vote.

It was also worthy to note that a correlation could be made between the candidates' blog and their campaign and perceived personality. Senator Obama's blog was hopeful; Senator Clinton's tended to be negative towards her opponent and the posts tended to seem very reserved; Senator McCain's was straight-forward and to the point; Romney's was almost non-existent.

With the popularity of the chosen blogs I expected more of a cross over between them. The findings shown earlier demonstrate that in the blogs researched they do not tend to cross post or talk about each other. Therefore no correlation can be made between new media blogs influencing well-known media blogs or vice-versa.

Going forward, I suggest that other researchers further this research by focusing more closely on the blog media and venture into research into other new social media.

In regards to blogs, research can be conducted by seeing how many blogs cover one particular news story or how many comments one particular news article creates in various blogs. The tone of the comments could be studied and also correlations could be made by gender. Also how many times does the same person comment on the news story, in other words, does a comment conversation occur between the various individuals commenting on the post.

Another form of blog research could be to see how many blogs cover fundraising issues and to see if there is any correlation between call to actions on blogs to actual fundraising results.

Youtube.com would be another great idea to research in detail. YouTube is used on a daily basis by millions of users to view all types of video. Research could be done to see how many views candidates videos have and what comments are being said about them. Data could be mined to see if these are unique visitors versus repetitive users, when is the most popular time they are viewed, what videos receive the most response, etc.

Finally, the world of social media should be research to see how their growth and participation has affected presidential campaigns. All the candidates have accounts on the various social media networks (myspace.com, facebook.com, twitter.com). It would be interesting to see how much these social networks have helped or hurt their campaigns.

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