



Voters Are Ready for New Media

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Is Candidate Whack-A-Mole the best we can do?

New media usage is a mainstream activity for US adults in all major political parties, according to [BIGresearch's "Simultaneous Media Usage Study,"](#) conducted in December 2007.

Libertarians had the highest tech usage of respondents surveyed by BIGresearch. Republicans had the lowest, but even 40% of the GOP used video games, IM and online video.

"New media offers candidates with an alternative or complement to their traditional media spending," said Gary Drenik, president of BIGresearch. "By actually listening to potential voters and using all media, not just traditional, candidates can build an ad strategy that is more likely to influence votes."

Top Five New Media Technologies Used by US Adults, by Political Party, December 2007 (% of respondents)

Democrat		Independent	
1. Mobile phone	88.4%	1. Mobile phone	86.4%
2. Instant messaging	52.3%	2. Instant messaging	48.2%
3. Video games	47.0%	3. Video games	46.9%
4. Text messaging	46.8%	4. Downloading/accessing online video or TV content	45.6%
5. Downloading/accessing online video or TV content	46.5%	5. Text messaging	42.1%
Libertarian		Republican	
1. Mobile phone	86.5%	1. Mobile phone	88.9%
2. Video games	57.1%	2. Video games	42.9%
3. iPod/MP3 player	56.6%	3. Instant messaging	42.6%
4. Instant messaging	56.0%	4. Text messaging	40.4%
5. Downloading/accessing online video or TV content	52.8%	5. Downloading/accessing online video or TV content	39.5%

Note: ages 18+
Source: BIGresearch, "Simultaneous Media Usage Study (SIMM) 11" as cited by Marketing Charts, March 19, 2008

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US adult Internet users also have a growing sense that the Web is an important part of political campaigning, according to data released in March 2008 by the [USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future.](#)

Agreement among US Adult Internet Users that the Internet Has Become Important for the Political Campaign Process, 2005, 2006 & 2007 (% of respondents)

	2005	2006	2007
Strongly agree	34%	28%	30%
Agree	30%	31%	34%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%	23%	25%
Disagree	9%	11%	8%
Strongly disagree	4%	7%	3%

Note: ages 16+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future, "2008 Digital Future Report," January 17, 2008 as cited by "Web Insight" press release, March 17, 2008

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The campaigns of the remaining major US presidential candidates are certainly aware of this, and all have well-developed Web sites. Sen. Obama has mobile ringtones, wallpaper and IM buddy icons. Each of the three remaining major candidates have blogs.

Yet despite high levels of new media usage, and consumer acknowledgment of its growing importance in politics, the presidential campaigns have yet to put all new media types to work.

None of the candidates has done much with video games, despite their use in serious topics (e.g. the [UN World Food Program](#); [obesity](#)).

Video game designer, critic, and researcher Ian Bogost wrote recently on [Water Cooler Games](#) about why games have been such a small part of 2008 campaigns so far.

"The most influential reason is also the most obvious: since 2004, online video and social networks have become the big thing, as blogs were four years ago," Dr. Bogost wrote. "But another comes down to limited investment on the part of the political community in creating new games—certainly games and blogs and social networks and video can all coexist."

The eMarketer **Politics Online** report will be published in May. [Click here](#) to be notified when it is released.

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