

We The People:  
The Shifting Paradigm of Electoral Campaigning

*Barack Obama and The 2008 US Presidential Election*

By Luke K. Freeman

November 2008

Department of Communication  
Faculty of Arts  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, BC

## **We The People: The Shifting Paradigm of Electoral Campaigning**

*Barack Obama and The 2008 US Presidential Election*

### **A Historic Election**

“We the people,” the first three words of the two-hundred-and-twenty-year-old Constitution of the United States of America, is taking on a whole new meaning with the rise of the Internet, new media and information technology. The United States 2008 presidential election marked a significant paradigm shift in electoral campaigning. It was an historic election for many reasons. These ranged from the first presidential campaign in fifty years where none of the candidates were a former president or vice president through to the first election of an African-American to the Oval Office: Barack Obama, Junior Senator for Illinois. In recent years, the population boom and universal voting rights have made managing the political process increasingly difficult. Throughout the twentieth-century this has been increasingly addressed by using broadcast media for political communication (McNair 2007, p5). Therefore, significant historic relevance may be found in the shifting paradigm of presidential campaigning and the evolving functions of information technology, primarily the Internet. This paper will review and critique the historic nature of this presidential campaign through the role of the Internet and emerging technologies.

In March 2008, blogger Tim Leberecht announced, “Obama has introduced a new brand of politics, and he has caused a paradigm shift that goes beyond politics and marketing and may alter the very fabric of the American society: democratization with the means of the democratized web” (¶1). This was evidenced by the record-breaking usage of the Internet for campaigning, fundraising and voter interaction (ibid). Five months prior to the election, 46% of Americans had already used the Internet, email or mobile phone text messaging to “...get news about the campaign, share their views and mobilize others” (Smith & Rainie 2008, p1). By February 2008, nine months before the election, Barack Obama’s donor base was a “national force” reaching one million people (Davies 2008, ¶12). This afforded him the opportunity to focus on the campaign while still

outspending Senator Hillary Clinton in every state (ibid). Furthermore, over six months before Obama announced his candidacy, a group on the social networking site *Facebook*, “Students for Barack Obama,” was created to encourage him to join the presidential race (Vargas 2007, ¶4). However, the most significant aspect of the Internet in this election was how, for the first time, Internet popularity significantly translated into movement on the ground. This was demonstrated by the three-and-a-half-thousand students gathered at George Mason University for a rally organised by Students for Barack Obama before Obama had announced his candidacy (Graham-Felsen 2007a, ¶1).

### **Social Networking**

In her AlterNet journal article, writer Nancy Scola notes, “Facebook is revolutionizing the way collective political and social actions are organized today, blowing the doors off old models of how volunteer lists are amassed, funds raised, and messages honed and delivered” (2008, ¶2). The most significant use of the Internet in the 2004 presidential race was Howard Dean’s campaign, which managed to sign up 139,000 subscribers over six months (Vargas 2007, ¶4). Only two years later a junior at Bowdoin College, Meredith Segal, started Students for Barack Obama on Facebook and membership reached over 200,000 within one month – still half a year before Obama announced his candidacy (ibid, ¶11). Todd Zeigler of Bivings Group, an Internet marketing firm working with the Republicans, argued that the important aspect of these social networking movements was their spontaneity, acting independently without intervention from the Obama campaign (2007, ¶14). This demonstrated true enthusiasm for his candidacy, particularly among young people, far beyond that of any other candidates (Vargas 2007, ¶14). Furthermore, Barack Obama’s initial decision to run was largely influenced by a grassroots *MySpace* page that quickly attracted 160,000 supporters (Schifferes 2008, ¶17).

During Barack Obama’s term as the Junior Senator for Illinois he set up profiles on various social networking sites such as *AsianAve.com*, *MiGente.com* and *BlackPlanet.com* to construct an

approachable presence for Asian, Latino and black communities respectively. BlackPlanet is the third most visited social networking site in the United States (behind MySpace and Facebook) and Obama's presence evolved to one profile for each state, totalling fifty. These social networking sites were powerful tools for organising group action and planning events. For example, the rally at George Mason University was organised completely through online social networks, everything from high quality posters through to the line-up of speakers: a "serious campaign-level rally" according to Adam Conner, author of the *RunObama.com* blog (Graham-Felson 2007a, ¶2). On February 10 in 2007, Obama officially announced his candidacy. That same day his campaign launched his own social networking site: *My.BarackObama.com* (ibid, ¶15).

### **Video Sharing**

YouTube was launched in February 2005 and is now the leading online video-sharing site. It allows any user to upload videos in addition to viewing, searching and commenting on other shared videos. By June 2008, 33% of all adult Americans surveyed had watched at least one kind of political video within the past few months; this translates to almost half the online population (Smith & Rainie 2008, p3). Many of the 2008 presidential candidates embedded their YouTube videos on their campaign website. Hillary Clinton officially announcing her candidacy on YouTube typified the role of online video sharing in a new paradigm of electoral campaigning (Macnamara 2008, p2). With broadcast media increasingly revolving around short "sound bytes," YouTube videos hearken back to the era of the spoken word, smaller communities and deliberative politics (Gastil 2008, p96). This is exemplified by user-generated content, unrestricted commenting, constant access and shift back toward longer and more detailed content. For example, Barack Obama's thirty-seven-minute speech, "A More Perfect Union," has been watched almost seven million times over the last eight months, a significant feat in twenty-first century politics (YouTube, 2008).

Technologies like YouTube are fulfilling much of philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas' notion of the public sphere where "Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in

an unrestricted fashion - that is, within the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions” (1978, p89). Whereas the broadcast media exposure of politics is mostly in brief segments of news, talk shows or satire, YouTube not only has its own “YouChoose ‘08” channel but also different channels for individual candidates (YouTube 2008). The campaign paradigm has shifted to a point where "...the punch-counterpunch rhythms of the campaign are now usually played out online in emails and videos rather than in faxed press releases and 30-second ads" (Smith & Rainie 2008, p10). Furthermore, the 2008 presidential race saw a convergence of traditional broadcast media and new online media. This was exemplified by the joint broadcast of a presidential candidates’ debate in September 2007 by *CNN* and YouTube (Macnamara 2008).

YouTube was also a site for the proliferation of many independently developed videos such as “Obama Girl” by *BarelyPolitical.com* (online satire company), “Yes We Can” by *will.i.am* (popular musician), or the vast range of user-generated videos that have risen to popularity. A survey of Americans in June 2008 showed that “...one-quarter have watched campaign-related videos that did not come from a news organization or the campaigns themselves” (Smith & Rainie 2008, p15). Similarly to the social networking groups, these independently developed YouTube videos significantly contributed to the rise in Obama’s public profile early in the race (Schifferes 2008, ¶11). Many YouTube users upload copyrighted content without consent from the copyright owners, and although this copyright infringement often leads to the video being removed, many of the copyright owners still allow the videos to remain on the site (Green 2008, p1-4). This commercial content on YouTube, such as *The Simpsons* segment “Homer Simpson tries to vote for Obama” with over two-and-a-half-million views, played a significant role in this presidential race without any influence from official campaigns (Youtube 2008).

The Barack Obama campaign YouTube channel, *BarackObamadotcom*, has almost two thousand videos and well over one-hundred-million views, more than four times the channel views

of his Republican opponent, Senator John McCain (YouTube 2008). Irrespective of their obvious success, Kate Albright-Hanna of the Obama campaign stated that they do not focus on the number of views; their goal is "...to get people talking about what's going on in their lives and why they're supporting Barack -- and hopefully not only will they watch the videos but also comment on them..." (Vargas 2008c, p2). This use of online video clearly encouraged the interaction of younger voters that are largely native to the digital realm (Davies 2008, ¶18).

### **Official Campaign Websites**

Until recently the major uses of the Internet in electoral campaigning was only for email distribution, blogging and, most commonly, campaign websites (Williams et al 2005, p177). Although uses of other Internet technologies have increased substantially during this election cycle, the roles of official campaign websites has developed significantly and even incorporate many of these technologies. In June 2008, a survey of Americans showed that 39% of adults online had used the Internet to bypass mainstream media and consume "unfiltered" campaign material, including candidates' debates, speeches, announcements, policy papers and transcripts (Smith & Rainie 2008, p16). The developments range from *Pork Invaders* (a video game about wasteful government spending) on *JohnMcCain.com* to *My.BarackObama* (a social networking tool) on *BarackObama.com* (Mera 2008, ¶3). The integration of technologies varies between candidates. While *JohnMcCain.com* chose to host its own videos and *BarackObama.com* embedded a YouTube player (allowing users to comment), both were still used to "bypass the news media" (Vargas 2008c, p2).

The most revolutionary use of these campaign websites is Barack Obama's social networking site *My.BarackObama* (or *MyBO*). This social networking tool empowers supporters to "...post blogs, organize fundraising drives, create offline meetings and link up with other supporters" (Graham-Felsen 2007a, ¶15). *MyBO* contains hundreds of groups in the network ranging from "Environmentalists for Obama" through to "Obama Supporters for Gay Rights" (Vargas 2008c, p4). Throughout the presidential race Barack Obama's campaign team made

contact with supporters in these groups and encouraged them to build community by calling people and hosting parties for members within the groups (ibid). This enabled the creation of community and familiarity between people with similar interests, demographics or geographic location that all supported Senator Obama. The MyBO “Activity Tracker” allowed groups and individuals to measure their impact on the campaign by calculating their activity level (1-10) based only on recent actions (My.BarackObama.com 2008). “President Obama, Please Get FISA Right,” is one of the largest groups on MyBO and its mandate is convincing Obama to lead the Democratic-majority senate to restore liberties revoked by the Patriot Act and preventing FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) amendments from following suit (Get FISA Right 2008). Throughout the campaign Senator Obama responded to many concerns raised by these groups. This demonstrated the power of integrating social networking tools into campaign websites.

### **Fundraising**

The funds raised for the 2008 US presidential campaigns were astronomical. Barack Obama’s campaign alone raised over 650 million dollars, half of which were small donations (Slater 2008, ¶12). By June, one in ten of American Internet users had already used the Internet to donate money to a candidate (Smith & Rainie 2008, p6). Whereas financial contributors would previously have to attend a fundraising event or mail in a cheque, the effort required to donate to a presidential candidate was lower than ever: “all it takes is a credit card and three clicks” (Vargas 2008c, p2).

Furthermore, the Obama campaign succeeded in online fundraising because of breadth of support and ease of contributions. Pledged Democratic delegate for Obama, Linnie Frank Bailey, became deeply involved because of her ten-dollar donation (Vargas 2008b, p1). The commitment of a small financial donation was powerful for many supporters as it encouraged them to follow it up with action. Mrs. Bailey told the Washington Post: “I’m not rich. I’m just a working mom. I knew from the beginning that my contribution wouldn’t be financial” (ibid, p3). Not only did it just take a

few clicks to donate on BarackObama.com but contributions were made easier by prompts to contribute \$15-\$1,000 after watching each YouTube video (Vargas 2008c, p2).

### **Blogging**

Author Rebecca Blood defines blogs quite simply as “Web pages frequently updated with posts centered around one topic arranged in reverse chronological order” (Blood 2002, p5). Blogs have had increasing political importance in recent years; Howard Dean’s campaign pioneered using the Internet for significant mobilisation with the alliance of bloggers (Williams et al 2005, p178). Although there has been extensive critique in recent years on the role of blogging in politics, bloggers took a new role in the process this election cycle. By 2007, in the early stages of the campaigns, the relationship between politicians and bloggers had become more noteworthy, “Unprecedented numbers of bloggers...[were] credentialed to cover the party conventions” (Smith & Rainie 2008, p10). Sam Graham-Felson, a former journalist for *The Nation*, joined the Obama campaign as a blogger. As an example of citizen interaction, Graham-Felson decided to blog about the 75,000<sup>th</sup> donor, a five-dollar contribution, after reaching that fundraising goal (Graham-Felson 2008b).

### **Mobile Phones**

*“One Sunday afternoon in early December, minutes before Oprah Winfrey and Obama addressed about 29,000 people at a rally in Columbia, S.C., Jeremy Bird, Obama’s state field director, asked the crowd to take out their cellphones and text ‘SC’ to 62262, Obama’s short code. The code spells ‘Obama’ on phones...In the following weeks, [Scott] Goodstein sent texts to the numbers he’d collected and asked supporters to make phone calls, volunteer in precincts and vote on Jan. 26 in South Carolina. Obama won that state by 28 points.”*

*~ Jose Antonio Vargas (2008c, p3)*

Mobile networks are reviving and altering the characteristics of a traditional communication medium, the telephone, for electoral campaigning through the power of text messaging (or “texting”) and the mobile web. The example of the South Californian rally discussed by Vargas, also demonstrates the power of mobile phones for mass organisation of individuals, network building

and a more personal form of mass communication (2008c, p3). Furthermore, Obama's texting campaigner Scott Goodstein argued, "Texting is a two-way street" that allows volunteers and staff to respond to questions such as "Where's my polling place?" (Vargas 2008c, p3). Not only did the Democratic campaign announce their vice presidential pick via text message but they also launched *Obama Mobile* for users to download videos and access news about Obama on their mobile phone's web browser (ibid). The type of targeted advertising that was prominent in the last election was further explored by geographic targeting enabled by texting mobile phones based on area codes (Mera 2008, ¶16).

### **Remix Culture**

Henry Jenkins, author and scholar from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, argued at his SXSW Interactive Festival keynote address that to accuse Obama of plagiarism, as Clinton's campaign did, is to miss the point of what Obama represents, Jenkins simply stated "It's a remix culture, stupid!" (Leberecht 2008, ¶7). Since its early boom in rap music, remix culture has been defining the twenty-first century – particularly because of the infiltration of easy video sharing by YouTube. *Remix America* is a multi-partisan website that allows users to use clips from their "American Playlist" and remix them to produce their own "mash-up vision of America" as a new platform for "patriotic dissent and political commentary" (ibid, ¶8). At the *Take Back America* conference Norman Lear, television writer and producer, stated that America has always been a remix and "...yesterday's 'melting pot' is today's remix... Take a little from the Magna Carta, a little from John Locke, and a whole lot of rebellion" (2008, ¶3). In fact, the "product" Obama was even claimed to be a "mash-up, a (hyper)-text, a rich media (re)-mix of statements, tunes, vibes, opinions, and facts" (Leberecht 2008, ¶4).

### **Evolving the Broadcast Media**

University of London professor James Curran argues that the ideological role of the media is to "keep people informed about public affairs so that individuals are adequately briefed when they

take part in the process of self-government” (2005, p120). However an increase of population, the decline of the town-hall meeting and the increasing scale of politics left the bulk of political communication to take place in “private institutions” such as the popular press (2008, p8). This is evidenced by the sums spent on media advertising for politics matching or outspending the advertising expenditure of the largest commercial corporations (Schiller 1984, p117). Furthermore, gaining news coverage largely requires elements of negativity and sensationalism (Gastil 2008, p95). However, the 2008 presidential campaigns demonstrated a reconceptualisation of the traditional broadcast media role in politics and convergence with emerging information technologies.

Throughout the election, mainstream television companies partnered with Internet companies to provide special election coverage such as the *CNN-YouTube* or *MySpace-NBC* coalitions. The CNN-YouTube Debates were conducted twice, once for the Republicans and once for the Democrats, each consisting of eight presidential candidates that debated questions submitted by YouTube users (Catone 2008, p1).

When the Washington Post asked Andrew Rasiej, founder of Personal Democracy Forum, about the Obama campaign’s use of online video, he stated “They’ve basically leapfrogged not just the Clinton and McCain campaigns but also the mainstream media when it comes to reaching their supporters” (Vargas 2008c, p1). However, a significant portion of the astronomical fundraising effort in the most expensive presidential battle in the history of the United States was simply reinvested into using traditional broadcasting media (Mera 2008, ¶5). Although the campaigns of the 2008 candidates facilitated the use of the Internet for communication, Jenkins argues, “the real challenge is to get those ideas back into mainstream media” (2006, p207).

Another new development in this election cycle was the ability for supporters to pay for an advertisement on cable for as little as six dollars (SaysMe.tv 2008). *Says.Me.tv* allowed users to pay for a video supporting their desired candidate and it would appear according to their specified location and time with their name displaying as the advertisement sponsor. Furthermore, if users were

unhappy with the available advertisements, they had the option to upload their own to the collection (subject to an approval process). This kind of citizen interaction further exemplifies Habermas' notion of the public sphere (1978, p89).

### **Online and Offline Convergence Culture**

American political author and commentator Dick Morris wrote that "...if the public won't buy your basic premise, it doesn't matter how much you spend or how well your ads are produced; they won't work" (1997, p152). Although Internet use for politics has traditionally been by political activists, the Internet has also been instrumental in drawing in politically disenfranchised younger voters less than thirty years of age (Gastil 2008, p30). Furthermore, online political analyst Andrew Rasiej stated that the Obama campaign has "come the closest to achieving the Holy Grail of politics on the Internet - converting online enthusiasm to offline action" (Davies 2008, ¶6). Another significant online figure, Craigslist founder Craig Newmark, was inspired to shift from his longstanding politically independent position to avidly supporting the Obama campaign (McGirt 2008, ¶20). Newmark said the change was because he saw Obama as a leader, "A leader gets people to do things on their own, through inspiration, respect, and trust" (ibid).

Senator Obama's campaign achieved an autonomous decentralized workforce of supporters through channelling communication and organization through technology and social networks (Norquay 2008, p60). Before Obama launched his campaign, the aforementioned George Mason rally had demonstrated that his online support had translated into the real world and his following amongst the youth was "more than a bunch of kids who clicked a button" (Graham-Felsen 2007a, ¶5). This online-offline convergence was demonstrated clearly and paid huge dividends throughout the campaign. In Texas Senator Hillary Clinton had 20,000 volunteers working and Barack Obama had 104,000 Texans members of My.BarackObama.com (Norquay 2008, p60). However, Clinton won the direct vote by four percent but Obama's overwhelming support at the caucuses won him more of the Texan delegates (ibid). By June 2008, use of the Internet had already mobilised over

two million Obama volunteers (Schifferes 2008, ¶10). During the Democratic primaries, online supporters were empowered to organize unprecedented numbers of house parties. During January in San Francisco there were almost two hundred house parties for Obama, twenty-nine for Edwards and only nine for Clinton (Davies 2008, ¶25). However, journalist Geoff Norquay argues, "...this breakthrough succeeded only because the central campaign managed to walk the fine line between anarchy and top-down micromanaging" (Norquay 2008, p60).

### **Communication and Voter Education**

Essentially, a campaign is a highly developed communication strategy. A successful campaign should be measured by how well they communicate their message to the electorate, regardless of the election's outcome. The success of the Obama campaign was not simply its use of new information technologies, rather the quality of the message, consistent communication and the way that translated into support. The Obama campaign was careful not to overcomplicate their use of information technologies, this resulted in good usability and its widespread use (Norquay 2008, p60). Throughout the campaign Obama maintained a consistent theme of "Change," whereas McCain's image drifted from "Maverick" through to "Steady Hand at the Wheel" (Ambinder 2008, ¶7). Obama's online support spread like a wildfire amongst the youth that came of age throughout Bill Clinton's impeachment, the controversial 2000 election, September 11 terrorist attacks and the invasion of Iraq – largely because of the "post-partisan rhetoric" that Obama represented (Graham-Felsen 2007a, ¶11).

An Obama delegate, Linnie Frank Bailey, argued that using the Internet for political communication removed the "wall between politicians and their constituents" and increased the ease of participation to the point that "These days, there's no excuse for not participating" (Vargas 2008b, p2). Jenkins argues that new media and longstanding broadcast media operate on different communication principles; we are moving toward the peer-to peer model and away from the one-to-many model (Jenkins 2006, p208).

Voter education is very important in democracies, particularly during election time. In the 2008 election, the Internet played as a hub for communication to educate voters. A survey in June showed that already 18% of Internet users had used the Internet to read a candidate's position paper and a further 12% had read the full text of a candidate's speech (Smith & Rainie 2008, p16). Interestingly, Obama won the nineteen states with the highest levels of education (234 electoral votes) and these states proved more likely to be involved online (Judis 2008, ¶7).

### **Criticisms**

Leading up to and after the election there have been criticisms of the use of information technologies in the 2008 US presidential campaign. One of the recurring criticisms is related to notions of access. Computer ownership and digital literacy are still quite unequal, particularly low income-families and the elderly are easily disenfranchised by a predominantly online campaign (Curran 2005, p131). Furthermore, the people that are most likely to vote seem to be those least likely to use the Internet (Mera 2008, ¶8).

Information technologies have also aided the decontextualisation of information and the spread of misinformation. For example, Obama made comments in San Francisco about small-town voters having "bitterness" over job losses and therefore "clinging to guns or religion;" these comments were digitally recorded and posted out of context by blogger Mayhill Fowler (2008, ¶9). Furthermore, similar stories about Jeremiah Wright, Obama's preacher, were circulating on blogs, email and YouTube as early as February 2007 (Smith & Rainie 2008, p9). However, blogger Tim Leberecht argues that while information technologies have been a big source of Obama's vulnerabilities they have been a bigger source of power; "When your greatest weakness is your biggest strength, you are very hard to beat" (2008, ¶6).

Journalist Andrew Keen also noted that Obama's campaign success proves that "having a strong Internet presence is only half the story; the other half is having the Chicago Senator's charisma, his political judgment, his speaking skills, his intellect, his personal network, [and] his

advisers” (2008, ¶5). Keen continues to point to Obama’s key political relationships, forged primarily in the US Senate or the streets of Chicago, and the significant role that they played (2008).

### **Conclusion**

*“Obama is a once-in-a-generation candidate, a brilliant communicator in an age of communication. Cool and consistent under pressure. He grew over the course of two years into a candidate voters believed was ready to be president. The right candidate at the right moment. The most un-Bush of any of the Democratic candidates.” ~ Marc Ambinder (2008, ¶4)*

Although this election is being called “historic” for many reasons, one of the most significant of these is the changing paradigm of electoral campaigning. Throughout recent history the mass media has been the agent for involving the citizenry in the political process to a “historically unprecedented degree” (McNair 2007, p41). It has been argued that the media should be the platform of open political debate, involving citizens into the formation of public opinion (Curran 2005). Furthermore, McNair agrees the masses are “not so stupid as to be the passive victims of crude manipulation” but rather the media has been the agent for shaping the public’s agenda (2007, p41; Gastil 2008, p58). However, the mainstream media has fallen short of these ideological expectations. Renowned political scientist Robert Dahl sets three criteria for the democratic process: inclusion, effective participation, and enlightened understanding (1989). The historic nature of this presidential campaign is largely due to its steps toward fulfilling these criteria through the use of information technologies.

However unique and groundbreaking the use of information technologies were, the successful election of Senator Barack Hussein Obama to President of the United States of America cannot be attributed to them alone. Neither online grassroots initiatives nor the campaign’s online strategy can win an election singlehandedly, as demonstrated by the Howard Dean 2004 candidacy (Williams et al 2005, p178). However, the profound impact of these information technologies has set the stage for the electoral campaigning to come (Vargas 2008a, p2). Furthermore, scholar and

writer N. J. Slabbert argues, “To this extent, the 2008 election may not really be the first twenty-first century US presidential election, but rather the last twentieth-century election” (2008, p359).

The United States of America is in the middle of economic recession, a global environmental crisis and two enervating wars. This election was historic because Barack Obama constructed a *movement* of hope and change in response to this situation, instead of just an ordinary campaign (Jenkins 2008, ¶5). Movements are about engaging people around higher order ideals and beliefs. Movements ask people to become self-motivated. This election is not just historic; it’s our favourite kind of history repeating itself. Upon seeing a seemingly irrevocable problem, a charismatic leader understood that people yearned to be part of the solution and then they put faith in him because he gave them tools of change.

## References and Works Cited

- Ambinder, M. (2008). The Obama Win: Explanations and Theories. The Atlantic, A Reported Blog on Politics.
- Blood, R. (2002). The Weblog Handbook: practical advice on creating and maintaining your blog. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing.
- Carpentier, N. (2007). Participation, access and interaction: Changing perspectives. In Nightingale, I. V., & Dwyer, T. New media worlds: Challenges for convergence. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Catone, J. (2007). User Generated Politics: CNN-YouTube Debates Tonight. Read Write Web. [http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/user\\_generated\\_politics\\_cnn-youtube\\_debates.php](http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/user_generated_politics_cnn-youtube_debates.php)
- Curran, J. (2005). What Democracy Requires of the Media. In Overholser, G., & Jamieson, K. H. The Institutions of American Democracy: The Press. Oxford University Press.
- Curran, J. (2002). Media and Power. London: Routledge.
- Davies, F. (2008). The race online: Obama, rivals bring Internet campaigning to new level. Mercury News, Washington Bureau. [http://www.mercurynews.com/ci\\_8350952](http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_8350952)
- Ernst, J. (1988). The Structure of Political Communication. Frankfurt: European University Studies.
- Fowler, M. (2008). Obama Exclusive (Audio): On V.P And Foreign Policy, Courting the Working Class, and Hard-Pressed Pennsylvanians. Huffington Post. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mayhill-fowler/obama-exclusive-audio-on\\_b\\_96333.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mayhill-fowler/obama-exclusive-audio-on_b_96333.html)
- Gastil, J. (2008). Political Communication and Deliberation. Sage Publications.
- Graham-Felsen, S. (2007a). Obama's Impressive Youthroots . The Nation. <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20070305/graham-felsen>
- Graham-Felsen, S. (2007b). 75,000. Obama HQ, My.BarackObama.com. [http://my.barackobama.com/page/community/post\\_group/ObamaHQ/CQtN](http://my.barackobama.com/page/community/post_group/ObamaHQ/CQtN)
- Green, J. (2008). MisUnderstanding YouTube. FlowTV.org, 1-4. <http://flowtv.org/?p=1591>
- Habermas, J. (1978). Jürgen Habermas. London: Travistock.
- Hassan, R. (2004). "Tactical Media" in Media, Politics and the Network Society. Open University Press, Maidenhead.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide. New York: New York University Press.
- Judis, J. B. (2008). America the Liberal. The New Republic. <http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=c261828d-7387-4af8-9ee7-8b2922ea6df0>
- Keen, A. (2008). Keen on New Media: Did the Internet elect Barack Obama?. The Independent. <http://blogs.independent.co.uk/independent/2008/11/keen-on-new-m-3.html>
- Lange, P. G. (2008). Publicly Private and Privately Public: Social Networking on YouTube. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(1), 361-80. <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/lange.html>
- Lear, N. (2008). Norman Lear Announces "Remix America" at "Take Back America". Remix America.
- Leberecht, T. (2008). A new (Obama) brand of politics: yes, we can...remix America!. Matter/Anti-Matter. [http://www.cnet.com/matter-antimatter/8301-13641\\_1-9901353-44.html](http://www.cnet.com/matter-antimatter/8301-13641_1-9901353-44.html)
- Lister, M., Dovey, J., Giddings, S., Grant, I., & Kelly, K. (2003). New Media and New Technologies. In

- editors. (Ed.), *New Media: A Critical Introduction* (pp. 9-12). Routledge, London.
- McGirt, E. (2008). *The Brand Called Obama*. Fast Company. <http://www.fastcompany.com/node/754505/>
- McNair, B. (2007). *An Introduction to Political Communication* (Fourth Edition). Routledge, London and New York.
- Mera, T. O. (2008). US election 2008: From the web to the Oval Office. *Telegraph-Journal*. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/scienceandtechnology/3359011/US-election-2008-From-the-web-to-the-Oval-Office.html>
- Mills, C. W. (1959). Chapter One: The Promise. In editors. (Ed.), *The Sociological Imagination*. Lewis & Clark College, Portland.
- Moore, A., & Ahonen, T. T. (2008). Henry Jenkins on Obama and the "We" Generation. *Communities Dominate Brands*. <http://communities-dominate.blogspot.com/brands/2008/02/henry-jenkins-o.html>
- Morris, D. (1997). *Behind the Oval Office*. New York: Random House.
- Philo, G. (1993). *Getting the Message: News, Truth, and Power*. London: Routledge.
- Rosenberg, S. W. (2007). *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy: Can the people Govern?*. Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire.
- Schiffes, S. (2008). Internet key to Obama victories. *BBC News*. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/7412045.stm>
- Schiller, H. (1984). *Information and the Crisis Economy*. Norwood: Ablex.
- Scola, N. (2008). Despite Negative Press, Facebook Is a Powerful Agent for Social Change. *AlterNet*. <http://www.alternet.org/story/83196/>
- Shirky, C., & Manjoo, F. (2008). Does "Obama Girl" help Obama?. *Salon.com Technology*. [http://machinist.salon.com/feature/2008/03/07/clay\\_shirkey\\_interview/print.html](http://machinist.salon.com/feature/2008/03/07/clay_shirkey_interview/print.html)
- Slater, W. (2008). Obama's fundraising success puts public financing in question. *The Dallas Morning News*.
- Smith, A., & Rainie, L. (2008). *The Internet and the 2008 Election*. PEW Internet & American Life Project, Washington. [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_2008\\_election.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_2008_election.pdf)
- Vargas, J. A. (2007). Young Voters Find Voice on Facebook: Site's Candidate Groups Are Grass-Roots Politics for the Web Generation. *Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/16/AR2007021602084.html>
- Vargas, J. A. (2008a). Campaign.USA: With the Internet Comes a New Political 'Clickocracy'. *Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/31/AR2008033102856.html>
- Vargas, J. A. (2008b). Something Just Clicked: An Obama Delegate's Road to Politics Began With an Online Donation. *Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/09/AR2008060902826.html>
- Vargas, J. A. (2008c). Obama's Wide Web: From YouTube to Text Messaging, Candidate's Team Connects to Voters. *Washington Post*, 1-4. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/19/AR2008081903186.html>
- Williams, A. P., Trammell, K. D., Postelnicu, M., Landreville, K. D., & Martin, J. D. (2005). Blogging and Hyperlinking: use of the Web to enhance viability during the 2004 US campaign. *Journalism Studies*, 6(2), 177-186.
- (2008). *Get FISA Right*. . GetFISARight.net
- (2008). *President Obama, Please Get FISA Right*. Retrieved November 14, 2008 from <http://my.barackobama.com/page/group/SenatorObama-PleaseVoteAgainstFISA>.

(2008). SaysMe.tv. Retrieved November 14, 2008 from <http://www.saysme.tv/>.