



**Pew Internet**  
Pew Internet & American Life Project

a project of the  
**PewResearchCenter**

# The internet and campaign 2010

**54% of adults used the internet for political purposes in the last cycle, far surpassing the 2006 midterm contest. They hold mixed views about the impact of the internet: It enables extremism, while helping the like-minded find each other. It provides diverse sources, but makes it harder to find truthful sources.**

Aaron Smith, Senior Research Specialist

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<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/The-Internet-and-Campaign-2010.aspx>

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Pew Research Center  
1615 L St., NW – Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
202-419-4500 | [pewinternet.org](http://pewinternet.org)

## Summary of Findings

### More than half of all American adults were online political users in 2010

Fully 73% of adult internet users (representing 54% of all US adults) went online to get news or information about the 2010 midterm elections, or to get involved in the campaign in one way or another. We refer to these individuals as “online political users” and our definition includes anyone who did at least one of the following activities in 2010:

- *Get political news online* – 58% of online adults looked online for news about politics or the 2010 campaigns, and 32% of online adults got most of their 2010 campaign news from online sources.
- *Go online to take part in specific political activities*, such as watch political videos, share election-related content or “fact check” political claims – 53% of adult internet users did at least one of the eleven online political activities we measured in 2010.
- *Use Twitter or social networking sites for political purposes* – One in five online adults (22%) used Twitter or a social networking site for political purposes in 2010.<sup>1</sup>

Taken together, 73% of online adults took part in at least one of these activities in 2010. Although our definition of an online political user has changed significantly over time, the overall audience for political engagement and information-seeking has grown since the most recent midterm election cycle in 2006—using a different array of activities to measure online political activity, we found at that time that 31% of adults used the internet for campaign-related purposes. As an example of the changing landscape for online politics since the last midterm contest, the proportion of internet users who viewed campaign-related videos online jumped from 19% in 2006 to 31% in 2010. Similarly, as recently as the 2006 election cycle just 16% of online adults used online social networking sites; today roughly six in ten online adults are social networkers, and these sites have emerged as a key part of the political landscape in the most recent campaign cycle.<sup>2</sup>

### The internet continues to grow in importance as a source of political news

One quarter of all US adults (24%) got most of their news about the 2010 elections from the internet, and the proportion of Americans who get most of their midterm election campaign news from the internet has grown more than three-fold since the 2002 campaign.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Politics-and-social-media.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2007/Election-2006-Online.aspx>

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## Main sources of campaign news, 2002-2010

Based on all adults

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2010</u>
Television	66%	69%	67%
Newspapers	33	34	27
Internet	7	15	24
Radio	13	17	14
Magazines	1	2	2

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Note: totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

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Among internet users (32% of whom got most of their midterm election news from online sources), 18-29 year olds (36%) and those ages 30-49 (29%), the internet is now the second-most commonly mentioned source of campaign news, ahead of newspapers and trailing only television.

**Americans feel that the internet makes it easier to meet others with similar political views, but also increases political extremism. They also feel that the internet opens people to a wider range of viewpoints, although many find it difficult to separate good political information from bad.**

Americans hold diverse views—both positive and negative—about the internet’s impact on the political debate.

- 54% of online adults say that the internet makes it easier to connect with others who share their views politically; 44% say that the internet makes this “a lot easier” and 10% say that the internet makes this “a little easier.” The internet users who get news or take part in politically-related activities on social networking sites are especially likely to say that the internet helps them connect with others around political issues.
- At the same time, 55% of all internet users feel that the internet increases the influence of those with extreme political views, compared with 30% who say that the internet reduces the influence of those with extreme views by giving ordinary citizens a chance to be heard.
- 61% of online adults agree with the statement that the internet exposes people to a wider range of political views than they can get in the traditional news media. Young adults and political social networkers are more likely than average to view the internet as a source of information they can’t find elsewhere.
- At the same time, 56% of internet users say that it is usually difficult for them to tell what is true from what is not true when it comes to the political information they find online.

Despite some of these challenges, 22% of online political users who voted say that they were encouraged to vote by material they found online during the 2010 campaign, and an additional 42% say

that political information they saw or read online encouraged them to vote for or against a specific candidate.

### **Led by online political video, a number of online activities were prominent in the 2010 race**

Some 31% of adult internet users went online to watch political videos in the months leading up to the 2010 elections. When we asked this question after the 2006 midterm elections, just 19% of adult internet users said that they watch political videos—that makes online video watching the activity with the greatest amount of growth out of those we measured in both 2006 and 2010. Supporters of both parties exhibited significant growth in online video consumption over that time, with online video watching by Republican voters roughly doubling between 2006 and 2010.

These are some other activities that online adults engaged in during the 2010 campaign:

- 35% of online adults looked for information online about candidates' voting records or positions on issues. Whites, college graduates and the financially well-off were especially likely to do this in 2010.
- 28% of online adults used the internet to research or "fact check" claims made during the campaign. This activity is also especially prevalent among whites, college graduates and those with relatively high household incomes.
- 16% of online adults sent email related to the campaign or the elections to friends, family members or others; this activity was popular with 50-64 year olds, as 21% of this group shared political emails in the months leading up to the 2010 elections.
- 12% of online adults revealed online which candidate(s) they voted for in 2010, with voters ages 18-29 leading the way.
- 8% of online adults signed up online to receive updates about the campaign or elections; another 8% of online adults shared photo, video or audio content related to the campaign.
- 7% of online adults used the internet to organize or get information about in-person meetings to discuss political issues.
- 6% of online adults took part in an online discussion group, listserv or other online group related to political issues. These online forums were particularly popular with political liberals and young adults.
- 5% of online adults used the internet to participate in volunteer activities related to the campaign, like getting lists of voters to call or getting people to the polls.
- 4% of online adults contributed money online to a candidate running for office; Republicans and Democrats were equally likely to donate money online in 2010.

Additionally, 20% of online adults used the internet to follow an interesting election campaign in another part of the country in the months leading up to the November elections. Males, whites and those with strong views (either for or against) the Tea Party movement were especially likely to use the internet to learn about or follow a race outside of their local area.

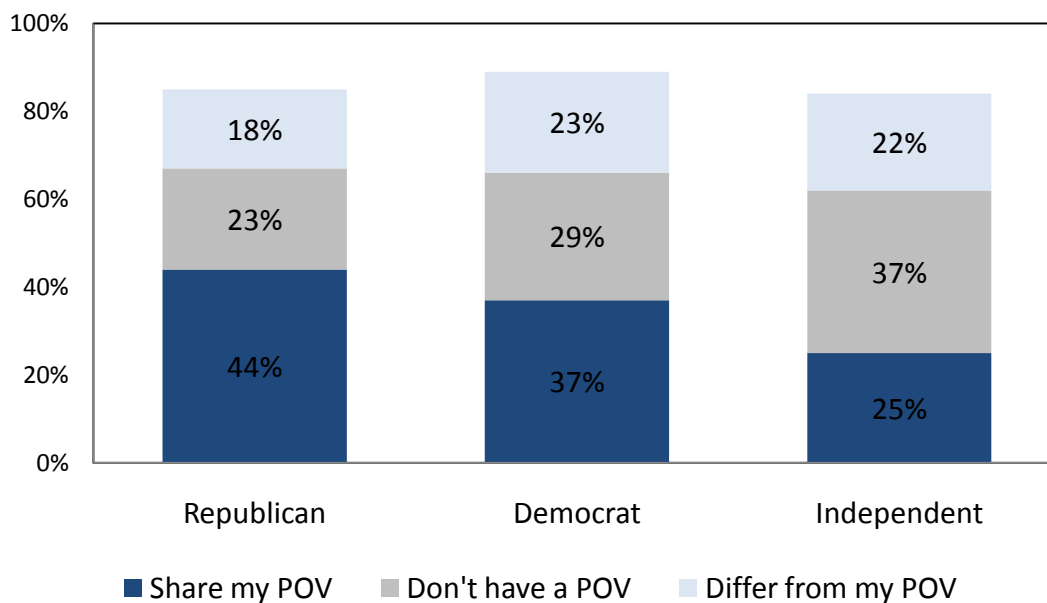
## As was true in 2008, a plurality of partisan online political users gravitate towards news that shares their own political point of view

In the 2008 presidential election, we found for the first time that online political users were more likely to say that they typically got online political news from sites that shared their point of view, as opposed to sites that don't have a particular point of view.<sup>3</sup> This trend continued in 2010, as 34% of online political users said that most of the political news and information they get online comes from sites that share their point of view—compared with 30% who typically get news from sites that don't have a point of view, and 21% who get news from sites that differ from their own point of view. As we found in 2008, views on this subject are correlated with partisan identification—both Republicans and Democrats were more likely than political independents to say that they typically get online political news from sources that share their political point of view.

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### News with a “point of view” by partisan affiliation

*% of online political users within each group who usually get political news from online sources that...*



**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. N=2,257 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,167 based on online political users.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, see <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/6--The-Internets-Role-in-Campaign-2008/3--The-Internet-as-a-Source-of-Political-News/6--Partisanship.aspx>

The results reported here are based on a national telephone survey of 2,257 adults conducted November 3-24, 2010. The survey included 755 interviews conducted on the respondent's cell phone, and interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish. For results based on internet users, the margin of error is +/-3 percentage points.

## Overview of Americans and their sources of political material

The Pew Internet Project has previously released reports on some of the particular uses of the internet that occurred in the 2010 midterm elections—including how people used mobile connections via their cell phones and laptops to participate and learn<sup>4</sup> and how social media tools like Facebook and Twitter became a more central part of the campaign environment.<sup>5</sup> This report covers more broadly the way that people used the internet in the 2010 contest compared with other media, how they used it to share information and deliberate with others, and how they used it to participate in the political process.

Our post-election survey found that the internet continues to play a central role in the way Americans access and digest political information, as three-quarters of adult internet users were “online political users” in the 2010 midterm elections. An online political user includes anyone who did one or more of the following activities in 2010:

- *Get political news online* – 58% of online adults looked online for news about politics or the 2010 campaigns, and 32% of online adults got most of their 2010 campaign news from online sources.
- *Go online to take part in specific political activities*, such as watch political videos, share election-related content or “fact check” political claims – 53% of adult internet users did at least one of the eleven general online political activities we measured in 2010.
- *Use Twitter or social networking sites for political purposes* – One in five online adults (22%) used Twitter or a social networking site to interact politically in one way or another in 2010.

Taken together, 73% of online adults did at least one of these during the 2010 campaign, which works out to 54% of all US adults. The online environment has changed dramatically since even the previous midterm elections in 2006, making it somewhat difficult to compare the overall size of the online political user cohort over time. To use one example, in late 2006 just 16% of online adults used an online social networking site such as Facebook or LinkedIn and our post-election survey did not contain any questions about the use of online social networks for political purposes; as of November 2010 the social networking population had risen to 61% of internet users and these sites had become a key element of the modern political campaign.

However, even as our definition of an online political user has changed over time to accommodate these broader developments it is clear that the politically-active online cohort has grown significantly since the previous midterm election: in 2006 we found that 31% of all US adults were online political users.

Three-quarters (77%) of these online political users go online wirelessly using a cell phone or laptop, and nearly nine in ten (87%) have a broadband connection at home. This group voted for Republican candidates over Democratic candidates in 2010 by a margin of 49%-35%.

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Mobile-Politics.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Politics-and-social-media.aspx>

## Online political users

*% within each group who are online political users (based on all adults)*

<b>All adults</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Men	56
Women	52
<b>Age</b>	
18-29	67
30-49	61
50-64	53
65+	26
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
White, non-Hispanic	57
Black, non-Hispanic	45
Hispanic	39
<b>Household Income</b>	
Less than \$30,000	36
\$30,000-\$49,999	60
\$50,000-\$74,999	66
\$75,000+	77
<b>Education level</b>	
Some high school	17
High school grad	43
Some college	65
College+	76
<b>Congressional vote</b>	
Republican voters	69
Democratic voters	56
Non-voters	42
<b>Attitude towards Tea Party</b>	
Agree	70
Disagree	66
No opinion	52
Have not heard of	30

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. N=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.



## The internet and political news sources

### One-quarter of Americans use the internet as a major source of campaign news in 2010, up from 7% in 2002

One-quarter of American adults (24%) got most of their campaign information from the internet during the 2010 midterm elections, a three-fold increase from the 7% who said this during the 2002 midterm elections. Over that same time, the proportion of Americans who use television and radio as major political news sources has remained stable, while the proportion using newspapers has fallen from 33% in 2002 to 27% in 2010. The proportion of Americans who get most of their campaign news from the internet has increased by 60% since the 2006 midterms alone.

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### Main sources of campaign news, 2002-2010

*Based on all adults*

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2010</u>
Television	66%	69%	67%
Newspapers	33	34	27
Internet	7	15	24
Radio	13	17	14
Magazines	1	2	2

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Note: totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

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Our questions about main sources of campaign news were asked of all American adults—internet users and non-users alike. Among just those who go online, the internet is now the second-most common source of campaign news (32%); this puts the internet ahead of newspapers (25% of internet users get most of their campaign news from newspapers) but behind television (63%).

Young adults are especially reliant on the internet as a source of campaign and election news. Those ages 18-29 are five times as likely as those 65 and older to say that they got most of their election news in 2010 from the internet (36% vs. 7%). Although young adults are among the most likely groups to use the internet for campaign news, the use of online sources for campaign news has grown significantly since the 2002 midterm elections for all major demographic groups.

## Use of the internet for campaign news, 2002-2010

*% within each group who use the internet as a main source of campaign/election news*

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>+17</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	7	25	+18
Women	6	22	+16
<b>Age</b>			
18-29	13	36	+23
30-49	7	29	+22
50-64	4	18	+14
65+	1	7	+6
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White, non-Hispanic	6	25	+19
Black, non-Hispanic	5	14	+9
Hispanic	7	20	+13
<b>Household Income</b>			
Less than \$30,000	5	19	+14
\$30,000-\$49,999	6	27	+21
\$50,000-\$74,999	8	28	+20
\$75,000+	13	32	+19
<b>Education level</b>			
High School Diploma or Less	3	15	+12
Some College	9	29	+20
College+	12	34	+22

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

### Main sources of televised campaign news

As in the previous midterm election campaign in 2006, local news programming is the most common destination for televised political news. One-third (33%) of those Americans who get political or campaign news from television say that they get most of this news from local news programming, a figure that is unchanged from the previous midterm election in 2006.

The proportion of Americans who get most of their news from the Fox News Channel rose five percentage points between 2006 and 2010, making it the only individual TV news outlet with a notable increase over this time period. Meanwhile, the proportion saying they get most of their news from CNN and each of the three network nightly news programs dropped slightly between the 2006 and 2010 midterm elections.

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## Main sources of televised political/campaign news

*Based on those who get political/campaign news from television*

	2006	2010
Local news programming	33%	33%
Fox News Channel	21	26*
NBC Network News	17*	12
CNN	17*	14
ABC Network News	15*	10
CBS Network News	13*	9
MSNBC	6	5
CNBC	3	2

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. N=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,533 based on those who get campaign/election news from television. \* Indicates statistically significant difference between 2006 and 2010.

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In terms of political differences in television news consumption, Republican voters, Tea Party supporters and conservatives are much more likely than Democratic voters, liberals, and those who do not support the Tea Party to get political or campaign news from Fox News Channel. The latter groups are more likely to say that they get campaign news from sources such as CNN, MSNBC or network news programs.

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## Partisan differences in television political news consumption

*Based on those who get political/campaign news from television*

	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Independents</u>
Local news programming	33%	29%	34%
Fox News Channel	47**	15	23^
NBC Network News	10	16*	12
CNN	9	16*	16*
ABC Network News	8	12*	10
CBS Network News	7	12*	9
MSNBC	3	7	5
CNBC	1	3	1

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. N=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,533 based on those who get campaign/election news from television. \*\*Indicates statistically significant difference compared with Democrats and Independents; \*Indicates statistically significant difference compared with Republicans; ^Indicates statistically significant difference compared with Democrats.

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### Main sources of online campaign news

When asked an open-ended question about their main sources for online campaign news, the 24% of U.S. adults who get most of their election coverage from the internet mention a number of sites. Roughly one in five online political news consumers mention either CNN.com (22%) or yahoo.com (20%), while one in ten mention the websites of Google (13%), Fox (10%) or MSN (10%). A smaller number of online political news consumers get most of their news from sites such as Aol.com, the New York Times website or sites such as the Drudge Report or Huffington Post.

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## Main sources of online political/campaign news

*Based on those who get political/campaign news from the internet*

CNN.com	22%
Yahoo.com	20
Google.com	13
Fox	10
MSN.com	10
MSNBC.com	7
AOL.com	4
New York Times	4
Candidates' website	2
Drudge Report	2
Huffington Post	1
Other	29
Don't Know / Refuse	12

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. N=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; n=486 based on those who get campaign or election news on the internet. Totals may add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

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As is true for television news, there are some partisan differences when it comes to the sites online political news consumers rely on for campaign news. Specifically, Republicans are much more likely than Democrats to cite Fox as a primary online news source—21% of Republican online political news consumers got most of their online campaign news from Fox News online, compared with less than 1% of online political news consumers who identify as Democrats.

### Online political news with a point of view

Since 2004, we have asked online political users (the 54% of Americans who go online for campaign news and information or otherwise to get involved politically) whether the political information they get online typically comes from sources that share their political point of view, or sources that differ from their political point of view, or sources that don't have a particular point of view. In 2010, one third (34%) of these online political users said that they typically get news from online sources that share their point of view, just ahead of the 30% who say that they get political news from sources that don't have a point of view. These figures are roughly in line with our findings from the 2008 presidential elections.

## Online news with a political point of view

*% of online political users who typically get online campaign news from sites that...*

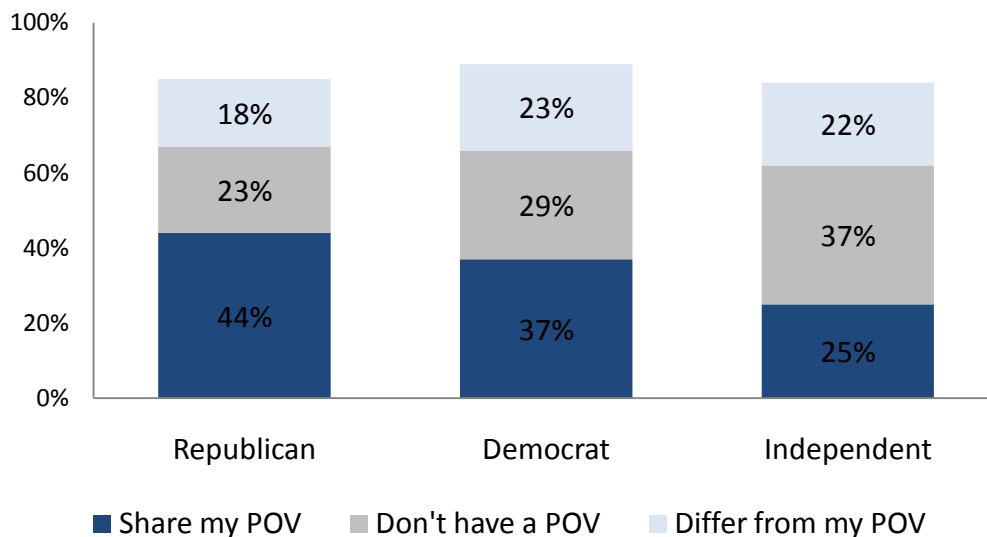
	2004	2006	2008	2010
Share my point of view	26%	28%	33%	34%
Don't have a point of view	32	34	25	30
Differ from my point of view	21	20	21	21
Don't know / Refuse	21	18	21	15

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. N=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; n=1,167 based on online political users.

Online political users who identify with a political party tend to prefer online news sources that share their point of view, while political independents tend to gravitate towards sites that do not have an overt point of view.

## News with a "point of view" by partisan affiliation

*% of online political users within each group who usually get political news from online sources that...*



**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,167 based on online political users.

## How Americans used the internet in campaign 2010

### Online political videos

In the months leading up to the November elections, 31% of adult internet users went online the watch videos about the candidates or the campaign. This represents a 63% increase from the 19% of online adults who watched political videos in the previous off-year elections in 2006.

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### Political Videos Online, 2006 vs. 2010

*% of internet users in each group who watch political videos online*

	2006	2010
<b>All Internet Users</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	22	36
Women	16	26
<b>Age</b>		
18-29	25	33
30-49	17	30
50-64	18	33
65+	16	23
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White, non-Hispanic	17	33
Black, non-Hispanic	22	24
Hispanic	25	23
<b>Household Income</b>		
Less than \$30,000	17	22
\$30,000-\$49,999	19	31
\$50,000-\$74,999	15	38
\$75,000+	22	37
<b>Education level</b>		
High School Diploma or Less	15	22
Some College	18	32
College+	23	38

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,628 based on internet users.

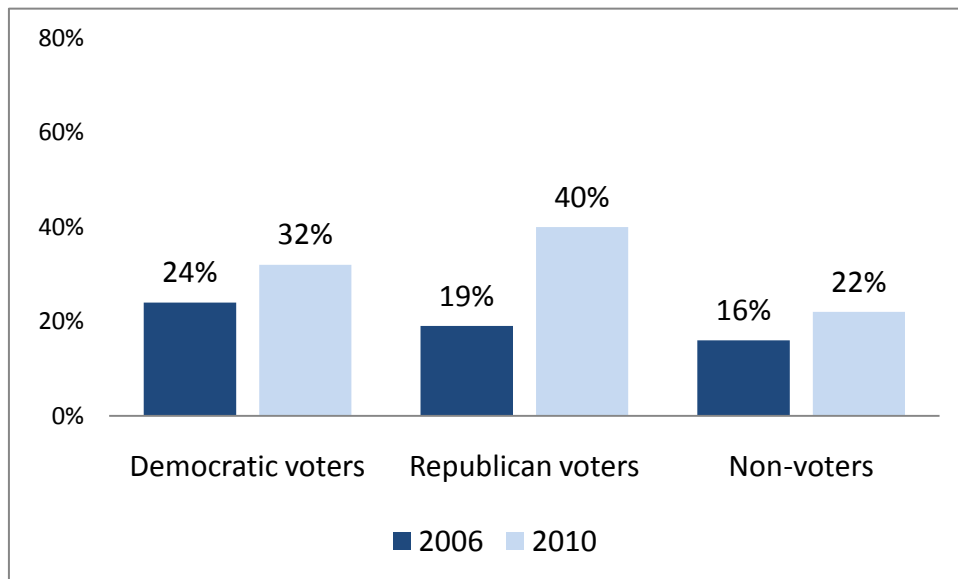
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Both Democratic and Republican voters were more likely to watch political videos in 2010 than they were in 2006, and voters of both parties were more likely than non-voters to watch political videos online. Fully 40% of Republican voters who use the internet watched online political videos in 2010, compared with 32% of such Democratic voters and 22% of internet users who did not vote. All told, the proportion of Democratic voters who watched political videos in the months leading up to the election increased by a third between 2006 and 2010, while the proportion of Republican voters doing so doubled over the same time period.

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## Growth in online video consumption by voters, 2006-2010

*Based on % of internet users in each group who watch political videos online*



**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,628 based on internet users.

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Along with watching videos online, 8% of online adults went online to share photos, videos or audio files related to the election with others. There are relatively few demographic differences when it comes to sharing multimedia content, and voters (for any party) are more likely than non-voters to have done this in 2010.



## Online communication and interaction with others

In the months leading up to the election, Americans used the internet to connect and interact with others around the campaign in a number of ways. Among online adults:

- 16% sent email related to the campaign or the elections to friends, family members or others
- 12% revealed online which candidates they voted for in the November elections
- 7% used the internet to organize or get information about in-person meetings to discuss political issues in the campaign
- 6% took part in an online discussion, listserv or other online group forum such as a blog, related to political issues or the campaign
- 5% used the internet to participate in volunteer activities related to the campaign—such getting lists of voters to call or getting people to the polls

Taken together, 27% of adult internet users did at least one of these communication-related activities in the months leading up to the November elections.

### Political email

Around one in six adult internet users (16%) sent emails related to the campaign in the months leading up to the November elections. Demographically, sharing political information via email is relatively popular with older adults, as 21% of online 50-64 year olds did this in 2010 (compared with 13% of 18-29 year olds, 15% of 30-49 year olds and 16% of those 65 and older). Sharing political information via email is also popular with college graduates (22% of such internet users did this) and those with a household income of \$75,000 or more per year (22%). White internet users are more likely to share political information in this way than African Americans (18% vs. 10%).

In terms of political differences, voters of all kinds are more likely than non-voters to share political emails with others—among internet users 24% of Republican voters and 19% of Democratic voters did this, compared with 8% of non-voters. Similarly, supporters as well as detractors of the Tea Party movement were more likely to use email in this way than were internet users who had not heard of the movement or who did not feel strongly about it one way or the other.

### Letting others know who one voted for

One in ten adult internet users who voted in 2010 (12%) went online to reveal who they voted for in the 2010 elections. This behavior is especially prevalent among 18-29 year olds—22% of such internet users did this in 2010, compared with 11% of those ages 30-64 and 6% of those 65 and older.

### Get information about in-person meetings or events

Seven percent of adult internet users went online to organize or get information about *in-person meetings* related to the campaign. There are relatively few demographic differences in this question, although college graduates (12% of such internet users did this in 2010) were more likely to go online for information about in-person political activities than were those with lower levels of education (5% of

whom did so). Not surprisingly, those with relatively strong political leanings were more likely than others to go online to find out about offline political events.

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## Using the internet to find in-person political events

*% of internet users in each group who went online to organize or get information about in-person meetings related to the 2010 campaign*

All internet users	7%
<b>2010 Vote</b>	
Republican voters	7
Democratic voters	11
Non-voters	4
<b>Attitude Towards Tea Party Movement</b>	
Agree	10
Disagree	11
No opinion	5
Have not heard of	1

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,628 based on internet users.

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### Taking part in political online discussion forums

Six percent of adult internet users took part in an online discussion, listserv or other online group forum related to the campaign or political issues in the months leading up to the 2010 election.

Demographically, young adults were more likely than their elders to take part in online discussion groups in 2010—10% of internet users ages 18-29 did this, compared with 6% of 30-49 year olds and 5% of those ages 50 and up. Those internet users who describe their political ideology as liberal (11%) were roughly twice as likely as conservatives (6%) or moderates (5%) to take part in these online forums in 2010.

### Using the internet to participate in volunteer activities

Five percent of adult internet users went online in the months leading up to the 2010 elections to participate in volunteer activities related to the campaign, such as getting lists of voters to call or getting people to the polls. This type of online engagement was common among black internet users (9% did this, compared with 4% of whites and 2% of Latinos), and college graduates were somewhat more likely than those with only a high school education to do this. Voters (whether Democratic or Republican) were also more likely than non-voters to use the internet to facilitate political volunteerism.

### **The internet as a tool for candidate assessment and “fact-checking” of political claims**

One-third (35%) of wired adults went online in the months leading up to the November elections to look for information about candidates’ voting records or positions on issues. Demographically, this activity was especially prevalent among college graduates (48% of such internet users did this) as well as those with household incomes of \$75,000 or more. White internet users (37% of whom went online to research voting records or candidate positions) were also more likely than blacks (20%) or Latinos (28%) to do this.

28% of online adults used the internet to research or “fact check” claims made during the campaign. As with online political fact checking, this activity is particularly prevalent among whites, college graduates and those with relatively high incomes.

Finally, 8% of online adults signed up online to have updates about the campaign or the election delivered to them directly. Other than college graduates (14% of such internet users signed up for updates about the election) there are relatively few demographic differences on this activity.

## Online political information seeking and “fact checking”

*% of internet users in each group who went online to do the following in the months leading up to the 2010 elections...*

	<u>Look up candidate voting records or positions</u>	<u>Fact check political claims</u>	<u>Sign up for campaign or election updates</u>
<b>All internet users</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	39	32	9
Women	32	24	8
<b>Age</b>			
18-29	37	26	7
30-49	35	29	8
50-64	36	31	11
65+	26	21	5
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White, non-Hispanic	37	32	8
Black, non-Hispanic	20	13	9
Hispanic	28	15	4
<b>Household Income</b>			
Less than \$30,000	24	13	6
\$30,000-\$49,999	31	24	8
\$50,000-\$74,999	35	38	11
\$75,000+	46	42	11
<b>Education level</b>			
High School Diploma or Less	22	13	4
Some College	35	27	6
College+	48	45	14

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,628 based on internet users.

Voters (for any party) were more likely than non-voters to engage in each of these three activities in 2010. Moreover, Republican voters were notably more likely than Democrats to look up candidate voting records or positions, and also more likely to research or fact check claims made during the campaign.

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### Information gathering and assessment by 2010 vote

*% of internet users within each group who did the following online in the months leading up to the November elections*

2010 Congressional Vote	Republican	Democrat	Did not vote
Look for information about candidates' voting records or positions on issues	50%**	37%*	20%
Research or fact check claims made during the campaign	44%**	30%*	12
Sign up to receive automatic updates about the campaign or elections	11*	11*	4

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,628 based on internet users. \*\* Indicates statistically significant difference compared with all other groups. \* Indicates statistically significant difference compared with non-voters.

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### Online political donations

Four percent of internet users went online during the election to donate money to a candidate running for public office, which is comparable to the 3% of internet users who did this during the previous mid-term election in 2006. Unsurprisingly, voters of both parties are more likely than non-voters to have donated money online in 2010 (among internet users 5% of Republican voters and 6% of Democratic voters did so). Similarly, Tea Party supporters (7%) and those who disagree with the movement (5%) were more likely than those who have no opinion (2%) or have not heard of the group (2%) to have donated money online.

### The internet as a tool for engagement with out-of-state campaigns

One of the striking uses of the internet has been for voters in one locale to become interested in races in other parts of the country – races in which they could not vote. The 2010 campaign offered a particularly interesting set of circumstances with the rise of the Tea Party movement that was heavily covered in the traditional media and gathered a great deal of debate and chatter in social media like Facebook, Twitter, and political blogs. Certain races like the Senate contests in Florida, Nevada, and Delaware drew widespread attention as Tea Party-backed candidates were featured in the general election.

Thus, although the 2010 campaign was not a national election, fully 20% of adult internet users said that they went online in the months leading up to the election to follow an interesting election campaign in another part of the country. Men, whites, the relatively affluent and well-educated and those with strong views (either for or against) the Tea Party movement were particularly likely to go online to follow an election campaign elsewhere in the country in 2010.

## Using the internet to follow races in other parts of the country

*% of internet users in each group who went online to follow elections in other parts of the country in 2010*

All internet users	20%
<b>Gender</b>	
Men	26
Women	14
<b>Age</b>	
18-29	14
30-49	21
50-64	26
65+	15
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
White, non-Hispanic	21
Black, non-Hispanic	13
Hispanic	15
<b>Household Income</b>	
Less than \$30,000	11
\$30,000-\$49,999	15
\$50,000-\$74,999	26
\$75,000+	30
<b>Education level</b>	
High School Diploma or Less	9
Some College	18
College+	33
<b>Attitude towards Tea Party</b>	
Agree	33
Disagree	29
No opinion	11
Have not heard of	4

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,628 based on internet users.

Although one in five online adults used the internet to keep tabs on out-of-state races, a relatively modest number went online to participate in volunteer activities or donate money in campaigns outside of their current state. Of the 5% of internet users who went online to participate in volunteer activities related to the campaign, 15% said that they did this for a campaign in another part of the country. And of the 4% of internet users who donated money online to a candidate or campaign, 24% made a donation to a candidate running for office in a state other than the one they live in. That works out to just 1% of internet users who went online to donate money or volunteer in a campaign outside of their state.



## **Attitudes towards the internet's impact on politics**

Ever since internet use became a notable part of political media in the late 1990s, there have been intense debates about the impact of the internet on politics. For the first time in our post-election surveys, we asked some questions to test public attitudes about the role of the internet in American political culture. The answers showed how conflicted people are about the internet: Many expressed positive views about the effect of digital technology on their personal engagement with politics, but also noted concerns about the ways in which the internet might be influencing the broader culture and tone of politics.

### **How the internet influences the ability to connect with others politically**

When asked whether the internet has made it easier to connect with others who share their own political views, 54% of online Americans agree that it has—44% say that the internet has made this a lot easier, and an additional 10% say that it has made it a little easier. Two in five (42%) feel that the internet has not had much impact in this regard.

Demographically, Latino internet users are particularly likely to say that the internet has helped them connect with others who share their views—56% of Latino internet users say that the internet has made it “a lot easier” to do this, compared with 41% of white internet users. Those under the age of 50 are also relatively likely to view the internet as having a positive impact in this regard. Roughly half of online 18-29 year olds (54%) and 30-49 year olds (48%) say that the internet has made it a lot easier to connect with others, compared with 36% of 50-64 year olds and 23% of internet users ages 65 and up.

The one in five online adults who used social networking sites during the 2010 campaign for political purposes are especially likely to say that the internet helps them connect with others who share their views—fully 64% of these users say that the internet has made this a lot easier, compared with 21% of these users who say that the internet has had no impact in this regard.

### **How the internet influences the prevalence of extreme views**

Even as a majority of Americans feel that the internet has generally helped them connect with others, a similar number also believe that the internet has increased the influence of extreme views in the political debate. Just over half (55%) of internet users agree with the statement that “the internet increases the influence of those with extreme political views,” while 30% said they agree with the statement that “the internet reduces the influence of those with extreme views by giving ordinary citizens a chance to be heard.” One in ten online adults (12%) are not sure which of these statements best describes their own views.

Interestingly, there are relatively few differences on this question based on demographic characteristics or one's level of online political engagement. Those who feel that the internet has made it easier to meet up with others who share their views, are no less likely than those who downplay the internet's role in connecting with others to see the internet encouraging extremism. Additionally, the 21% of

online adults who are active politically on social networking sites are just as likely as other internet users to say that the internet increases the influences of extreme political views.

Politically, Democrats and those who disagree with the Tea Party movement are a bit more likely to agree with the statement that the internet increases the influence of those with extreme views compared with Republican voters and Tea Party supporters.

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## The internet's impact on extreme views

*% of internet users within each group who feel the internet has increased/decreased the impact of extreme views*

	Increases	Reduces	Don't know / Refuse
All internet users	55%	30%	15%
<b>Online political user type</b>			
Political social network users	58	34	8
Other online political users	54	31	16
Not online political users	54	27	19
<b>Attitudes toward Tea Party movement</b>			
Agree	48	36	16
Disagree	64	25	12
No opinion	59	28	13
Haven't heard of	51	35	13
<b>2010 vote</b>			
Republican	50	34	16
Democrat	58	29	14
Did not vote	58	29	13

**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 adult internet users ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. n=1,628 based on internet users.

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## How the internet influences exposure to a diverse range of views

Six in ten online adults (61%) feel that the internet exposes people to a wider range of political views than they can get in the traditional news media, while one-third (32%) feel that the political information available online is the same as the information available elsewhere.

As with the impact of the internet on meeting new people, adults under the age of 50 are significantly more likely than older internet users to say that the internet exposes people to a wider range of political views than they can get elsewhere—among internet users 67% of 18-29 year olds and 68% of 30-49 year olds say this, compared with 55% of those ages 50-64 and 38% of those 65 and older. College graduates (71% of whom say that the internet exposes people to a wider range of political views) also tend to have relatively strong views on this subject.

Those online adults who utilize the internet for political information and engagement are significantly more likely than other internet users to feel that they are being exposed to a wider range of material thanks to the internet. This is especially true for the one in five online adults who use social networking sites for political purposes—fully 74% of these “political social networkers” feel that the internet exposes people to a wider range of political views than they can find elsewhere.

### **Difficulties in determining truth from fiction in the online world**

Americans are similarly split in their assessments of the difficulty of separating truth from falsehoods when it comes to online political information. One-third of online adults (33%) say that it is usually easy for them to tell what is true from what is false when it comes to the political information they find online, while 56% say that it is usually difficult for them to determine this. There are few demographic differences when it comes to assessing the veracity of online political information, although young adults (ages 18-29) are slightly more likely than those ages 65 and older to say that it is usually easy for them to tell what is true online from what is false.

The group we refer to as “online political users” is twice as likely as internet users who do not engage in political activities online to say that it’s usually easy to tell true from false political information (39% vs. 20%). Still, it is notable that even among this relatively tech-savvy group, more than half (55%) indicate that they have trouble telling true from false political information online.

### **How the internet influences voting behavior**

One in five online political users (22%) say that the news and information they found online in 2010 encouraged them to vote in the 2010 elections, compared with just 4% who said that this online content actually discouraged them to vote (73% said it had no impact one way or the other). These figures are nearly identical to the findings we got the last time we asked this question, in 2004 (at that point 23% of online political users said that they were encouraged to vote by the material they found online).

A slightly larger number of respondents said that the political information they saw or read online made them decide to vote for or against a particular candidate—35% of internet users who voted in 2010 said this. There are relatively few demographic differences on this question, although voters with strong views towards the Tea Party movement were particularly likely to say that online information helped them decide who to vote for. Fully 39% of internet-using voters who support the Tea Party movement and 38% of such voters who disagree with the movement said this, compared with 30% of those with no opinion of the movement one way or another, and 20% of voters who had not heard of the group.

## Methodology

This report is based on the findings of a daily tracking survey on Americans' use of the Internet. The results in this report are based on data from telephone interviews conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International from November 3-24, 2010, among a sample of 2,257 adults, age 18 and older. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 2.4 percentage points. For results based Internet users (n=1,628), the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting telephone surveys may introduce some error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the continental United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications. Numbers for the landline sample were selected with probabilities in proportion to their share of listed telephone households from active blocks (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

New sample was released daily and was kept in the field for at least five days. The sample was released in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger population. This ensures that complete call procedures were followed for the entire sample. At least 7 attempts were made to complete an interview at a sampled telephone number. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with a potential respondent. Each number received at least one daytime call in an attempt to find someone available. For the landline sample, half of the time interviewers first asked to speak with the youngest adult male currently at home. If no male was at home at the time of the call, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult female. For the other half of the contacts interviewers first asked to speak with the youngest adult female currently at home. If no female was available, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult male at home. For the cellular sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone. Interviewers verified that the person was an adult and in a safe place before administering the survey. Cellular sample respondents were offered a post-paid cash incentive for their participation. All interviews completed on any given day were considered to be the final sample for that day.

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for sample designs and patterns of non-response that might bias results. A two-stage weighting procedure was used to weight this dual-frame sample. The first-stage weight is the product of two adjustments made to the data – a Probability of Selection Adjustment (PSA) and a Phone Use Adjustment (PUA). The PSA corrects for the fact that respondents in the landline sample have different probabilities of being sampled depending on how many adults live in the household. The PUA corrects for the overlapping landline and cellular sample frames.

The second stage of weighting balances sample demographics to population parameters. The sample is balanced by form to match national population parameters for sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region (U.S. Census definitions), population density, and telephone usage. The White, non-Hispanic subgroup is also balanced on age, education and region. The basic weighting parameters came from a special analysis of the Census Bureau's 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) that included all households in the continental United States. The population density parameter was derived from Census 2000 data. The cell phone usage parameter came from an analysis of the July-December 2009 National Health Interview Survey.

Following is the full disposition of all sampled telephone numbers:

**Table 1: Sample Disposition**

Landline	Cell	
29342	14599	Total Numbers Dialed
1391	310	Non-residential
1454	38	Computer/Fax
15	0	Cell phone
13307	5782	Other not working
1648	175	Additional projected not working
11527	8294	Working numbers
39.3%	56.8%	Working Rate
549	58	No Answer / Busy
2578	2370	Voice Mail
90	14	Other Non-Contact
8310	5852	Contacted numbers
72.1%	70.6%	Contact Rate
482	751	Callback
6213	3817	Refusal
1615	1284	Cooperating numbers
19.4%	21.9%	Cooperation Rate
75	44	Language Barrier
0	462	Child's cell phone
1540	778	Eligible numbers
95.4%	60.6%	Eligibility Rate
38	23	Break-off
1502	755	Completes
97.5%	97.0%	Completion Rate
13.7%	15.0%	Response Rate

The disposition reports all of the sampled telephone numbers ever dialed from the original telephone number samples. The response rate estimates the fraction of all eligible respondents in the sample that were ultimately interviewed. At PSRAI it is calculated by taking the product of three component rates:

- Contact rate – the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made
- Cooperation rate – the proportion of contacted numbers where a consent for interview was at least initially obtained, versus those refused
- Completion rate – the proportion of initially cooperating and eligible interviews that were completed

Thus the response rate for the landline sample was 13.7 percent. The response rate for the cellular sample was 15.0 percent.

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**Post-Election Tracking Survey 2010**

Final Topline

11/30/10

Data for November 3–24, 2010

Princeton Survey Research Associates International  
for the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life ProjectSample: n= 2,257 national adults, age 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews  
Interviewing dates: 11.03.10 – 11.24.10

Margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points for results based on Total [n=2,257]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on internet users [n=1,628]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on cell phone users [n=1,918]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on registered voters [n=1,833]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on online political users [n=1,167]

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**Q3** Overall, how have you been getting most of your news about this year's campaigns and elections... from television, from newspapers, from radio, from magazines, or from the Internet?<sup>6</sup>

	TELEVISION	NEWSPAPERS	RADIO	MAGAZINES	INTERNET	(VOL.) OTHER	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Current	67	27	14	2	24	7	1	2
Nov 2008	77	28	13	2	26	3	1	1
Nov 2006	69	34	17	2	15	6	3	--
Nov 2004	78	39	17	3	18	4	2	--
Nov 2002	66	33	13	1	7	7	2	--
Nov 2000B <sup>i</sup>	70	39	15	4	11	1	*	--
Nov 1996 <sup>ii</sup>	72	60	19	11	3	4	1	--
Nov 1992 <sup>iii</sup>	82	57	12	9	n/a	6	1	--

Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

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<sup>6</sup> Prior to 2002, trends based on surveys of voters, not total adults. Question wording varies depending on the type of election that year.

**Q4** Did you get most of your news about this year’s campaigns and elections from [READ AND RANDOMIZE SETS OF ITEMS (LOCAL; NETWORK; CABLE) AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS WITHIN EACH SET]

Based on those who get campaign and election news from television

	<u>CURRENT</u>		<u>NOV 2008</u>	<u>NOV 2006</u>	<u>NOV 2004</u>
%	33	Local news programming	21	33	23
	10	ABC Network news	15	15	16
	9	CBS Network news	11	13	13
	12	NBC Network news	15	17	17
	14	CNN Cable news	29	17	25
	5	MSNBC Cable news	10	6	8
	26	The Fox News Cable Channel	25	21	24
	2	CNBC Cable news	3	3	3
	5	Other (VOL.)	n/a	n/a	n/a
	3	Don’t know	6	8	7
	1	Refused	1	--	--
	[n=1,533]		[n=1,788]	[n=1,809]	[n=1,728]

Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

**Q5** What web sites did you use to get most of your campaign and election news? Just name a few of the web sites that you went to the MOST often. [PRECODED OPEN-END; PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL: “Anything Else?”]

Based on those who get campaign and election news from the internet [N=486]

	<u>CURRENT</u>	
%	22	CNN.com
	20	Yahoo.com
	13	Google.com
	10	Fox
	10	MSN.com
	7	MSNBC.com
	4	AOL.com
	4	New York Times
	2	Candidates' websites
	2	Drudge Report
	1	Huffington Post
	29	Other (SPECIFY)
	10	Don’t know
	2	Refused

Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.



**Q18** There are many different activities related to the campaign and the elections that a person might do on the internet. I'm going to read a list of things you may or may not have done online in the months leading up to the November elections. Just tell me if you happened to do each one, or not. Did you... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] in the months leading up to the election?<sup>7</sup>

Based on all internet users

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Sign up online to receive updates about the campaign or the elections				
Current total internet users [N=1,628]	8	92	*	0
Nov 2008 total internet users <sup>8</sup> [N=1,591]	11	89	*	*
b. Contribute money online to a candidate running for public office <sup>9</sup>				
Current total internet users	4	96	0	*
Nov 2008 total internet users	8	91	*	*
May 2008 total internet users <sup>10</sup> [N=1,553]	8	92	*	--
Nov 2006 landline internet users [n=1,578]	3	97	*	--
Nov 2004 total internet users <sup>11</sup> [n=1,324]	4	96	*	--
Nov 2002 total internet users <sup>12</sup> [n=1,707]	2	98	*	--

**Q18 continued...**

<sup>7</sup> In November 2008, question wording was: "There are many different activities related to the campaign and the elections that a person might do on the internet. I'm going to read a list of things you may or may not have done online in the past year related to the campaign and the elections. Just tell me if you happened to do each one, or not. Did you... [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE] in the past year?" In May 2008, question wording was: "There are many different campaign-related activities a person might do on the internet. I'm going to read a list of things you may or may not have done online in the past several months related to the 2008 election campaigns. Just tell me if you happened to do each one, or not. Have you... [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]?" In November 2004, question wording was: "When you went online to get information about the ELECTIONS, did you ever do any of the following? Did you ever [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]?" In November 2002, question wording was: "When you go online to get information about the ELECTIONS, do you ever do any of the following things? Do you ever [INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]?"

<sup>8</sup> Nov 2008 question items were asked only of online political users; in "internet users" trend figures, those who don't go online for political info are included in "no."

<sup>9</sup> In May 2008, item wording was: "Contributed money online to a candidate running for public office"; Prior to 2004, item wording was: "Contribute money to a candidate running for public office through his or her website"

<sup>10</sup> May 2008 question items were asked only of online political users; in "internet users" trend figures, those who don't go online for political info are included in "no."

<sup>11</sup> Nov 2004 question items were asked only of those who went online for 2004 election info; in "internet users" trend figures, those who don't go online for political info are included in "no."

<sup>12</sup> Nov 2002 question items were asked only of those who went online for 2002 election info; in "internet users" trend figures, those who don't go online for political info are included in "no."

**Q18 continued...**

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
c. Look for information online about candidates' voting records or positions on the issues <sup>13</sup>				
Current total internet users	35	65	*	0
Nov 2008 total internet users	42	58	*	0
Nov 2006 total internet users [n=1,727]	29	71	*	--
Nov 2004 total internet users	34	66	*	--
Nov 2002 total internet users	29	71	*	--
d. Watch video online about the candidates or the election <sup>14</sup>				
Current total internet users	31	69	*	*
Nov 2006 total internet users	19	81	*	--
Nov 2004 total internet users	21	79	*	--
e. Use the internet to participate in VOLUNTEER activities related to the campaign – like getting lists of voters to call, or getting people to the polls <sup>15</sup>				
Current total internet users	5	95	*	0
Nov 2008 total internet users	6	94	*	*
May 2008 total internet users	3	97	*	--
f. Share photos, videos or audio files online that relate to the campaign or the elections				
Current total internet users	8	92	*	*
Nov 2008 total internet users	17	83	*	*
g. Send email related to the campaign or the elections to friends, family members or others				
Current total internet users	16	84	*	*
h. Use the internet to organize or get information about in-person meetings to discuss political issues in the campaign				
Current total internet users	7	93	*	*
i. Take part in an online discussion, listserv or other online group forum like a blog, related to political issues or the campaign				
Current total internet users	6	94	0	0

**Q18 continued...**

<sup>13</sup> Trend item wording was: "Look for more information online about candidates' positions on the issues or voting records". Prior to November 2006, this item was split into two items: "Get information about a candidate's voting record" and "Look for more information about candidate's positions on the issues". For trending purposes, items were recalculated to combine the two & those percentages are reported here.

<sup>14</sup> Trend item wording was: "Watch video clips about the candidates or the election that are available online"

<sup>15</sup> 2008 trend item wording was: "Sign up ONLINE for any VOLUNTEER activities related to the campaign – like helping to register voters or get people to the polls"

**Q18 continued...**

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
<i>Item J: Based on internet users who voted in the 2010 elections [N=1,106]</i>				
j. Reveal online which candidates you voted for this year				
Current total internet users	12	88	*	*
k. Use the internet to research or "fact check" claims made during the campaign <sup>16</sup>				
Current total internet users	28	72	*	0
Nov 2006 landline internet users	21	78	*	--
Nov 2004 total internet users	28	71	1	--

I'm now going to read several statements about the internet and politics. For each one, I would like you to tell me which of the statements best describes how you feel. [RANDOMIZE Q19A-Q19D]

**Q19a** Would you say the internet makes it easier to connect with others who share your political views, or that the internet has no impact on how you connect with others who share your political views?

IF YES, MAKES EASIER: Would you say the internet makes it A LOT easier, or only a little easier?

Based on all internet users [N=1,628]

<u>CURRENT</u>		
%	44	Yes, a lot easier
	10	Yes, a little easier
	42	No, no impact
	3	Don't know
	2	Refused

**Q19b** Which of the following statements comes closest to your view? The internet INCREASES the influence of those with extreme political views, OR the internet REDUCES the influence of those with extreme views by giving ordinary citizens a chance to be heard.

Based on all internet users [N=1,628]

<u>CURRENT</u>		
%	55	Increases influence of extreme views
	30	Reduces influence of extreme views
	12	Don't know
	3	Refused

<sup>16</sup> Trend item wording was: "Use the internet to check the accuracy of claims made by or about the candidates"

**Q19c** Do you think that the internet exposes people to a wider range of political views than they can get in the traditional news media, or is most of the political information you can find online the same as what you can get elsewhere?

Based on all internet users [N=1,628]

	<u>CURRENT</u>	
%	61	Wider range of views
	32	Mostly the same
	5	Don't know
	1	Refused

**Q19d** Thinking about the political information you find online, would you say it's usually EASY or DIFFICULT for you to tell what is true from what is not true?

Based on all internet users [N=1,628]

	<u>CURRENT</u>	
%	33	Easy
	56	Difficult
	9	Don't know
	2	Refused

**OUT** On another topic, in the months leading up to the election, did you go online to... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE], or not?

Based on all internet users [N=1,628]

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Follow an interesting election campaign in another part of the country	20	79	*	*
<i>Item B: Based on internet users who used the internet to participate in volunteer campaign-related activities [N=74]</i>				
b. Participate in VOLUNTEER activities related to a campaign in another part of the country – like getting lists of voters to call or email, helping to register voters or helping find ways to get people to the polls	15	83	2	0
<i>Item C: Based on internet users who contributed money online to a candidate [N=72]</i>				
c. Donate money to a candidate running for office in a state other than the one you currently live in	24	76	0	0

**Q23** When you get political or campaign news or information online, would you say most of it comes from sources that SHARE your point of view, DON'T HAVE a particular point of view, or DIFFER FROM your own point of view?<sup>17</sup>

Based on online political users<sup>18</sup>

	SHARE MY POINT OF VIEW	DON'T HAVE A POINT OF VIEW	DIFFER FROM MY POINT OF VIEW	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Current [N=1,167]	34	30	21	10	5
Nov 2008 [N=1,186]	33	25	21	16	5
Nov 2006 <sup>19</sup> [N=742]	28	34	20	18	--
Nov 2004 [N=937]	26	32	21	21	--

<sup>17</sup> For Nov 2008 and Nov 2006, question wording was: "When you get political or campaign information online, would you say most of the sites you go to SHARE your point of view, DON'T HAVE a particular point of view, or CHALLENGE your own point of view?" For Nov 2004, question wording was: "When you go online looking for political or campaign information, would you say most of the sites you go to SHARE your point of view, DON'T HAVE a particular point of view, or CHALLENGE your own point of view?" Results for "Differ from my point of view" reflect trend percentages for "Challenge my point of view".

<sup>18</sup> Definitions for 'online political users' may vary from survey to survey

<sup>19</sup> Based on landline respondents only.

**Q24** Thinking about all of the news, information, email and other material you saw or read online this year, did this online information ENCOURAGE you to vote in the Nov. 2 elections, did it DISCOURAGE you from voting, or did it have no impact on your decision about whether to vote?

Based on all internet users

	CURRENT TOTAL INTERNET USERS	CURRENT ONLINE POLITICAL USERS		NOV 2004 TOTAL INTERNET USERS	NOV 2004 ONLINE POLITICAL USERS
%	18	22	Encouraged me to vote	18	23
	4	4	Discouraged me from voting	1	1
	78	73	No impact	80	75
	*	*	Don't know	1	1
	1	1	Refused	--	--
	[n=1,628]	[n=1,167]		[n=1,324]	[n=937]

**Q25** Did any of the information you saw or read online about the 2010 elections make you decide to vote FOR or AGAINST a particular candidate?

Based on internet users who voted in the 2010 elections

	CURRENT		NOV 2004 <sup>20</sup>
%	35	Yes	22
	64	No	77
	1	Don't know	1
	1	Refused	--
	[n=1,106]		[n=1,119]

Based on online political users

	YES	NO / DIDN'T VOTE	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Current [N=1,167]	30	69	1	*
Nov 2004 [N=937]	27	72	2	--
Nov 2002 [N=741]	25	71	4	--
Nov 2000 [N=841]	43	55	2	--
Pew Nov 1998 <sup>21</sup> [N=315]	34	63	3	--
Pew Nov 1996 <sup>22</sup> [N=215]	31	69	0	--

<sup>20</sup> Nov 2004 question asked of all internet users. Results shown here reflect only internet users who voted.

<sup>21</sup> Pew Nov 1998 trend based on a Pew Research Center survey conducted October 26-December 1, 1998 among 2,000 adults nationwide, including 1,993 internet users.

<sup>22</sup> Pew Nov 1996 trend based on a Pew Research Center survey conducted October 21-31, 1996 among 1,003 internet users. Question wording was: "Has any of the information you have received online about the 1996 elections influenced your choice of candidates?"

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<sup>i</sup> Nov 2000B trends based on the Pew Research Center for People and the Press November 2000 Re-Interview Survey, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates. [N=1,113 voters, those who said they voted in the 2000 elections]. Interview dates: November 10-12, 2000.

<sup>ii</sup> November 1996 trends based on the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press November 1996 Re-Interview Survey, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates. [N=1,012 voters]. Interview dates: November 7-10, 1996.

<sup>iii</sup> November 1992 trends based on the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press November 1992 Re-Interview Survey, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates. [N=1,012 voters]. Interview dates: November 5-8, 1992.