Facebook Changing the Face of Voting: How the Internet and Social Networking Sites Affected Youth Voting Behaviors in the 2008 Election

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So What?

- Voting behavior is always being researched
  - In 2006 there were 42 million eligible voters aged 18-29
  - 2008 saw record numbers of youth turnout
- "…mobilizing young voters creates a larger, more vibrant voting base in the long-run, re-energizing our nation's democracy." (youth mobilization tactics)

Why I care

Obama carried the youth vote in 2008 and some believe the youth are the ones who won him the election. What made him so appealing to young voters? I believe it was his campaign's superior use of the Internet and Social Networking sites.

Literature Review: Youth Results in 2008

- Von Drehle, 2008: The Year of the Youth Vote
- Milner, 2010: online youth civic engagement?
- CIRCLE

Internet Effects

Tolbert & McNeal, 2003: Internet access=more voting

Bachman, et. al., 2010: narrowing participation gap

Smith, 2009: Internet use for 2008 campaign

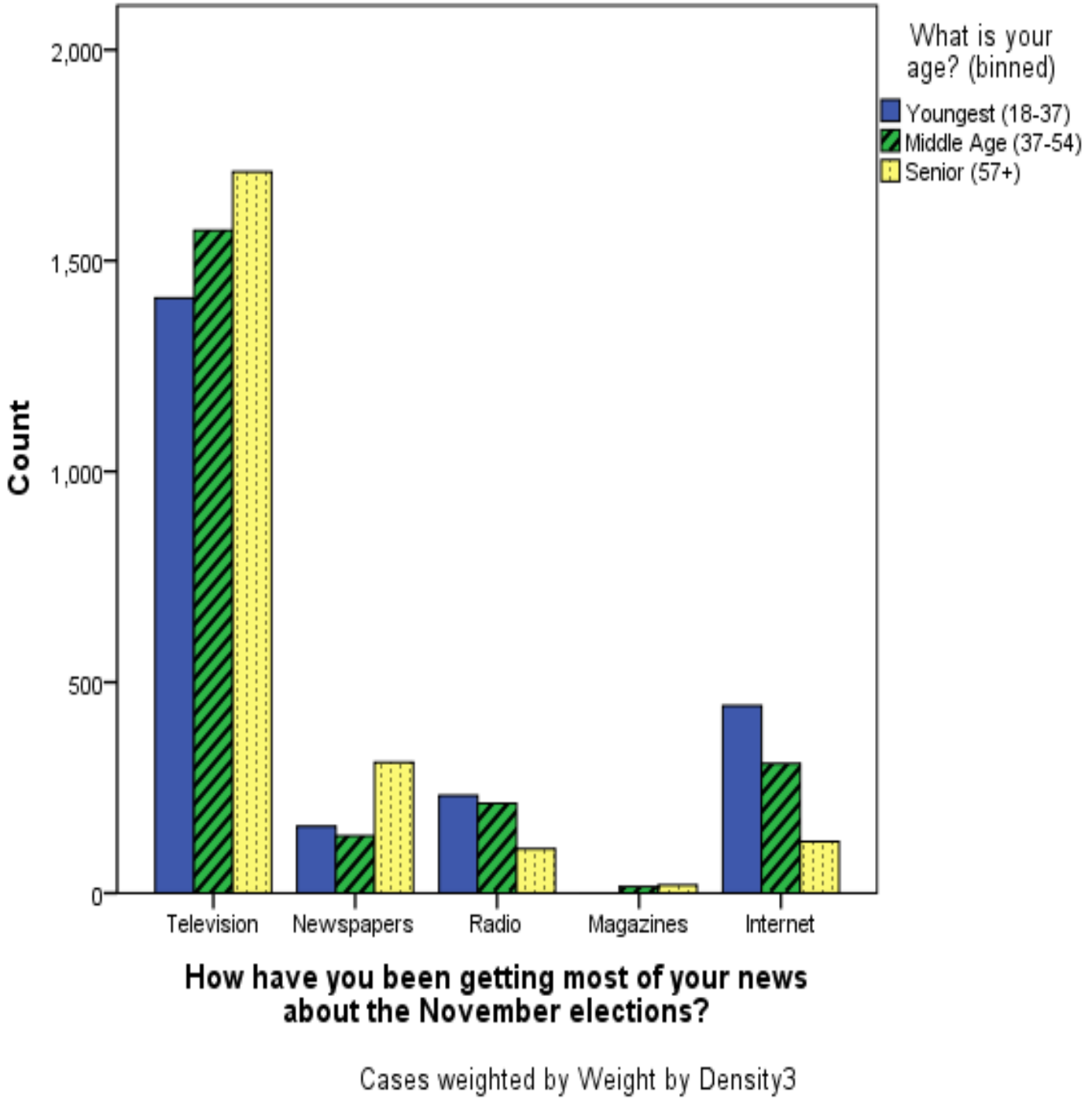
Data

- PEW Internet and American Life Project (Princeton Survey Research Associates) "November 2008 Post-Election Tracking Survey"

	Vote for Obama	Vote for McCain
18-24	**74.7%**	25.3%
	(357)	(121)
25-34	59.6%	40.4%
	(482)	(327)
35-44	52.9%	47.1%
	(490)	(436)
45-54	57.3%	42.7%
	(553)	(412)
55-64	59.7%	40.3%
	(448)	(302)
65+	52.8%	47.2%
	(440)	(394)
Internet as main news source	**55.9%**	44.1%
	(386)	(304)
Other main news source	58.4%	41.6%
	(2401)	(1710)

Relationship between Age, Political News Source, and 2008 Vote

Chi-square (age) = 75.853
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .000
Lambda (age) = .000
Chi-square (Internet) = 1.854
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .173
Lambda (Internet) = .000


What is your age? (binned)
Youngest (18-37)
Middle Age (37-54)
Senior (57+)
Count
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
Television
Newspapers
Radio
Magazines
Internet
How have you been getting most of your news about the November elections?
Cases weighted by Weight by Density3

Relationship between Social Network Use and Age

Chi-square (18-24 SNS user) =.767
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .381
Lambda (18-24 SNS user) = .000
Chi-square (total SNS user) = .002
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .966
Lambda (total SNS user) = .000
Chi-square (18-24 SNS post) = 13.153
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .000
Lambda (18-24 SNS post) = .000
Chi-square (total SNS post) =8.224
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .004
Lambda (total SNS post) = .000

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
SNS user	**76% (98)**	46.5% (58)	81.8% (54)	59.5% (22)	100% (14)	100% (5)
Not user	71.8% (191)	74% (225)	55.9% (147)	59.8% (79)	78.8% (41)	18.2% (2)
SNS post	**80.9% (144)**	56.9% (78)	73.7% (70)	60.6% (20)	84.2% (16)	
No post	63.6% (110)	67.9% (171)	54.4% (99)	59.5% (72)	83% (39)	46.7% (7)

Logistic Regression

Vote for Obama by Age

Model estimate and model summary: Logged odds (vote for Obama in 2008) = a+b(age)

Model estimates	Coefficient	Significance	Odds Ratio	Percentage change in odds
Constant	.768			
Age	-.009	**.000**	.991	-.9%
Model summary	**Value**	**Significance**		
Change in -2 log likelihood	**32.727**	**.000**		
Cox-Snell R-square	.007			
Nagelkerke R-square	.009			

Vote for Obama by Age and Internet News Source

Model estimates and model summary: Logged odds (vote for Obama in 2008) = a + b1 (age) + b2 (Internet news source)

Model estimates	Coefficient	Significance	Odds Ratio	Percentage change in odds
Constant	.835			
Age	-.010	**.000**	.990	-1%
Internet news source	-.205	**.016**	.815	-18.5%
Model summary	**Value**	**Significance**		
Change in -2 log likelihood	**38.524**	**.000**		
Cox-Snell R-square	.008			
Nagelkerke R-square	.011			

Model estimates	Coefficient	Significance	Odds Ratio	Percentage change in odds
Constant	.125			
Age	.006	.324	1.006	.6%
Black non-Hispanic	3.634	.000	37.870	3,687%
Student	.309	.065	1.362	36.2%
2007 income	-.140	.000	.870	-13%
High School education	.793	.009	2.210	121%
Some College education	.715	.016	2.043	104.3%
Beyond College education	1.111	.000	3.038	203.8%
Internet news source	.183	.232	1.200	20%
SNS user	-.231	.126	.794	-20.6%

Model summary	Value	Significance
Change in -2 log likelihood	145.613	.000
Cox-Snell R-square	.115	
Nagelkerke R-square	.158	

Logistic Regression

Vote for Obama, News Source and Internet Use against Control Variables

What's next?

Romano, 2012

Milner, 2010

Peters, 2012