DEFINING CREATED MEDIA:
HOW POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS ARE BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN PAID AND EARNED MEDIA

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Georgetown university
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts
in Communication, Culture and Technology

By

David Robert Seawright, B.A.

Washington, D.C.
April 24, 2013

Defining Created Media:

How Political Campaigns are Bridging the Gap Between Paid and Earned Media

David Robert Seawright, B.A.

Thesis Advisor: Diana Owen, Ph.D.

Abstract

Political campaigns, parties and organizations are no longer limited to paid and earned media to deliver persuasive messaging to potential voters. Instead, campaigns can make political content directly available to the public online without paid placement or journalistic reporting. This research explores how campaigns are bridging the gap between paid and earned media by defining created media, exploring four characteristics that make created media distinct from paid media and earned media. Furthermore, it quantifies how Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc. used created media through a case study of Twitter and the 2012 election.

The research and writing of this thesis
are dedicated to my wife, Kendall,
who supported me every step of the way.

Love,
David

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

THERE ARE VERY FEW sure things in politics, and a quick analysis of the last eight years makes this truth painfully obvious. President George W. Bush's 2004 campaign, led by political strategist Karl Rove, exposed a "fundamental change" in electoral strategy due to a greater understanding and accessibility to data by "unearth[ing] every available fact on individual voters – what they eat, drive, buy their kids, who they really are – and used that information to persuade them to vote for George W. Bush" (McCoy). The Bush campaign proceeded to combine publicly available voting records with consumer data to predict the party identification and propensity of certain individuals to vote, which in turn informed the campaign on how to target these prospective voters with the campaign's desired messages.

The innovations employed by Rove formed merely the foundation for what was to come. By 2008, then-Senator Barack Obama and the Democratic Party pushed the digital realm even further to mobilize supporters, fundraise and collect data about voters in a way that both 2004 presidential teams could only have imagined. In the final two months of the 2008 cycle alone, Obama for America gathered 223 million new data points on voters and grew the Democratic National Committee's voter file by ten-times what it had been in 2004 (Kreiss, 71). The result? Only four years after Rove boasted of a "period of dominance" that would last a generation or more (Lemann), the Democrats won a super-majority in Washington, D.C. with control of the House of Representatives, the Senate and the White House.

But just two years later, the Republican Party (GOP) unveiled new strategies of its own – including an early adoption of social media platforms like Twitter – to regain a

house majority (Lassen and Brown; Williams and Gulati). In November of 2012, President Obama pushed the envelope even further so as to defy the odds of a stagnant economy, record unemployment and skyrocketing federal debt to defeat Mitt Romney and retain control of the White House due, in large part, to a sophisticated get-out-the-vote (GOTV) operation that prompted leading Republicans to assert that Democrats were running an entirely different campaign than they were ("Obama School," Miller).

If there is a sure thing in politics today, it is that voter identification and solicitation efforts are changing and will continue to change more rapidly than ever. As the political game evolves, the way scholarship studies and analyzes campaign content and strategies must also evolve. Relying on traditional definitions and theoretical frameworks will no longer produce scholarship on par with the caliber of political campaigns today.

It is for these reasons that this research exists. The current methodology and terminology that defines research on political campaigns is behind the times and inhibits scholars' ability to analyze properly a drastically changing area of study. As a result, scholarly research is either outdated upon publication or is replaced with journalistic research – a necessary arm of political analysis that lacks the depth of scholarship through advanced research methods.

Campaigns and political scientists alike have long relied on two terms to categorize message delivery in the context of political campaigns: paid media (advertising) and earned media (news coverage). However, the means of message delivery have evolved beyond these clear-cut categories due to the rise of digital media. Today, campaigns can deliver messages directly to voters without paid placement or

reporting by a news agency. I will explore how modern campaigns are bridging the gap between paid and earned media as *created media* in two ways: first, by answering a conceptual question – what are created media? – and second, by answering an empirical question – how did the two major presidential campaigns use created media during the 2012 election? I will accomplish these ends by providing a conceptual definition of created media and then performing a case study of Twitter's use by both major 2012 presidential campaigns since Twitter was a key outlet of created media employed by both Romney for President, Inc. – the Republican nominee's campaign operation – and Obama for America – the political operation that twice elected President Barack Obama.

There are three primary goals in conducting this research. First, the terminologies of earned and paid media are archaic and limiting. Proper political science research on campaigns cannot be conducted while this terminology is the industry standard. Without this new category of *created media*, scholars will remain inhibited by the stanadard definitions and will be unable to expand research into the new messaging realm of 21st century American politics. Second, my case study of Twitter will provide contextual examples of created media in action while providing specific and detailed examples of how created media were used during the 2012 presidential campaign. By coding a significant amount of content produced by both Romney for President, Inc. and Obama for America, this research will produce a statistical analysis of how Twitter functioned during the final three weeks of the general election cycle, providing scholarly insight into recent electoral politics that are otherwise unstudied. Third, this research will provide a foundation for future research to apply my definition of created media as the digital space – and how campaigns use it – continues to evolve.

This research will methodically define created media and analyze their use in the 2012 election by establishing the current theoretical frameworks of paid and earned media from previous literature (Chapter 2) before offering a concrete definition of created media and the four characteristics that distinguish created media from its paid and earned counterparts (Chapter 3). I will then provide an introduction to Twitter as a campaign tool and offer definitions to terminology that are unique to Twitter (Chapter 4) and outline the sampling and coding process of tweets (Chapter 5). Finally, I will discuss the findings of my statistical analysis, which show the effectiveness of Obama for America's created media strategy on Twitter and the systemic failure of Romney for President, Inc. on the same medium (Chapter 6).

Political science scholarship needs to reach a level of analytical sophistication that matches the field being studied. To achieve this end, we must first address the terminology and theoretical frameworks that serve as the groundwork of campaign research. At its core, that is the focus of this research. It aims to return to the basics by revisiting widely accepted definitions and building upon them to serve as the foundation for future research that will develop theoretical frameworks that meet the 21st century standard of politics.

CHAPTER 2: PREVIOUS LITERATURE

BARACK OBAMA FUNDAMENTALLY changed politics: the first-ever black president forever altered the way that the American presidency will be viewed and who the American people see as viable candidates to occupy the White House. But he – and the operation his staff members created, called Obama for America – also profoundly altered the way that the campaigns that get candidates elected to office function. The tactics employed by Obama for America in the 2008 election, when then-Senator Obama defeated his Republican opponent, Senator John McCain, were a major discussion topic even after President Obama took the oath of office for his second term as the leader of the free world. The analytical and practical tools unleashed by Obama for America in the 2012 were innovative and enormously successful, but research has barely scratched the surface of the function and practical application of these tools.

While the political class of journalists, pundits, campaign consultants and scholars furiously try to study both of Obama's victorious presidential elections, few things are as obvious as this: the level of sophistication employed by Obama for America to target voters, deliver specifically crafted messages to those voters and inspire them to turn out at the polls was nothing short of remarkable. Take, for instance, this anecdotal example from then-Senator Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2008, as detailed by Sasha Issenberg in *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns*:

> A data analyst at Obama's Chicago headquarters was reviewing the hundreds of individual-level variables thrown into microtargeting algorithms and realized that one – mass-transit ridership – played an outsized role in predicting which Wisconsin voters were most likely to support Obama. The analyst knew the campaign would already try to mobilize these turnout targets through mail and phone calls, but he thought his new finding pointed to yet one more medium in which it should be

able to reach them where they spent time – provided it could be done as efficiently. The analyst alerted one of the campaign's media planners, who called each of the public transit agencies in Wisconsin to see which of them allowed advertisers to target particular routes, stops, or depots instead of covering the whole system at once. Milwaukee did, and so the media planner called over someone from the campaign's graphics department, and together they made a map showing Milwaukee precincts where individuals with high support scores were clustered, and a series of transparencies for each of the city's bus routes. They laid the transparencies atop the support map until they found lines that intersected their target precincts, and sent an order to GMMB, the campaign's lead advertising agency.

Danny Jester, a GMMB vice president and media director responsible for the Obama account, had never processed a request quite like this. Jester placed many of Obama's ads, as his agency had for John Kerry's campaign four years earlier. For a presidential campaign, this typically meant broadcast or cable television, or sometimes radio. Maybe a candidate for city council or county commission would buy bus ads, because they were easier to produce than television spots and intuitively made sense when thinking about geographically constrained electorates, but no one at this level ever proposed putting outdoor advertising on the schedule. Among those who placed political ads, progress had been treated as effectively synonymous with the introduction of new delivery devices. The half-century-long history of refinements in media targeting were a story of technological innovation: moving from buying national ads to local ones in key markets, and then shifting from broadcast waves to cable television, where narrow audiences could be more easily pinpointed. Internet advertising, with its ability to track users' movements through cookies and interests through search engines, was the latest breakthrough.

Obama aggressively bought ads in all of those media, including $16 million in online advertising, among it deep reaches into mobile devices. With no hoopla, however, the campaign also bought bus ads. Milwaukee didn't have the inventory available on the routes Jester requested, but other cities did, and Jester started writing checks. Soon Obama's ads were rolling through select buses in ten cities nationwide, including Philadelphia, Miami, Denver, Flint, and Akron. The most technologically advanced campaign in history had so thoroughly mastered the politics of individual data and testing that it found new value in electioneering tactics many had abandoned as hopelessly last-century. "There's all this shit we used to say no to in campaigns – bus benches, mass-transit advertising, *PennySavers*, what's that sock they stick the newspaper in? – because we used to do it before TV got dominant," says Larry Grisolano, who coordinated all of the campaign's public-opinion research and media buys. "Now if I know that there are twenty-seven people I want to reach and they all cluster around this bus bench, I'll buy

> that bus bench. And if I know these twenty-seven people read the *PennySaver*, I'll buy an ad in the *PennySaver*." (274-375)

Issenberg is an American author and journalist who covered the 2008 campaign, for the *Boston Globe* and in 2013 serves as a columnist for *Slate* and the Washington Correspondent for *Monocle*. Although it took him nearly four years to publish his analysis of the 2008 election, it is both thorough and thoughtful regarding the changing dynamics of political strategy – a trend that Obama's 2008 effort turned into an avalanche of data, targeting and strategic messaging.

Kenski, Hardy and Jamieson released their own analysis of the 2008 election, *The Obama Victory*, two years after it happened. It tells a story of Obama for America "harnessing the capacities of new technologies" to deliver "traditional messages in nontraditional ways," creating direct channels of communication with voters unlike any campaign before it ever had (307). Among the "nontraditional" channels discussed are email and SMS text messaging, both of which Obama for America used to great success. However, there were notable absences from their analysis. Not only was outdoor advertising on buses not discussed, but neither were various forms of new media. Social media giant Facebook merits nary a mention. Indeed, other forms of social media that are staples in the political discussion today – like Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and Pintrest – are also absent from their analysis because they were either not of prominence or existence in 2008.

The way that political campaigns function and the tools that they use to deliver messages to voters change more rapidly than scholars and political observers have been able to publish their work. By the time *The Obama Victory* was published in 2010, the

United States was once again in the middle of a federal election cycle and campaigns were using entirely new "nontraditional" channels to deliver messaging to voters. This reality leaves scholarly researchers between a rock and a hard place – either race to be published and leave critical elements completely out of an analysis, or perform due diligence, weave their arguments within the context of previous research and publish their work numerous election cycles behind the times, when the researched political tactics are outdated and may even have been replaced. Even with a quick turnaround, Kenski, Hardy and Jamieson faced this reality in 2010, when a newly prominent social media platform called Twitter helped propel the GOP not only to regain a majority in the House of Representatives, but do so in style, producing a 63-seat swing (Lassen and Brown; Williams and Gulati).

Created Media: A New Concept

THE PRESENTED RESEARCH aims to add new terminology to the realm of political science research with a definition that is firmly rooted in previous scholarship on the methods of political message delivery. This concept is adaptable to the current media reality of rapidly changing platforms and media functions. Properly defining created media and suggesting its home between paid media and earned media requires that a more complete understanding of paid and earned media and their existing definitions must first be explored.

Paid Media

Paid media are when "a candidate and/or party will pay for a form of…communication that promotes their superior attributes or policies over those of their opponents and that is designed to elicit specific behaviors, such as voting, and/or increased awareness of the candidate or party" for which a campaign, party or political organization pays for (Hughes, 164). By definition, paid media are costly: some analysis suggests that a campaign may allocate 65 percent of its overall budget on paid media (Pelosi, 78). Even when campaign expenditures extend into the hundreds of millions of dollars, paid media still demand the majority of a campaign's operating budget: in 2008, Obama for America spent about 50 percent of its total budget on paid media – over $380 million – with $20 million going to print advertising, $21 million to digital advertising, and $338 million for broadcast and cable television and radio (Kay). Candidates in 2008 across parties and ballots spent over $1 billion on television alone, with $1.163 million on local television stations, $200 million on local cable, $34 million on network television, and $19 million on national cable buys (Johnson, 32).

Although advertising in the 21st century often requires a budget of millions of dollars, paid media is as old as the American republic. History indicates that Thomas Jefferson's 1796 presidential campaign paid men on horseback to deliver negative messaging on handbills about his opponent, John Adams, throughout the state of Massachusetts (Jamieson, 5). By 1924, paid media extended from handbills to the airwaves, with both John W. Davis, a Democrat, and Calvin Coolidge, a Republican, buying radio airtime to broadcast speeches. After Republicans outspent Democrats three to one on radio time and won the election, paid media on radio took off. In 1928, both sides paid for the first radio advertising spots and by 1934 campaigns began hiring

advertising agencies and the first political consultants to craft their paid media messaging (Diamond and Bates, 36).

Less than two decades later, the first ever presidential candidate turned to television advertising when Dwight D. Eisenhower filmed a series of 36 television commercials, called "Eisenhower Answers America," in a New York City studio. Rosser Reeves, a famous Madison Avenue advertising executive, produced the ads, which featured seemingly "everyday" Americans asking Eisenhower questions and the candidate responding (Diamond and Bates, ix).

With that, an onslought of paid media on television began. Today, paid media in campaigns can include any number of mediums. Trent, Friedenberg, and Denton outline a long list of potential paid media methods: "brochures, newsletters, questionaires, letters, billboards, yard signs, bumper stickers, newspaper advertisements, magazine advertisements, matchbooks, buttons, pencils, computer bulletin boards, faxes, Internet home pages, social media ands, and, of course, radio and television commercials" (324). Their categories of paid media, including the goals and strengths of those media, are presented in **Table 2.1**.

The inherent upside of paid media merits the financial cost: paid media offer a campaign, party or political organization complete control over their message (Burton and Shea, 167) and, most importantly, they successfully move numbers. Ridout and Franz conducted a study on the effectiveness of political advertising and concluded that paid media influences the way that people vote, especially in highly competitve races or when an incumbent is being challenged. Moreover, they found political advertising to be

persuasive even to low-information voters and committed partisans, meaning it is broadly effective in altering vote choice (145-146).

While paid media are effective, they are not the only means by which political campaigns deliver their message to voters Instead, it is a major portion of a larger media mix of campaign messaging that includes other media, including earned media – discussed below – and created media, the newest addition to the campaign messaging arsenal.

Earned Media

Earned media are not as clearly discernable as paid media, but their prevalence in campaign media strategy both throughout history and today is obvious. Earned media are "news coverage on television, on radio, in the papers, or on Web-based outlets, where others must be persuaded about the news value of one's message" (Burton and Shea, 177). Another definition of earned media is "positive news media coverage of an event, issue, or person, initiated by a campaign" (Lynch, 157).

Lynch goes on to note that earned media have been a "staple of public relations since antiquity" and have played a significant role in American politics since before the Revolution. American patriots circulated pamphlets about the Boston Massacre to garner press attention and unite colonists around the cause. The first orchestrated earned media operation, meanwhile, was on William McKinley's presidential campaign in 1896 when it "created a publicity bureau, which disseminated press releases and cartoons to the news media and posters and pamphlets to voters. The Republicans spent $3.5 million on that campaign and at least $500,000 on publicity and press bureau activities" (Lynch, 160).

Today, every political campaign strives to use earned media to deliver its message to voters through the news media.

While earned media are a common portion of the campaign and political science lexicon today, this terminology was not widely accepted until the late 1980s when campaign consultants – and the campaigns that paid them – noted that winning the attention of reporters was not free at all (Lynch, 160). The term "earned media" first appeared in writing in a *Newsweek* article in 1988 by Alter and Fineman:

> Satellite hookups and cable TV, which furnish saturation coverage of the campaigns, have made the search for the perfect line a near obsession. Campaigns spend – and often waste – thousands of dollars boiling down all of the issues into broad themes that can be used in both 'paid media' (political TV ads) and 'earned media' (which recently replaced 'free media' as the favored euphemism for news). (Alter and Fineman, 22)

Before long, political scientists joined campaign consultants in embracing the transition to earned media from free media as the various events that campaigns use attract reporters' attention come at a cost to a campaign through time and money. Take political rallies, for instance. A campaign must devote employees, often called an advanced staff, to organize the event. To attract news coverage, campaigns book large, picturesque venues, invest in lighting and sound equipment to improve the quality of photography and video coverage, and print signs and display flags to emphasize the enthusiasm and patriotism of the campaign's supporters, none of which is free (University of Texas at Austin). As Burton and Shea put it, the terminology shifted from free to earned media "in order to emphasize the hard work that goes into the quest for coverage" (177).

Earned media, like its paid counterparts, have distinct advantages that they offer to a campaign. First, earned media borrow credibility from the journalistic agency

reporting the campaign's message, as such agencies are generally viewed as objective observers of political activities. Second, earned media are delivered to an audience that is already engaged politically by watching the news, reading the newspaper, or visiting political news websites online. As such, the audience for earned media is active – a sharp contrast to the passive audience to which paid media are delivered. And third, earned media are affordable. Despite the fact that political events geared at capturing the attention of reporters come at a cost to the campaign, there is no required paid delivery – the journalistic outlet covering the event places the story on air or online without payment from the campaign (Burton and Shea, 177).

Herein lies the key difference between paid media and earned media. Earned media do not require paid placement – campaigns do not pay magazines, newspapers, digital outlets, radio or television stations to cover such political events. As such, earned media are a much more affordable method of delivery than paid media and can be equally or even more effective: a significant amount of coverage from the news media can cut through the clutter of political messaging in a way that advertising on over-saturated airwaves cannot (Graf, 53).

This is not to say that earned media are without disadvantages. Obviously, campaigns cannot ensure coverage. Considerable effort and expense may be expended only for the various media outlets to ignore the event. Moreover, when candidates or campaigns use earned media to deliver messages to voters, they cede control of the delivery date, framing of the event or issues and the substance of the message to the journalistic outlets covering the event (Stegar, Kelly and Wrighton; Flowers, Haynes and Crespin). The loss of control of the message is in sharp contrast to paid media, whose

greatest asset to the campaign is complete control over the message delivered to voters, as well as control over how it is delivered, when it is delivered and to whom it is delivered.

Like paid media, earned media in the context of political campaigns date back to the beginning of our country. George Washington used political rallies and newspaper coverage to vilify his opponents in this country's first contested presidential election in 1972 (Jamieson, 5). Today, campaign strategists go to great lengths to garner press attention: tossing the coin before a televised football game or frequenting the late-night talk show rotation. Some campaigns rely on earned media simply because they cannot afford advertising: during the 2008 Republican presidential primary, the campaign of former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee estimated it earned $200 million in media attention by giving 20 television interviews each morning for four months leading up to the Iowa caucuses (Johnson, 33). Huckabee's strategy proved effective as his campaign rode the wave of earned media to a victory in Iowa, even though it was heavily outspent on the airwaves by opponents.

Today, the target audience of most political events is not only, or even predominantly, the people who attend the events, but instead are the viewers of the nightly news or the readers of the next morning's newspaper (University of Texas at Austin). However, political events are not the only tactic employed by campaigns to attract the attention of reporters. The wide variety of earned media strategies common to campaigns are shown in **Table 2.2**.

Paid-Turned-Earned Media

PAID AND EARNED MEDIA are both part of a larger campaign communications plan and media mix, and effective campaigns will coordinate their paid and earned media effort to deliver a cohesive message across mediums to potential voters. Both paid and earned media should reach a critical mass by election day to deliver a strong closing argument to voters as they head to the polls (Pelosi, 124-125).

While paid and earned media plans ideally operate on separate tracks headed toward the same final destination, the two can readily overlap. Under the right circumstances, the paid media strategy or content from a campaign can attract the attention of political reporters, creating a concept that I call "paid-turned-earned media." While paid-turned-earned media is most commonly tied to famous examples from presidential campaigns – some of which I will discuss below – the coverage of advertising by political journalists is substantial (Ridout and Smith, 605).

Perhaps the most famous example of paid media in American history, President Lyndon B. Johnson's "Daisy Girl" ad in 1964, gained its notoriety through the earned media it garnered rather than the reach of the advertising campaign behind it. In fact, "Daisy Girl" ran on television only once, but by capturing the attention of the news media with its extreme message, the ad was the subject of discussion and rebroadcast on the nightly news nationwide (Ridout and Smith, 598). As a result, "Daisy Girl" remains the epitome of paid-turned-earned media by attracting more attention from the news media than any other political ad in presidential campaign history (Leighley, 211).

President Johnson's now-famous ad is by no means the only example of paid media transforming into earned media: the 1988 "Willie Horton" ad, 2004's "Swift Boat" campaign, and the "Harry and Louise" ads from the 1990s all show that earned media can

amplify a campaign's paid media by delivering the message to more individuals than commercial advertising alone could. And while the most famous examples are all national ads from presidential campaigns, local news outlets find the paid media from local races to be newsworthy as well, creating the same paid-turned-earned media effect (Fowler and Ridout, 2).

Ridout and Franz dissect a lesser-known example of paid-turned-earned media: an advertisement produced by the National Republican Senatorial Committee that ran in Tennessee in 2006. The ad, which used humor and racial undertones, was seen by 81% of Tennessee residents, many of whom came across the spot via the news media. The ABC and CBS national news broadcasts ran segments about the ad, NBC ran three segments on the ad between October 20 and Election Day, the *Washington Post* printed six articles about the ad, as did the *New York Times* and the *Associated Press* added in 16 articles of its own. A local paper, the *Chattanooga Times and Free Press*, ran eight stories about the ad and an additional three opinion columns. "In sum, even if Tennessee voters did not happen to catch an airing of the ad that was paid for by the NRSC, they still would have had ample opportunity to become familiar with it" (124-125).

According to Darrell West, the coverage of political advertising in the news media has increased over time. His analysis, which tracked mentions of political ads in coverage by the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and *CBS Evening News* since the 1970s, found a considerable jump in paid-turned-earned media throughout the 1980s and 1990s (70). Ridout and Franz performed a similar analysis of paid-turned-earned media and concluded that coverage of paid media has increased both in the amount of coverage and the proportion of political coverage devoted to political advertising (126).

Not all coverage of political advertising occurs at the national level. Fowler and Ridout conducted a study of local news coverage in nine different races during the 2006 election cycle, analyzing local newspaper and television news in five Midwestern states (Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin) of nine different races (five gubernatorial races and four U.S. Senate races) between September 7 and November 6, 2006. Overall, they concluded that both local newspapers and television stations contributed to the paid-turned-earned media phenomenon (12-13). Local outlets are prone to the same trends in covering political advertising as their national media counterparts, writing that "in all but the least competitive races, mentions of advertising in news coverage are substantial, surpassing one-third of total coverage in some races in some media outlets" (19).

The aforementioned studies make it clear that news organizations devote time and energy to cover political advertising as paid media strategy embodies the "process" stories that journalists crave. Moreover, these organizations both at the local and national level are committing more airtime and page-space to cover advertising with each ensuring election cycle. Ridout and Franz hypothesize as to why news organizations so eagerly turn paid media into earned media. First, the introduction of an ad into the political conversation is something new for reporters, who often hear the same stump speech from candidates multiple times a day, to cover. Second, negative advertising can be framed as a conflict between two candidates, much to the pleasure of political reporters. And third, advertising is easy to cover and requires little actual reporting from a journalist (129).

The concept of paid-turned-earned media is important to understand as these overlaps signify the cohesion of a campaign's message across mediums. While these categories exist separately from one another, they are known to overlap and are indicative of a campaign's larger media mix. In the next chapter, I will discuss how the concept of paid-turned-earned media applies to created media, which also is prone to overlap with the other messaging tactics within a campaign's media mix.

Owned Media and Political Campaigns

POLITICAL SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP has failed to expand beyond the definitions of paid and earned media. The corporate marketing industry, however, has touched on the reality that the forms of message delivery in the 21st century do not all fit nicely into the two previously designated categories. As a result, these marketers have discussed the term "owned media", which "is media owned and managed directly by the firm, typically the firm's website and auxiliary websites" (Pauwels, Srinivasan and Rutz). Others have defined owned media as "any asset owned by the brand, including a website, microsite, social networking presence, a mobile application, or even vending machines, retail stores, and more" (Burcher, 9). Forrester, an independent market research firm, provides greater context to the concept of owned media, claiming that owned media are channels owned by a brand that are meant to "build for longer-term relationships with existing potential customers and earn media" (Corcoran).

There are those who argue that marketing political candidates is the same as marketing corporate products; after producing the first ever series of campaign commercials made for television, Rosser Reeves famously compared the marketing of a

presidential candidate to marketing soap (Gower, 63). However, many analysts contend that marketing a candidate is entirely different than selling soap for multiple reasons. First, voters thoughtfully consider their vote choice in a way that soap consumers do not. Second, choosing a candidate is decidely different than purchasing a product because the results of an election do not begin until after the victor begins to govern. And third, the campaign environment is full of changes and unforseen obstacles that require flexibility, innovation and quick decisions from political professioanls in a way that corporate marketers do not face when selling soap.

There are also significant differences in the philosophy behind political and corporate marketing. Political campaigns are a zero sum game. They offer a winner and loser based on the percentage of voters who choose each candidate. On the other hand, winners in corporate marketing are decided based upon numerous factors, not necessarily market share. More importantly, corproate decisions are made based on market research while campaigns are at least defined by the political ideology supported by the candidate. Just because public opinion polling indicates the unpopularity of a certain position, a candidate may not adopt that position based on the conviciton of his or her political beliefs (Newman, 9-10).

It is not the purpose of this research to engage in the debate regarding the merits of political versus corporate marketing. However, this research does draw a clear distinction between owned media as defined by corporate marketers and its political counterpart, created media. By definition, political campaigns require the development of short-term relationships – within months a candidate must develop name-recognition, convince voters of his or her merits and ultimately win their vote. Unlike corporate

marketers who have multiple opportunities to win over a consumer – consumers must regularly return to the store to purchase more soap – voters only have one chance to choose between candidates seeking election.

Among the examples listed as owned media by corporate marketers are websites and social media profiles that are used to foster long-term relationships with potential consumers (Corcoran). Research indicates that the websites and social media profiles of campaigns do not foster such long-term relationships, but rather operate for a short period of time before being neglected after election day, when – even if a candidate is victorious – there is minimal value in regularly updated campaign materials (Westling, 7). If a candidate loses a race, his online presences are rendered all but useless. As such, the "long-term relationship" argument for owned media through social media is not reflected in campaign practices.

Furthermore, candidate websites have a decidedly different function than corporate websites. Gulati and Williams outline the many functions of a campaign website: informational content, involvement and engagement, voter mobilization and interactivity ("Closing Gaps," 56-65), all of which are distinct from the stated purpose of corporate websites. Their research also explores the role of fundraising on a candidate's website, and find that by 2008 raising money became a prominent purpose of candidate websites ("Social Networks," 2). Panagopoulos and Bergan, meanwhile, argue that websites are as effective a fundraising tool as they are a communcations tool (127). Indeed, Barack Obama raised "about $500 million" online in 2008 and an additional "$690 million digitally in 2012" (Scherer). Political fundraising is not limited to the

candidate's website, but fundraising appeals occur on Facebook (Small) and Twitter, for "social media allows a candidate to have increased fundraising capacity" (Berry, 33).

As such, the practical application of candidate websites and social media profiles – both of which are designated as owned media by corporate marketers – does not reflect the stated purpose of these online outlets by corporate marketers under the definiton of owned media. With decidedly different purposes and functions, the terminology of owned media does not transfer readily or effectively into the political sphere. By defining created media, which serves as the political counterpart to the owned media of corporate marketers, this research will fill this particular gap in the definitions of political message delivery.

Conclusions

DIGITAL MEDIA ALLOW politicians to have direct and unmediated contact with their constituencies (Lassen and Brown). Campaigns in the 21st century are actively using these tools to inform, engage, mobilize and interact with voters, and yet they exist without a clear definition from political scientists. These means of communication do not conform to the definitions of paid media or earned media, but rather embody their own characteristics and necessitate their own definition.

In the next chapter, I will define created media and discuss the four characteristics that all created media share. This definition will be distinct from paid and earned media, even though there exists an overlap between these forms of media similar to the concept of paid-turned-earned media in this chapter. Ultimately, through my definition and characteristics of created media, I will establish the context for my case study, which will

explore how Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc. used created media during the 2012 presidential election.

Table 2.1
Tactics, Purpose and Attributes of Paid Media

Tactic	Purpose	Examples / Attributes
Display Graphics		
	Create and reinforce name recognition	Examples include: billboards, posters, yard signs, bumper stickers, and buttons.
	Give a very quick impression of the candidate	Useful in reinforcing partisans who are already committed to the candidate.
	Serve as a reminder medium when other campaign activity is limited	Enhance the link between supporters and the candidate.
	Reach markets that other media cannot reach	Can help create a bandwagon effect among voters.
Brochures		
	A basic, generic brochure is the fundamental piece of campaign advertising for local races.	Provide a brief biography with several photos and a list of key issues of the campaign
	Serves as the introductory piece (and perhaps the only piece) of campaign literature.	Brochures are versatile – can be delivered as direct mail or directly by volunteers at events or while walking precincts.
Direct Mail		
	Allows the campaign to be highly selective in targeting audiences.	Direct mail allows the campaign to target an audience more precisely than virtually any other form of advertising.
	Some direct mail intends on persuading; other direct mail intends to fundraise.	Can be tailored to reflect the interests of a specific constituency.
		Allows for an extended message.

Table 2.1 (cont.)
Tactics, Purpose and Attributes of Paid Media

Tactic	Purpose	Examples / Attributes
Telephone Contact Services		
	Highly targetable and can be used both to persuade and fundraise	Target voters based on demographic characteristics and base persuasive messages on the group being called.
	Often coordinated with a direct mail campaign (will follow up a mail piece with a phone call)	Fundraising solicitations can be narrowly targeted and a precise script developed to use with various types of potential contributors
Print Advertising		
	Candidates can express themselves more fully than other types of paid advertising.	Provide for timeliness – the campaign can plan well in advance to determine precisely when it wants the advertisement to run, but normally the campaign can make changes relatively quickly.
	Popular formats include: mimic a news story layout or opinion column, testimonials or endorsements.	Effective means of quickly countering an opposition argument. Print publications do not run out of advertising inventory. Newspaper readers are voters.

Table 2.1 (cont.)
Tactics, Purpose and Attributes of Paid Media

Tactic	Purpose	Examples / Attributes
Radio		
	Increase name recognition through brief jingles	Allow for a variety of formats (:15, :30, :50, and 5-minute spots)
	Provide insight into a candidate's believes and into the candidate him/herself	Target by geography and demography based on station type (religious, country, news, sports, etc.)
	Present a reasonably complete analysis of one or perhaps more questions	Particularly effective in rural areas.
		More cost effective than television
Television		
	Reach large audiences based on geography	The only medium that is able to play to two senses: sight and sound
		Able to produce the largest audiences
		Allows for some degree of targeting

Source: Trent, Friedenberg and Denton, 328-347

Table 2.2
Tactics, Purpose and Attributes of Earned Media

Tactic	Purpose	Examples / Attributes
News Release		
	To market stories to journalists.	Engaging in an attempt to grab the attention of reporters who receive countless releases every day
	Opportunity for a campaign to put its best foot forward in order to "manage" the news.	Written in third person with action verbs relying on facts instead of generalities
	Announce candidate statements and upcoming events	Match the style of the targeted outlet
	Attempt to spin breaking news	Imitate journalistic style with a headline, photo, offset quote, and written in inverted pyramid style
	Highlight endorsements	
	Provide background facts that help reporters make sense of a race.	
News Conference		
	Bring candidates into a controlled environment to see and hear a candidate	Only gain attention if news conference follows a major event
	Allow for personal explanations of complex issues or dramatic campaign developments	Most candidates kick off their campaign with a news conference
	Give reporters an opportunity to ask questions	Can be used to level attacks, defend against opponents' chargers, introduce new rounds of campaign commercials, announce important endorsements, highlight fundraising activities, introduce celebrity supporters, etc.

Table 2.2 (cont.)
Tactics, Purpose and Attributes of Earned Media

Tactic	Purpose	Examples / Attributes
Media Events		
	To create an image that conveys a message before a single word is spoken	When things go right, news conferences result in great pictures and positive coverage
		When things go wrong, the message can be disastrous
Debates		
	Candidates in the debate format strive to make clear, brief and novel statements	New wrinkles and off-the-cuff deviations can draw media attention
	At times, candidates use debates to be confrontational	Being particularly aggressive or confrontation usually results in more earned coverage, however the result isn't always positive
	Ultimate used to reinforce campaign theme	If debate coverage reinforces themes articulated in paid media, the one-two punch can prove effective
Interviews		
	Bring candidates into an environment where they can be seen or heard in an in-depth, personal situation	Performed with print reporters or on talk shows on television or radio

Table 2.2 (cont.)
Tactics, Purpose and Attributes of Earned Media

Tactic	Purpose	Examples / Attributes
Editorial Page		
	Allows for a candidate to get his or her opinions placed within the normal structure of a newspaper	Can take the form of an op-ed (most advantageous but most difficult to get) or letter to the editor
		Editorial pages also endorse candidates, which can prove invaluable to campaigns.
Non-attributed information		
	Backgrounders or leaks are coordinated efforts with reporters who exchange anonymity for information	Background conversations are those that can be attributed to a non-specific source
	Campaigns will often leak critical information about their opponent that they do not want the campaign to be directly linked to.	Deep background exchanges should not be attributed at all, but they can be used to guide a reporters' research
		Off-the-record conversations should not be used in any way

Source: Burton and Shea, 182-190

CHAPTER 3: DEFINING CREATED MEDIA

THIS CHAPTER WILL PROVIDE a clear definition of created media, including well-crafted distinctions between paid, earned and created media. It also will break down the created media concept into four distinct categories based on its practical characteristics. These characteristics are the *point of origin*, *method of delivery*, *targeted audience* and *attempted virality* of created media. Thirdly, it will detail how these three media types can – and do – converge with one another. Finally, this chapter will illustrate the definition of created media – as well as created media's relationship with its paid and earned campaign counterparts – through the use of examples from the 2012 presidential election campaign.

Defining Created Media

WHAT ARE CREATED MEDIA? *Created media are media content made originally by a campaign, party or political organization that are made available to the public without paid placement and/or targeting and without being delivered as news from a reporting entity.*

This definition fits comfortably within the previously established definitions of paid and earned media. As defined in Chapter 2, paid media are when "a candidate and/or party will pay for a form of…communication that promotes their superior attributes or policies over those of their opponents and that is designed to elicit specific behaviors, such as voting, and/or increased awareness of the candidate or party" (Hughes, 164). Earned media, meanwhile, are "news coverage on television, on radio, in the papers, or on Web-based outlets, where others must be persuaded about the news value of one's

message" (Burton and Shea, 177). By definition, then, created media are distinct from their paid and earned counterparts. A campaign does not pay for created media to be delivered to an audience and they are not delivered as news coverage to the electorate.

Created media have four characteristics that support this definition and establish a clear separation of created media from the paid and earned counterparts. These characteristics are the point of origin, method of delivery, targeted audience and attempted virality of created media.

Point of Origin

CREATED MEDIA ARE one of three message delivery systems that a campaign, party or political organization has in its communications arsenal, complementing the concepts of paid and earned media as defined in Chapter 2. When a campaign wants to deliver a message to the public, it can do so through paid advertising, news coverage or created media. In all three cases, the point of origin is the campaign, party or political organization behind the messaging. This relationship is outlined in **Figure 3.1.**

The point of origin is a critical component of created media. Created media are content made originally by a campaign, party or political organization, either by personnel employed directly by the campaign or through contracted vendors or consultants. Open-source political content – or content created by campaign supporters without approval or funding from the campaign itself – may gain significant traction on the web, but as such content is not officially endorsed by the campaign, party or organization, it is not included within this definition. In many instances, the point of origin is indicated by the presence of a disclaimer, as required by the Federal Election

Commission (FEC), which explicitly states the campaign, party or organization that funded the production of the associated message. According to the FEC, disclaimers are required on all forms of "public communication," including messages transmitted by broadcast, cable, or satellite, print advertisements, outdoor advertising, mass mailing, telephone delivery systems, and other forms of political advertising.

However, the FEC does not regulate all forms of political messaging, meaning that not all forms of created media are denoted with a disclaimer. If media lack a disclaimer, the point of origin may still be accurately deciphered, often times by association with the campaign, party or political organization's web presence, including its official website (usually with a candidate-specific uniform resource locator, or URL) and linked accounts on platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. In most cases, the campaign, party or political organization associated with the account will be explicitly stated in the "about" section of these accounts.

Method of Delivery

ALTHOUGH CREATED MEDIA share a point of origin with paid media and earned media, they are differentiated by their method of delivery. Created media are made available to the public without paid placement or delivery as news from a reporting entity. This distinction is made in the method of delivery – created media are not delivered as advertising or by reporters as news – and is critical to the definition of created media and to a clear understanding of how created media are different than both paid and earned media.

In Chapter 2, I offered a historical and academic analysis of paid media, its roles in political campaigns and the various means employed by campaigns to use paid media to their political benefit. The various methods of delivery were outlined in **Table 2.1** and drawn from the research of Trent, Friedenberg and Denton. Their stated categories of paid media do not include digital methods of delivery such as email services, banner ads, YouTube advertising and ads run on popular social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, but the acting definition of paid media embodies these new additions to the political advertising toolbox. In such cases, a campaign, party or political organization pays to have a message delivered to an audience that touts the superior qualities of one candidate over another candidate (or candidates), even if that contrast is not specifically stated.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the various methods of paid media delivery in a relational context. Political campaigns can pay to deliver messages in the form of display graphics, brochures, direct mail, telephone calls, print advertising, email, radio advertising, television advertising and digital advertising. Some of these categories contain subsets: display graphics include billboards, yard signs and bumper stickers; print advertising includes ads run in newspapers and magazines; radio advertising includes broadcast and satellite radio; television advertising includes broadcast and cable television; lastly, digital advertising includes (but is not limited to) banner ads, Facebook ads, Twitter ads and advertisements on YouTube. Again, each of these categories and subsets are a method of paid delivery, and for that reason each falls into the larger category of paid media.

I also discussed the various methods of delivery for earned media. These methods, discussed originally by Burton and Shea, are outlined in depth in **Table 2.2** and show that the methods of earned media delivery are media events, debates, interviews, news conferences, news releases, editorial pages and non-attributed information. Many of these categories also have subsets: media events can include campaign rallies and photo ops, interviews can be conducted with television, radio, print, or online news organizations, editorial page content can take the form of an op-ed article or letter to the editor (and can appear both in print and online), and non-attributed information includes background conversations, coordinated leaks, and off-the-record conversations. Because each of these methods of delivery requires the persuasion of a reporting entity of the news value of a campaign's message, they all fall into the larger category of earned media. These relationships are presented in **Figure 3.3.**

By definition, created media differ greatly from paid and earned media at the point of delivery. Created media are neither paid nor earned, but rather they are made available to the public without paid placement or being delivered as news by a reporting agency. The methods of delivery for created media are many. Campaigns can use social media, the candidate's website, microsites, the candidate's blog, and web videos to make political messaging available to the public. And like the categories of paid and earned media delivery, the methods of delivery for created media have subsets. Social media can include (but are not limited to) popular platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram and Pintrest. Web videos, meanwhile, are most commonly uploaded to YouTube, the web's most popular video sharing platform. Each of these forms of created media delivery embodies the greater definition of created media. Because none require

paid placement or rely on a reporting organization to deliver a campaign's message to the public, they fall into the greater category of created media. The various forms of created media delivery are presented in a relational diagram in **Figure 3.4**.

Together, paid, earned and created media form a large spectrum of messaging capabilities available to campaigns, parties and political organizations. Today, a political operation can employ paid methods of delivery, earned methods of delivery and created methods of delivery. Each of these categories opens a wealth of opportunity for message delivery, expanding from television ads to posts on Twitter to news conferences and beyond. The big-picture messaging capabilities of campaigns today – and the relational structure of paid, earned and created media within a campaign's larger media plan – are illustrated in **Figure 3.5**.

There is an important distinction to be made between paid, earned and created media in regards to the cost of production. As I discussed in Chapter 2, paid media, by definition, are expensive due to the cost of paying for delivery. Similarly, earned media are not free– media events, news conferences, campaign rallies and more all come at a cost to the campaign – which led to the terminology change from free to earned media. The same is true for created media, for which campaigns must pay the cost of production, by way of the necessary equipment, staff or consultants, of the content that will be made available to the public.

To be sure, the cost of production can vary from extremely cheap to very expensive – from typing up a 140 character message on Twitter to a professionally-produced web video – but because the cost is incurred by the campaign at the point of production and not via the method of delivery, created media are distinct from paid

media. It is in the method of delivery, and whether or not the campaign pays specifically for that delivery, that distinguishes created media from paid media.

For example, Romney for President, Inc. used both television and the web to share video content with potential voters. In both cases, the campaign had to pay the cost of production to make the video, either by way of hiring a consultant or paying employees to perform the task (in addition to purchasing or leasing the necessary equipment to produce the video). However, in the case of television advertising, the campaign had to pay television stations to deliver that content to an audience. In the instance of web videos, meanwhile, the campaign did not pay for the video's delivery, but rather made it available to the public online. Therefore, Romney for President's created media content is distinct from its paid media content in the cost of the method of delivery.

Like any good conceptual definition, the concept of created media is crafted to be both specific and generic. It is specific in its separation from paid and earned media, especially in its method of delivery but is generic so that it can accommodate research on platforms and content forms that will shift or even change entirely over time. The generic nature of the definition is of particular importance to created media, for digital platforms and content forms evolve especially rapidly online.

A simple comparison of Barack Obama's 2008 and 2012 campaign strategies illustrates this point. Twitter was virtually nonexistent during Barack Obama's first run at the presidency. Four years later, his campaign structure operated dozens of Twitter accounts – including an account for the president himself (@BarackObama), an account for the First Lady (@MichelleObama), an account designated for rapid response

(@TruthTeam2012), and numerous state-specific accounts (@OFA_OH, @OFA_VA, @OFA_NV, etc.), to name a few. President Obama's campaign operation maintained each of these accounts and kept them active throughout the course of the general election. Had created media been defined following the 2008 election and relied on specific examples within the definition itself, only four years later Twitter would have rendered that definition obsolete. There is little question that new means of digital communication will be developed before the 2016 presidential race. The purpose of this definition is to function even as the current methods of created media delivery fade into digital irrelevance and new methods inevitably take their place.

Targeted Audience

THE COMBINATION OF PAID, earned and created media allows campaigns, parties and political organizations to take their messages across platforms and directly to the public in multiple ways. However, these types of media differ in the audience they target, and each audience is determined by the previously discussed methods of delivery. The result is three different targetable audiences and three types of media with their own strengths and weaknesses.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, paid media are both effective and costly because they, unlike earned media, allow a campaign to control completely the message that is delivered to the targeted audience. The campaign can select the audience that receives the message to varying levels of accuracy depending on the method of delivery (direct mail, for example, is more targetable than broadcast advertising on radio or television). Furthermore, the message is delivered directly to the audience even if the viewer is not

seeking political information. Members of the general public that consume other forms of media, from primetime television to gathering the mail, all receive political messaging without seeking it out for themselves. The result is a potentially large but passive audience that receives political advertising while consuming other forms of media. As such, paid media expand the reach of a campaign's message beyond the politically engaged members of the public and reach them where they are, without soliciting any sort of effort from the public to receive that political information. Perhaps most importantly, the message is delivered directly – the campaign, party or political organization responsible for the message has complete control over its content and tone. This relationship of paid media to its targeted audience is represented in **Figure 3.6.**

Just as earned media differ from paid media in their method of delivery, likewise their targeted audience differs from paid media. As established by Burton and Shea's definition – and the above section on method of delivery – earned media seek to persuade a reporting entity of the news value of a campaign's message. If and when a reporting entity is convinced of the news value of that message, it then transitions into the second portion of earned media's definition: coverage in print, radio, television, or web news publications or outlets, whereby the message is subject to the interpretation and framing of the reporter before being condensed and reproduced as a news story. As I discussed in Chapter 2, this reality is the inherent weakness of earned media – the campaign, party or political organization behind the message sacrifices control of the message itself in order to have it delivered as news to the public. Similarly, the campaign cedes control of targeting the message to specific audiences. The audience of earned media is determined by which reporting entity covers the campaign's message – and what members of the

public tune into that particular reporting entity's campaign coverage. While this limits the reach of a message delivered via earned media, it also allows for earned media messaging to access an engaged audience that is seeking out public information in the form of news. The relationship of earned media to its target audience is illustrated in **Figure 3.7.**

Created media are differentiated significantly from paid and earned media in their targeted audience. The key difference between created media and their paid and earned counterparts is that there is not an explicit delivery of the content. In the case of paid media, campaigns pay for advertising to be delivered to a targeted audience while earned media relies on the news media to deliver the message to an audience as a newsworthy story. With created media, the public, in some capacity, must seek out campaign content in the form of created media after the campaign makes it available to the public. In that way, created media are not *targeted* media, as specified by the original definition, but rather *available* media, meaning created media actually target an audience consisting of members of the public seeking out campaign content, be it on the candidate's website, web videos, social media, or any other method of created media delivery.

This is not to say that campaigns lack information about the members of the public who consume created media. Many of the current methods of created media delivery require a form of opt-in, in which a member of the public chooses to receive regular updates from the campaign in the form of created media. This opt-in can take the form of a "like" on Facebook, choosing to "follow" a campaign operated Twitter account or "subscribing" to a campaign's YouTube channel. In these cases, the campaign, party or political organization behind the original message can target these audiences specifically with a message, but it remains incumbent upon the receiver to opt-into these

methods of created media delivery (and they can choose to opt-out of receiving them at any time). In this way, even though the messages are delivered automatically to the receiver following the opt-in, the audience remains those members of the public seeking out campaign content.

Even the forms of created media delivery that lack any sort of subscription require some type of opt-in, even if the opt-in is as simple as typing the campaign's URL into a browser or clicking on a link to that website, so the prospective viewer must choose to visit these created media, so the targeted audience remains members of the public seeking political information, meaning media created by campaigns that are made available to the public are likely to have a smaller audience than content delivered through paid advertising or campaign news coverage. That audience, however, has opted-in to receiving that media in some capacity, and as such is likely more engaged and enthusiastic about the content than passive viewers of paid and earned media. The relationship of the message to the targeted audience of created media is detailed in **Figure 3.8.**

Paid-Turned-Earned Media

In many respects, created media combine the assets offered to campaigns by paid and earned media. Like paid media content, the campaign has complete control over created media content; a campaign's digital team controls the content of its website, social media channels and web videos. And like earned media, created media are extremely cost-effective. Without paid placement, the campaign, party or political organization behind the message pays only for the cost of production.

However, because of the required opt-in, campaigns, parties and political organizations employ various methods to expand the reach of created media beyond members of the public seeking out political information for themselves. In Chapter 2, I addressed the tendency of campaigns to release advertisements to the news media in order to earn coverage. Furthermore, I outlined extensive research that shows that not only do reporters cover political advertising as news stories on the local and national level, but they also are increasingly likely to cover political advertising as its own news event: trends show that more stories – and a higher proportion of overall campaign coverage – are devoted to covering advertising with each passing election cycle. The relationship of paid media, earned media, and the resulting "paid-turned-earned media" overlap is illustrated in **Figure 3.9**.

Both presidential campaigns in 2012 received earned media for paid media content, but one advertisement in particular, produced by Romney for President, Inc., stands out for garnering a significant amount of earned media coverage. On October 29, 2012, the Romney campaign placed a media buy in Ohio to run a thirty-second television advertisement on the auto industry that was critical of President Obama's economic policies. The script, delivered by a somber male voice over, read as follows:

> *Voice Over:* Who will do more for the auto industry? Not Barack Obama. Fact checkers confirm his attacks on Mitt Romney are false. The truth? Mitt Romney has a plan to help the auto industry. He's supported by Lee Iacocca and the *Detroit News*. Obama took GM and Chrysler into bankruptcy, and sold Chrysler to Italians who are going to build jeeps in China. Mitt Romney will fight for every American job.
>
> *Mitt Romney*: I'm Mitt Romney, and I approve this message.

The press quickly pounced on the content of the ad. First, it met all of the criteria for coverage of paid media as defined by Ridout and Franz: it was something new for reporters to cover (not only was it a new ad, it was also was a change in tactic from Romney who had previously received ample criticism on the issue of the auto industry for penning an op-ed in the *New York Times* with the headline "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt"), it also was easy to cover (at only thirty-seconds, the ad was easily broadcast on news segments and the message was simple enough to transition into written coverage, both in print and online) and it embodied "conflict and controversy" (129). The ad's claim that the auto manufacturer was moving jobs abroad was quickly rebuked by the chief executive officer of Jeep, yet the Romney campaign chose to continue running the ad on broadcast television, leading to coverage and criticism from media outlets, like this from the *New York Times*:

> When General Motors tells a presidential campaign that it is engaging in 'cynical campaign politics at its worse,' that's a pretty good signal that the campaign has crossed a red line and ought to pull back. Not Mitt Romney's campaign. Having broadcast an outrageously deceitful ad attacking the auto bailout, the campaign ignored the howls from carmakers and came back with more.
>
> Mr. Romney apparently plans to end his race as he began it: playing lowest-common-denominator politics, saying anything necessary to achieve power and blithely deceiving voters desperate for clarity and truth." (New York Times Editorial Board, Nov. 1, A30)

Before long, the Jeep ad became a storyline in and of itself, with the Obama campaign attacking Romney for the tactic and Romney's strategists standing firm in their stance that the ad's claims were both valid and of sound political strategy. While much of the coverage surrounding the Jeep ad was negative, this example from 2012 is the epitome of paid-turned-earned media: it used paid delivery to promote Romney's "superior attributes

or policies" over those of Obama's that turned into news coverage after the press was "persuaded about the news value of [Romney's] message" (Hughes, 164; Burton and Shea, 177).

Created-Turned-Earned Media

Similarly, in today's political environment it is not uncommon for created media to crossover and capture the attention and coverage of the press, leading to a concept I call "created-turned-earned media." The forms of created media that transition into created-turned-earned media are many: the press has covered everything from the Facebook posts (Weinger) to the tweets (Associated Press) of politicians. As with paid-turned-earned media, there are multiple examples of created-turned-earned media from the 2012 presidential election. In one instance, a web video from Obama for America featuring Lena Dunham, the creator and star of HBO show "Girls," resulted in a significant amount of earned media coverage. The video, which was simply uploaded to YouTube and never placed as an advertisement on any medium, used provocative innuendos to encourage viewers to vote. The video begins like this:

> Your first time shouldn't be with just anybody. You want to do it with a great guy. It should be with a guy with beautiful… Somebody who really cares about and understands women. A guy who cares whether you get health insurance and specifically whether you get birth control. The consequences are huge.

The combination of the sexual innuendo as well as Dunham's popularity and stardom drew multiple media outlets to write about the web video and, in many instances, embed the video itself into online platforms for readers to see for themselves. One media outlet

to cover the video, BuzzFeed, went so far as to call it "a creative – and polarizing – Obama video" ("First Time," Miller).

Eventually, the web video reached over 2.6 million views on YouTube and earned countless more mentions of the video by the press. In this way, this particular web video perfectly exemplifies the concept of created-turned-earned media. The relationship of created media and earned media and the overlap of created-turned-earned media are demonstrated in **Table 3.10**.

Created-Turned-Paid Media

Created media also have the unique ability to transition into paid media. In these cases, campaigns, parties or political organizations combine attempts to expand the audience of created media content beyond the members of the public seeking political information online and, as a result, form the concept I call "created-turned-paid media."

This transition can take many forms. Probably the most common form of created-turned-earned media is "promoted" content on social media like Facebook and Twitter and video-sharing platforms like YouTube. Campaigns can pay Facebook or Twitter to insert original content from the campaign – a post created as a normal update from the organization behind the message – and insert it into the news feed of individuals who do not follow that account. The result: "Promoted posts appear higher in News Feed, so there's a better chance your audience will see them" (Facebook). Promoted posts are not set apart as advertisements (except for a small notation in the corner of the post) and allow campaigns to expand the reach of their created media to audiences beyond those that opt-in to their social media updates. Similarly, a promoted video on YouTube

ensures that certain web videos will be placed in the search results of users and receive the status of a "recommended" video after a user watches other web video content. These tactics were commonly employed by both presidential campaigns, which combined to spend $16,988,351.35 on digital advertising, a large portion of which when toward promoted content on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Sampler).

Created-turned-paid media are not limited to promoted content. YouTube allows for web videos to be turned into "pre-roll" advertisements, which forces a viewer to watch advertised content before viewing the original video he or she selected. Facebook and Twitter also utilize advertising features that allow campaigns to expand their following and, as a result, the reach of their created media. This delineation of this content as advertising is much clearer than that of promoted content. On Facebook, ads inviting a user to "like" certain pages are offset to the side from a user's newsfeed. Likewise, political organizations can pay Twitter to feature their accounts in the Who To Follow section of a user's homepage, which targets Twitter users who do not yet follow the featured account.

It is also fathomable for a campaign to transition created media from the web to more traditional forms of paid media, like television advertising. In many respects, the internet functions as a real-time (and enormous) focus group. For example, a campaign could upload a web video to YouTube and test the results of how it's received and how many people watch the video. If this particular messaging form succeeds in capturing the attention of an audience, the campaign could then place the same video as a television ad to expand its reach across mediums.

The ability to transition to paid media speaks to the versatility of created media and expands its effectiveness as a campaign tool. The relationship between created media, paid media and created-turned-paid media is illustrated in **Table 3.11**.

Attempted Virality

CREATED MEDIA HAVE an additional distinctive factor that clearly differentiates them from its paid and earned counterparts: virality, or the ability to "go viral." When a campaign, party or political organization uses created media to reach the public that is seeking political information, their goal is – either implicitly or explicitly – to encourage social sharing across mediums to expand the audience of created media without relying solely on created-turned-earned and created-turned paid media. I call this characteristic of created media "attempted virality."

Virality occurs when internet content is shared rapidly across social media platforms, gaining thousands – and often times millions – of page views in a short amount of time. According to Helm, viral marketing is "a communication and distribution concept that relies on customers to transmit digital products via electronic mail to other potential customers in their social sphere and to animate these contacts to also transmit the products" (159). There are many characteristics that viral content can, and usually does, embody, but the lone requirement is social sharing. At the dawn of the digital age, such sharing mostly occurred over email, but today many of the methods of created media delivery directly solicit such an act. Facebook includes a "share" feature that allows a user to share a status, photo or webpage with his or her list of friends even if those friends do not subscribe to the updates of the original poster. This same concept is

frequently used on Twitter but is known as a "retweet." And on YouTube, users are invited to share videos by posting the link in the body of a Facebook post, tweet or email. Even most modern websites include share functions that allow visitors to post the URL of the page they are visiting to their social media feeds.

There are other characteristics that viral web content usually embodies, but there is no perfect formula for achieving virality. Viral content often times is humorous, but plenty of comical web content goes unseen by the masses. Similarly, viral content often is of particular interest or informs the visitor of previously unknown facts, but the internet is full of such content that never gains the attention of viewers. And viral content is almost always highly creative or engaging, but producing a creative web video or infographic does not ensure that this content will be shared across social networks. All viral content, however, requires social sharing – it cannot be driven solely by paid advertising or media coverage. And lastly, the core of viral content's existence is reliant upon the realm of created media: the internet.

Under the right circumstances, it is possible for the three categories of media to blend together into a perfect storm of political messaging through internet virality. This occurs when created media, earned media and paid media all overlap around a particular political event, message or occurrence and is fueled by campaign content going viral across the web. In these instances, the combinations of each category – created-turned-earned media, created-turned-paid media and paid-turned-earned media, all feed off of (and into) each other to form what I call "converged virality."

Converged virality is the point of convergence when a campaign's message is integrated across media – created-turned-earned media, created-turned-paid media and

paid-turned-earned media – and is driven and amplified by the viral sharing of content on the web. Because the internet houses viral content, created media is the natural starting point for converged virality. However, this concept cannot exist without the intercession of created media between its paid and earned counterparts and, when fueled by intelligent digital strategy, paid and earned media can be leveraged to help fuel the virality of created media. In these cases, particularly humorous, informative or creative web content can catch the attention of web users who share the content across social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. This sharing of content expands the reach of created media by reaching new audiences – individuals who are friends with (or follow) someone who has opted-in to receiving campaign content online but do not subscribe to campaign updates from the candidates themselves.

However, campaigns can leverage paid media to expand the reach of the content as well, perhaps through promoted posts on Facebook, promoted tweets on Twitter or promoted videos on YouTube. Each of these can increase the number of views a page receives and, as such, increase the number of individuals who spread a link to the content across their own social channels. And at times, if the reception of created media content online is positive enough, a campaign can choose to transition the content into more traditional forms of paid media like television or print advertising. As discussed earlier in this chapter, these instances embody the concept of created-turned-paid media.

Similarly, campaigns can leverage earned media to contribute to the viral nature of web content. By capturing the attention of the reporters with created media, members of the news media can cover the content on their platform of choice, perhaps in a blog post, on cable news or in print form. In these instances, created-turned-earned media can

fuel web content's virality by capturing the attention of different audiences that consume more traditional forms of media. In many cases, news audiences will learn of viral content and turn to their web browsers to see it for themselves, before sharing it with their friends across social media.

When the three categories of media work cohesively, an audience much larger than that allowed by only one of these media is reached. The combination of paid delivery, earned news coverage and social sharing drives and amplifies a campaign's message in a way that paid media, earned media or created media alone cannot. In sum, paid, earned and created media are stronger together than they are apart.

Converged virality is part strategy, part chance. To be sure, to achieve this culmination of political messaging a campaign needs to be properly prepared to leverage paid and earned media to aid in the dissemination of created media, expand the reach of the content and contribute to its virality. However, simply supporting created media with paid and earned media does not guarantee that web content will become viral. At some point, average online users must decide to share the content across social networks to contribute to its virality. Without user engagement and sharing, web content simply fades in the news feeds of users and fails to reach the critical mass of citizen, journalist and advertising engagement to reach viral status.

For these reasons, I noted the final characteristic of created media as being attempted virality, for achieving viral status is far from guaranteed. Even so, the potential for created media to become viral is implicit within its existence online and is its obvious goal. When campaigns, parties or political organizations integrate a message across media – using created, earned and paid media, plus created-turned-earned, created-

turned-paid and paid-turned earned media – and that message is driven and amplified by social sharing and going viral, the result is converged virality. The relationship of paid, earned and created media, their respective intersections and the epicenter of converged virality is demonstrated in **Figure 3.12**.

Converged virality did not occur frequently during the 2012 presidential campaign, despite the delivery of thousands of created media messages that had the potential and the goal of going viral. Perhaps the strongest example of converged virality occurred following the first presidential debate in early October 2012. During the debate, Governor Romney asserted that, while he liked Big Bird and the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS), he was not willing to borrow money from China to pay for the production of "Sesame Street" on the publicly funded network. The Obama campaign was quick to respond, producing a web video called "Big Bird" and uploading it to YouTube on October 8, with the following script:

> *Obama:* I'm Barack Obama, and I approve this message
>
> *Voice over:* Bernie Madoff. Ken Levine. Dennis Kozlowski. Criminals. Gluttons of greed. And the evil genius who towered over them? One man has the guts to speak his name.
>
> *Romney*: Big Bird. Big Bird. Big Bird.
>
> *Big Bird*: It's me, Big Bird!
>
> *Voice over*: Big. Yellow. A menace to our economy. Mitt Romney knows it's not Wall Street we have to worry about – it's *Sesame Street.*
>
> *Romney*: I'm going to stop the subsidy to PBS.
>
> *Voice over*: Mitt Romney. Taking on our enemies no matter where they nest.

The "Big Bird" web video, with its creative and humorous approach to rapid response following a major political event, quickly went viral and was shared thousands of times across social networking platforms. YouTube's video statistics show that the "Big Bird" web video broke 3 million views on October 9, just one day after its release.

The news media quickly joined the discussion of the ad and contributed greatly to its virality. YouTube's video statistics also track the role of earned media in gaining traction for viral content online: over 45,000 views came from being embedded on TheHill.com, over 72,000 views from being posted on HuffingtonPost.com, over 137,000 views from being posted on NBCnews.com and over 312,000 views from being posted on Yahoo! – all on October 9 (YouTube.com). Following the mostly positive response to the video, Obama for America placed advertising dollars behind the "Big Bird" web video and even ran it on broadcast television during late night comedy shows (Cillizza).

In the end, the "Big Bird" web video accumulated over 3.5 million views on YouTube alone, plus the audiences reached via earned and paid media across the country. And while there is no substantial evidence that this particular piece of created media influenced the vote choices of Americans, it does speak to the versatility and effectiveness of created media and the potential for content to peak in the realm of converged virality.

Conclusions

CREATED MEDIA ARE NOT dependent on their paid and earned counterparts to exist. By definition – media content made originally by a campaign that is made available to the public without paid placement and/or targeting and without being delivered as news from

a reporting entity – created media are its own category within a campaign's media plan and are distinct through the characteristics of point of origin, method of delivery, targeted audience and attempted virality.

Implicit in the production of created media is the possibility that such media may be driven and amplified by going viral. However, the vast majority of created media content produced by political campaigns never achieves virality or transitions into paid or earned media. As paid and earned media before it, created media have the tendency to blend the categories of created, earned and paid as campaigns integrate their forms of message delivery.

A true understanding of created media acknowledges the crossover and overlap created, paid and earned media – including the convergence of these forms with viral content – but grasps the existence of created media in its own right. As the means of created media delivery continue to evolve and as campaigns continue to blend the lines between created, paid and earned content, the clear definition of created media will serve an important role as scholars seek to distinguish between the categories in order to properly analyze the tactics employed by candidates and campaigns seeking political office in the United States.

With created media and their characteristics clearly defined, complete with various examples from the 2012 presidential campaign, I will now put created media in context with a case study of Twitter and how both Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc., used the platform during the final weeks of the campaign.

Table 3.1

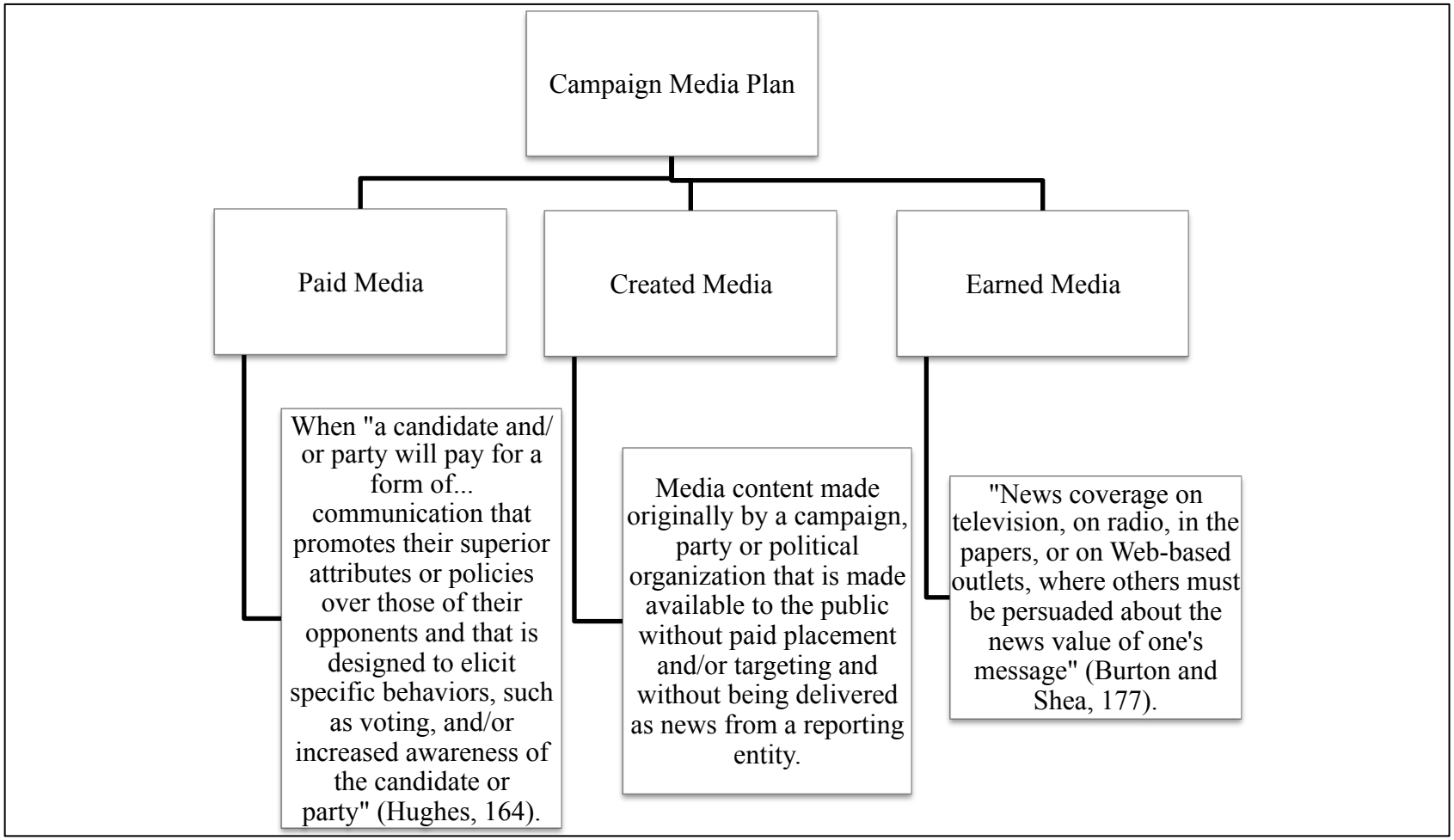


Table 3.2

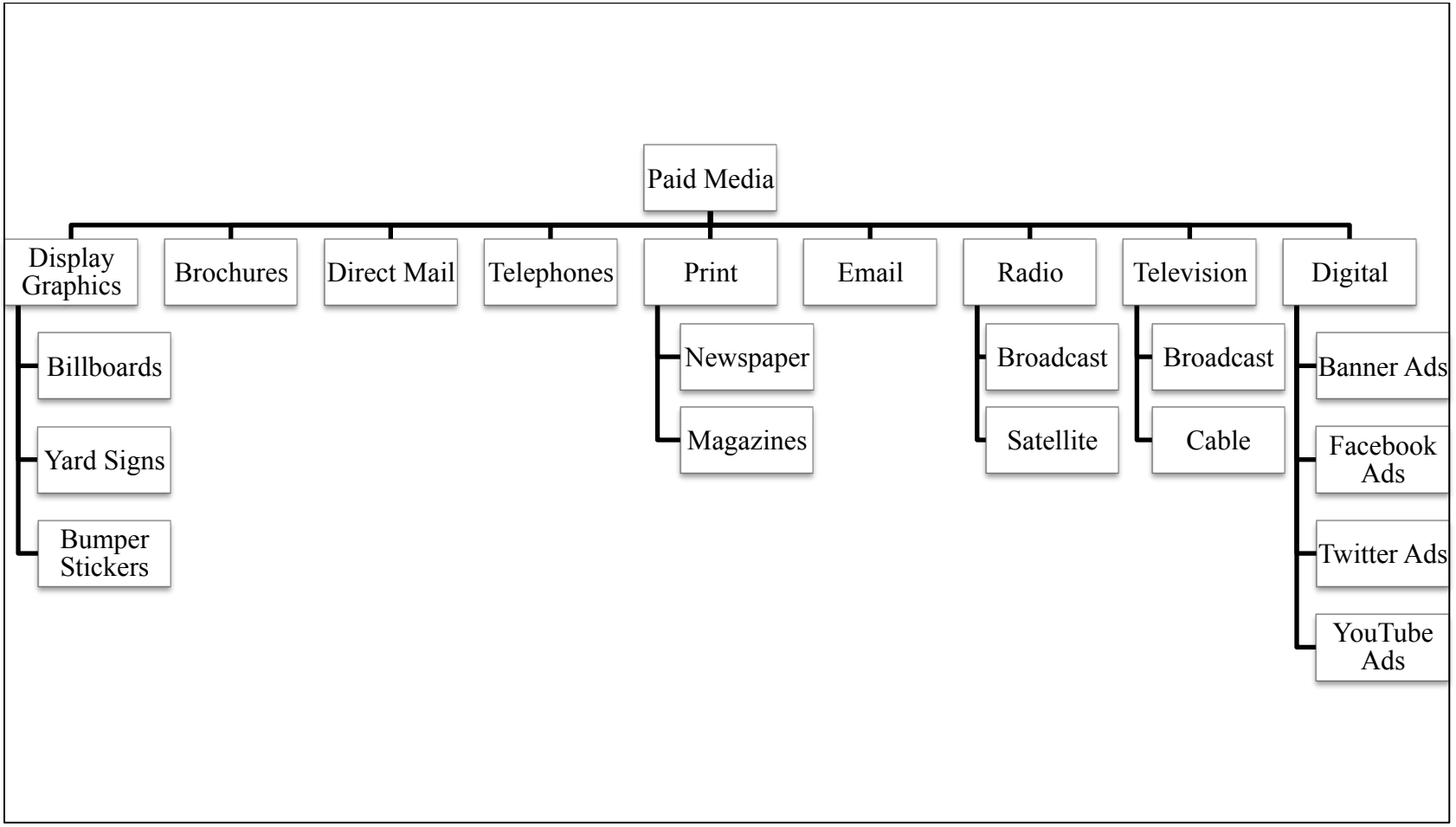


Table 3.3

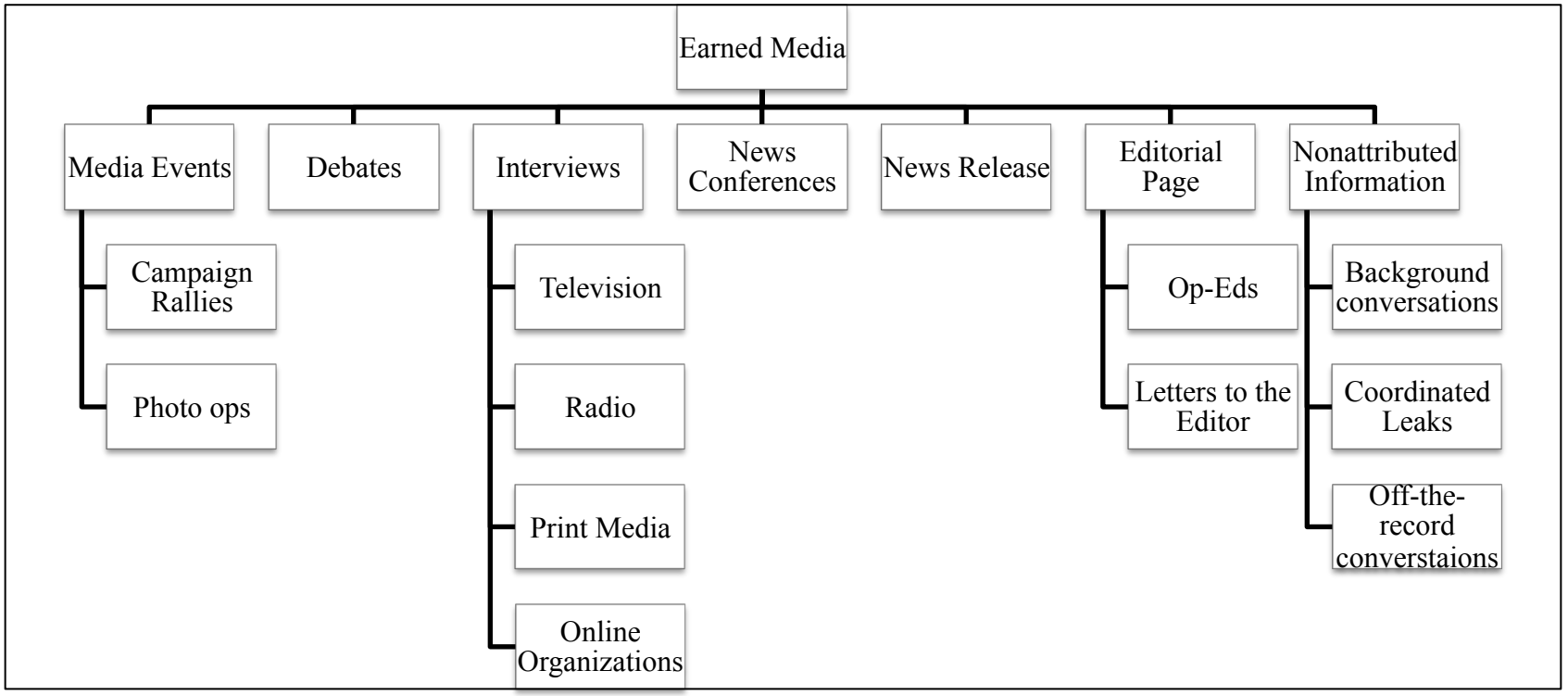


Table 3.4

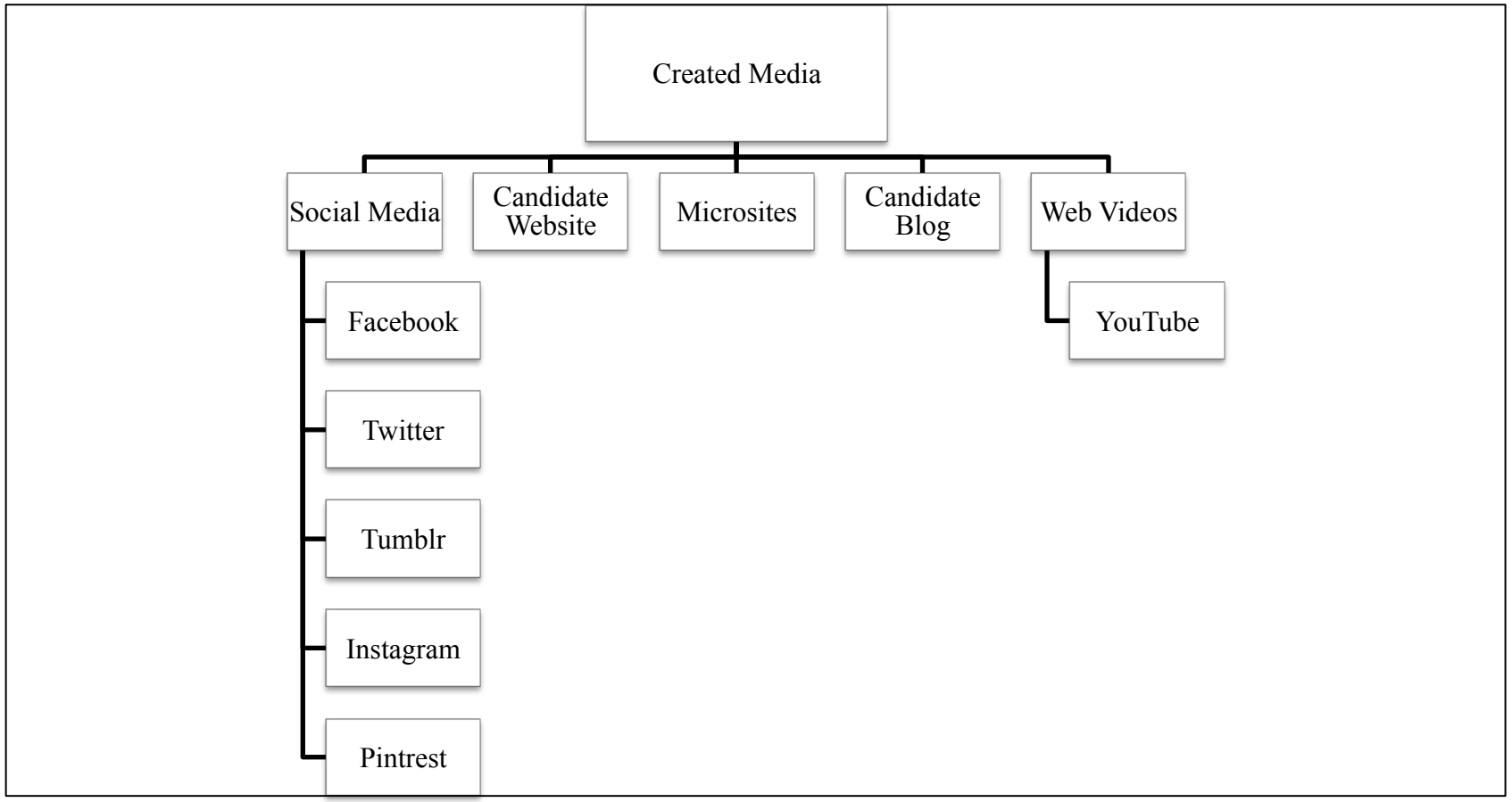


Table 3.5

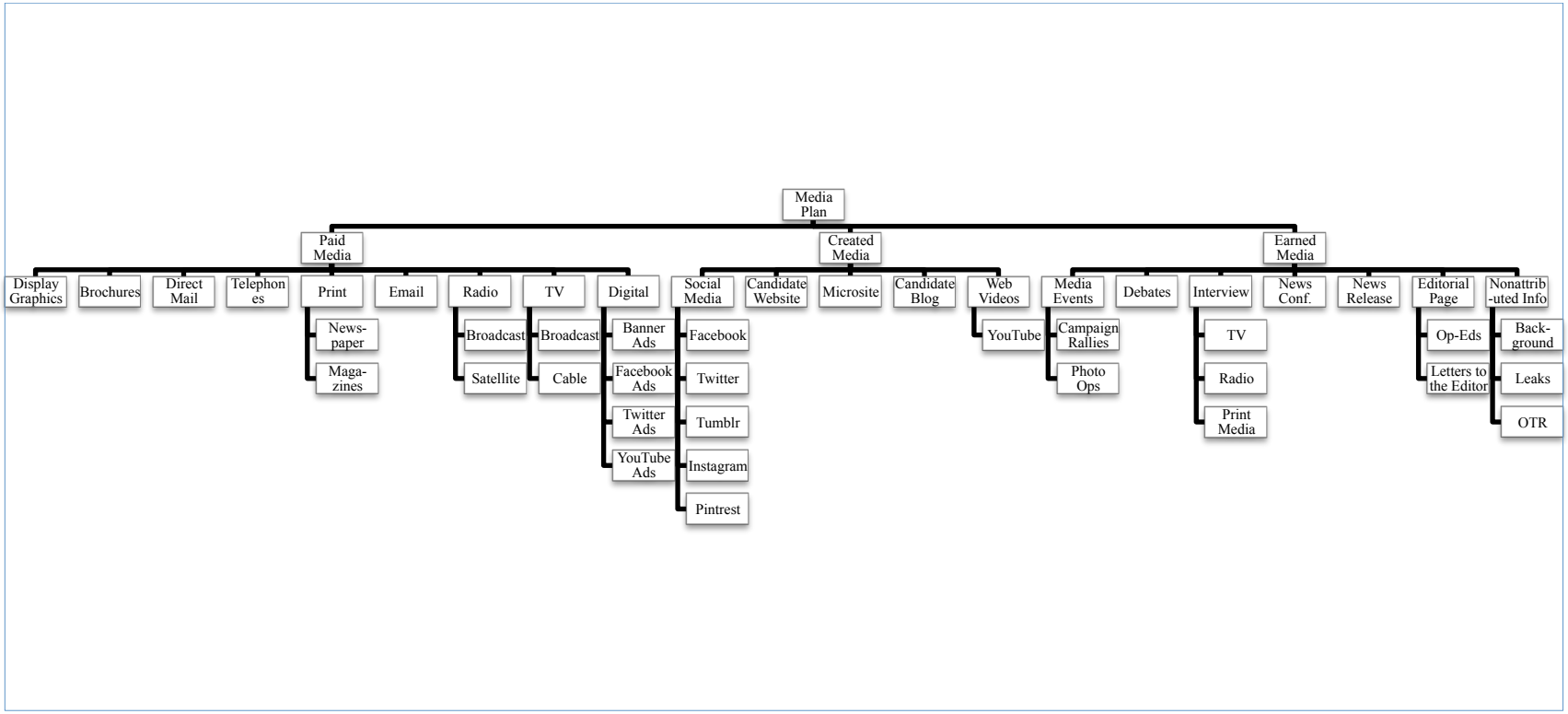


Table 3.6

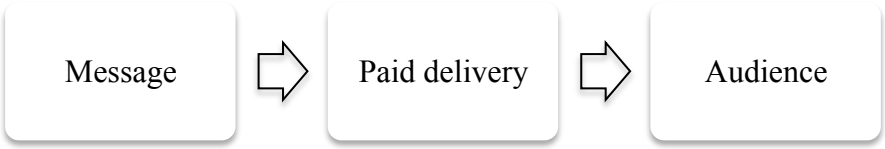


Table 3.7

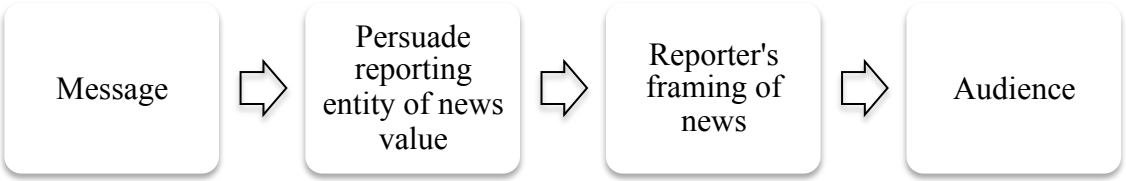


Figure 3.8

Figure 3.9

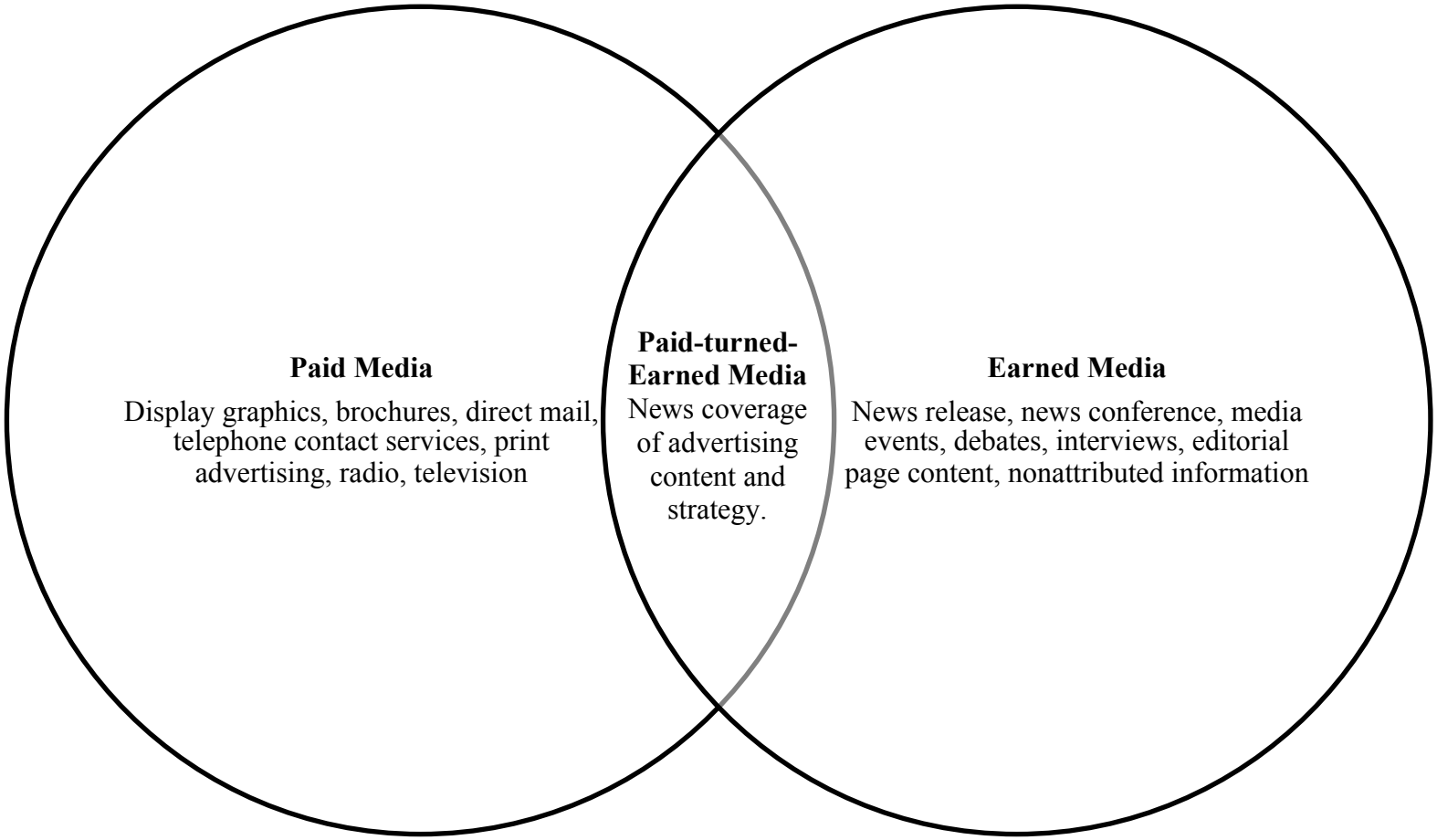


Figure 3.10

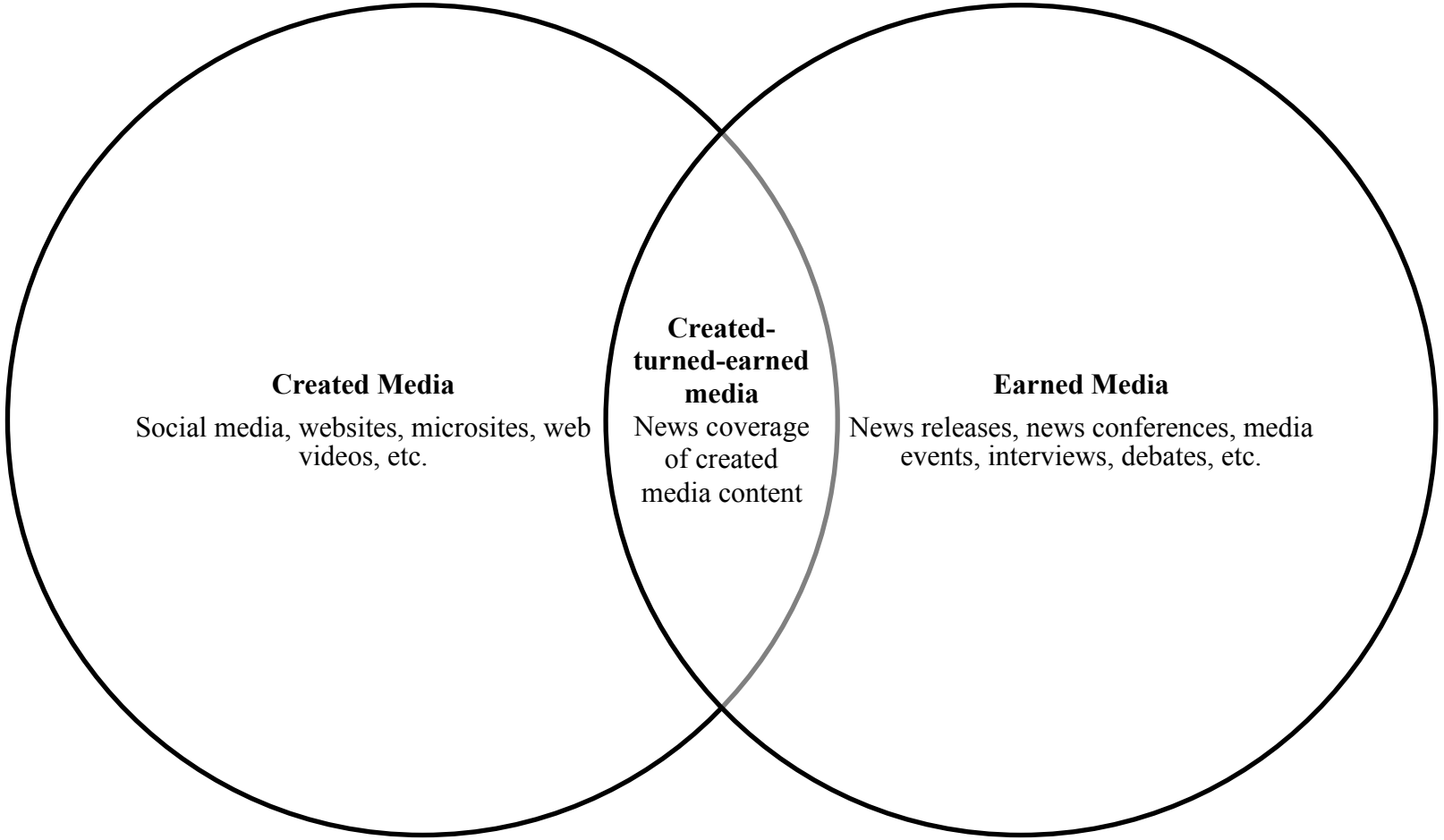


Figure 3.11

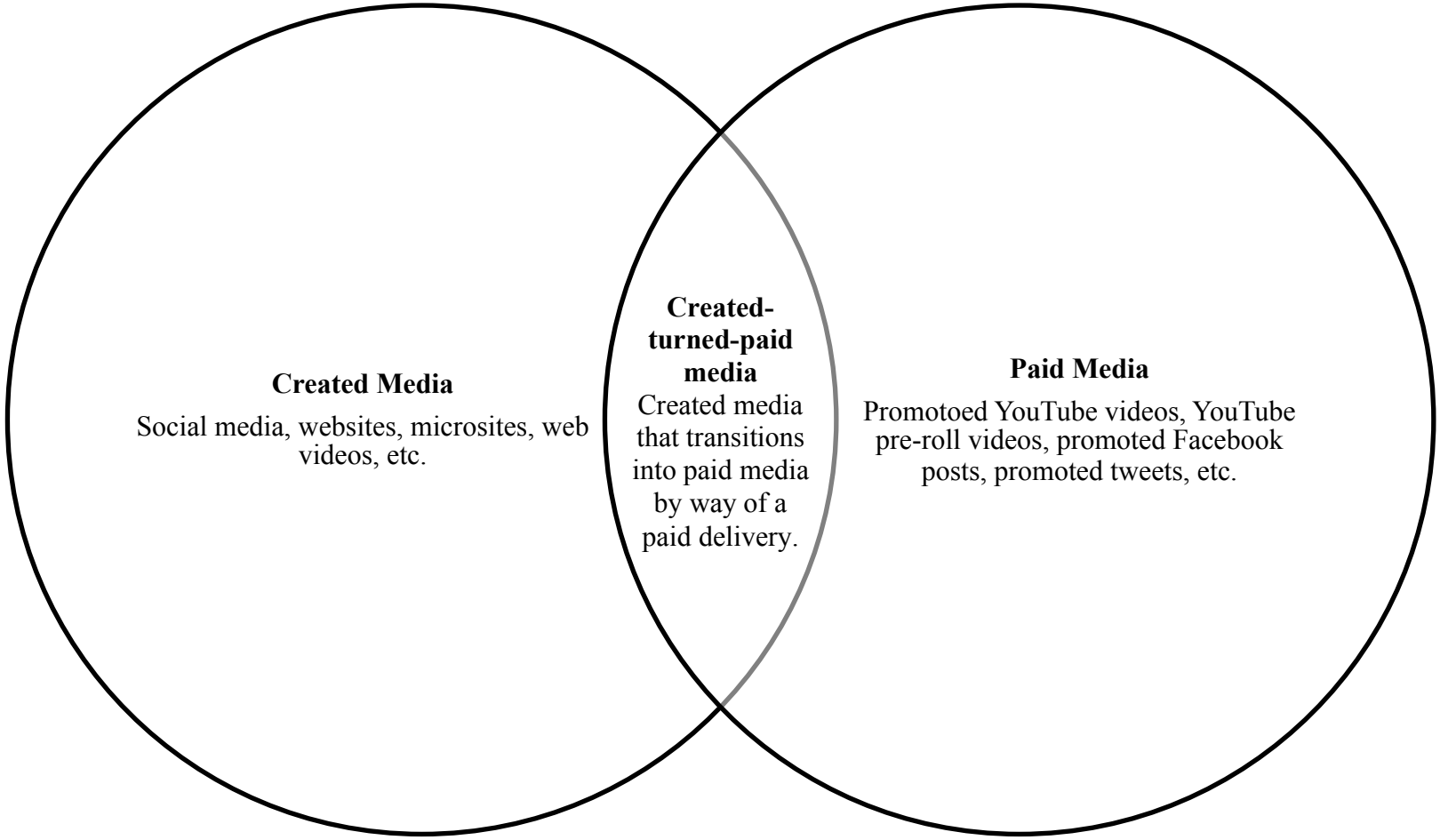
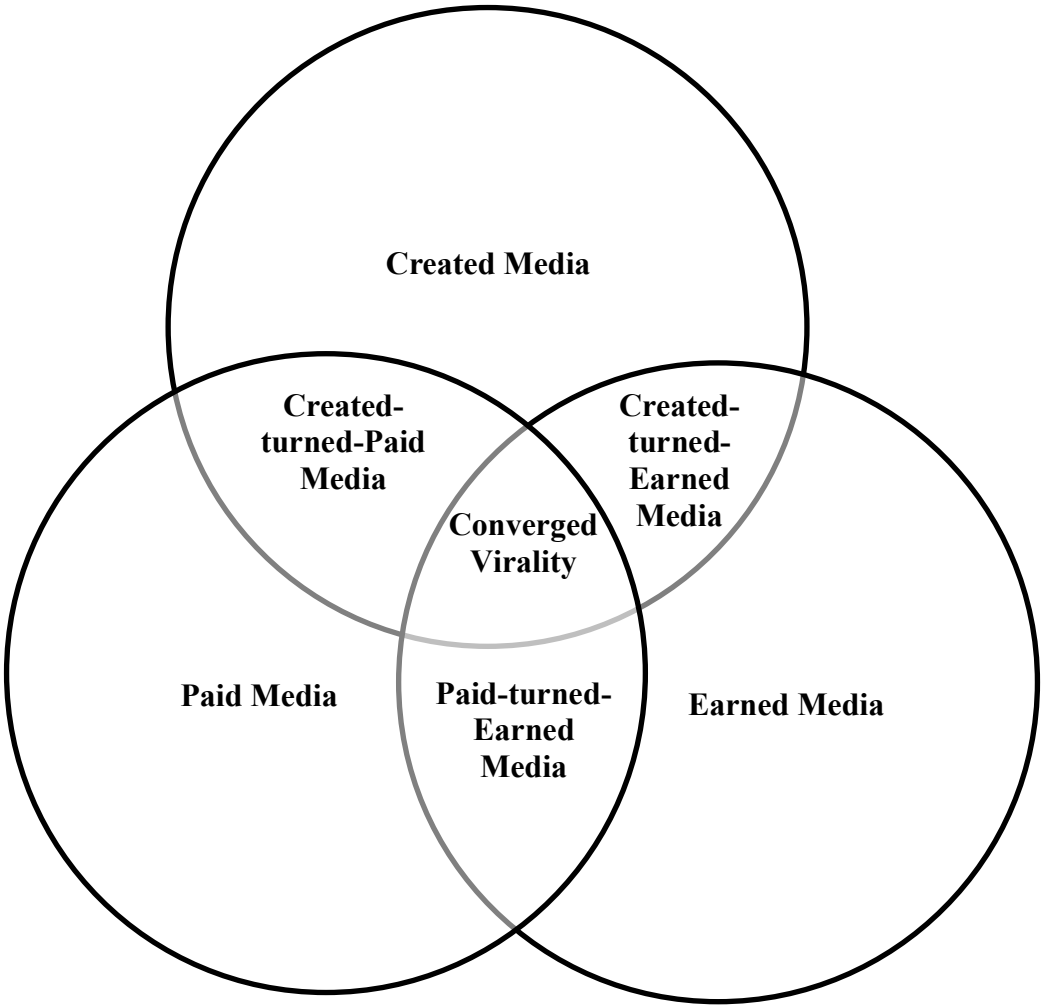


Figure 3.12



Chapter 4: Introduction to Twitter

In the previous chapter, I answered the first of my two research questions – the conceptual question, *What are created media?* – by providing a clear definition and supporting characteristics of created media. The characteristics that make created media distinct from paid and earned media are the point of origin, method of delivery, targeted audience and attempted virality. Furthermore, I discussed the concept of converged media as paid, earned and created media intersect to form paid-turned-earned media, created-turned-earned media and created-turned-paid media. Lastly, I discussed the concept of converged virality, in which a campaign integrates its message across media and is driven and amplified by viral sharing on the web.

This chapter begins the process of answering the second research question I will address. This empirical question is: *How did the two major presidential campaigns use created media during the 2012 election?* To answer this question, I will analyze the official Twitter accounts of both presidential candidates: @MittRomney for Romney for President, Inc. and @BarackObama for Obama for America.

In Chapter 3, I established that Twitter, as a subset of social media, is a method of created media delivery. In the remaining chapters, I will conduct a statistical analysis of how both presidential campaigns in 2012 used Twitter as a method of delivery for created media through a detailed content analysis. First, I must provide insight into the form, function and terminology of Twitter as a method of delivering created media.

Twitter Terminology

TWITTER IS A "real-time information network that combines you [the user] to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news (Twitter.com). The stories, ideas, opinions and news are delivered as "tweets," or 140-character microblogs, that can contain textual messages and links to content both within and outside the confines of Twitter. Despite the character limit imposed on each tweet, these microblogs are remarkably complex and can include a wide variety of characteristics.

Some characteristics, however, apply to every Twitter user and individual tweet. First, each user has a unique username, or "handle." The handle is important on two levels: it denotes the domain name at which a Twitter user's account can be accessed and is the means by which other users interact with other Twitter users. For example, the official Twitter account of President Barack Obama is @BarackObama. Twitter users can access his account through the URL www.twitter.com/BarackObama. Twitter users can "follow" other accounts and accumulate "followers" of their own. Once a user follows a particular account, every tweet sent by that account appears in the feed of that user's Twitter home page, meaning once a user follows a collection of users, Twitter becomes a steady stream of 140 character micro-blogs that update in real time. As such, any user can instantaneously send a message to the list of individuals who follow his or her account and simultaneously receive the messages sent by the users he or she follows.

Second, each tweet includes a timestamp referring to the date of its original posting. Once a tweet is sent, users have a variety of options of how to interact with that tweet. A user can select to reply to the tweet with a tweet of his or her own. In Twitter terms, this is known as an at-reply, because the tweet begins with an @ symbol before

completing the recipient's handle. When an at-reply is sent, the recipient of the tweet is notified regardless of whether he or she follows the account from which the at-reply was sent. Users are also notified when a tweet includes an at-mention of his or her account. An at-mention is a tweet that specifically mentions a Twitter user but may not be in the form of a reply, meaning that the handle could be included in any portion of the tweet. If an at-mention is included in the body of a tweet, it serves as a link that was the recipient of that at-mention. **Figure 4.1** provides an example of a tweet published by @MittRomney that includes an at-mention of Obama for America's official account for President Obama.

The tweets of users can be "retweeted" and, likewise, users can opt to retweet the content produced by other Twitter users. I discussed the concept of the retweet in Chapter 3 as the sharable function within Twitter that promotes virality across the medium. When a user retweets the tweet of another user, the original post appears in the news feed of all accounts that follow the account that retweeted the message, even if those users do not follow the original publisher of the message. **Figure 4.2** provides an example of a tweet from @MichelleObama – the official account for the First Lady operated by Obama for America – that was retweeted by the @BarackObama account.

Because retweets drive the original message beyond its initial audience, Twitter's version of social sharing effectively promotes virality. In fact, Twitter actually tracks the virality of tweets that are retweeted by listing the number of times each tweet posted has been retweeted by other users: below each tweet the word "expand" serves as a clickable hyperlink that reveals the number of times that particular tweet has been retweeted by

other users. This is shown in **Figure 4.3**, which features a tweet from @MittRomney from election day that was retweeted nearly 3,000 times by other Twitter users.

Because retweets are an effective means of expanding the reach of a campaign's message, it is not uncommon for accounts to solicit retweets from their followers. Most often, the word retweet is shortened to "RT" before asking the followers to share that particular message. In these cases, campaigns are upfront about the attempted virality behind their message by blatantly asking followers to pass along the message rather than hoping that those followers will find the original message compelling enough to retweet to their followers without prompting. **Figure 4.4** provides an example of such an occurrence, again from election night, from @BarackObama.

Twitter also features another tool – the hashtag – that promotes virality, by driving an idea via a particular phrase on Twitter rather than spreading a particular tweet virally across the platform. The hashtag allows a user to draw emphasis to a particular word or phrase within the body of the tweet. Hashtags are always denoted by the number sign (#) which precedes the word or phrase to which the user would like to draw emphasis. At that time, the text that is attached to the number sign without a space (and before being separated to following text via another space) becomes a clickable link that delivers the user to another feed within Twitter. The linked feed features only tweets that include the exact same hashtag as the hashtag included in the original tweet.

Campaigns have two means of using hashtags to their benefit. First, they can use an already established hashtag on Twitter to expand their audience and attract the attention of new users who do not already follow the campaign's account. Twitter denotes particularly popular hashtags as "trending topics." These trending topics are

separated by geography – region, country, and worldwide – to reveal the most popular content by location on Twitter at that particular time. By using an already established hashtag, a campaign can insert itself into an already active online discussion and potentially reach new audiences with its message.

Alternatively, campaigns can create an original hashtag to attempt virality. In these cases, the goal of the campaign would be for followers to engage in the conversation by using the hashtag themselves, and thus further disseminate the message, drive the conversation and, if the hashtag use is particularly successful, create a new trending topic.[i] An example of a hashtag used commonly by Romney for President, Inc. – #CantAfford4More – is illustrated in **Figure 4.5.**

Twitter also features an internal photo-sharing mechanism called "twitpic." Users can attach a photo to any post that will then be included as a link within the body of the tweet. Once the tweet is published, viewers can click on the link, published with the host name pic.twitter.com/ followed by a unique URL path name, or on the "view photo option," as shown in **Figure 4.6**. Once a user clicks on one of these options, the photo opens as an expansion of the tweet right in the user's news feed, not in a separate window or browser tab. The expanded version of the tweet shown in **Figure 4.6** is exhibited in **Figure 4.7**.

Twitter users are not limited to linking content within Twitter, and as such it is an effective tool for driving followers to content like the candidate's website, web videos, microsites, and more. Links from web pages can simply be copied and pasted into the body of the tweet, but the URL does count against the 140 character limit imposed on each tweet. Once the tweet is published, the link is live and, once clicked upon, opens in

a new browser window. **Figure 4.8** shows a tweet posted by @MittRomney on election day that links to a feature on his website that allowed the viewer to find his or her voting location.

As a medium, Twitter manages to be both simple – each post, after all, is limited to 140 characters, which amounts to little more than a sentence – and complex, as indicated by the original terminology developed by Twitter and Twitter users since its invention in 2006. A complete list of terms is listed in **Appendix A,** complete with Twitter's official definitions and explanations for each. The definitions and examples provided above, however, are the most critical Twitter concepts for the statistical analysis of how both presidential campaigns used created media during the course of the 2012 presidential election. I will discuss each of these topics – at-mentions, retweets, retweet asks, hashtags, twitpics and links – in greater detail, including how they were used by Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc. in the following chapters.

---

[i] Twitter also offers the option for advertisers to purchase a "promoted trend." This form of paid media allows a campaign to surpass the organic creation of a trending topic and promote it as a trend within Twitter, thus encouraging Twitter users to engage in the conversation by using the keyword from the promoted trend. These promoted trends have been reported to cost $200,000 a day (Fiegerman). Both Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc. purchased promoted trends during the 2012 presidential campaign (Fitzpatrick).

Figure 4.1

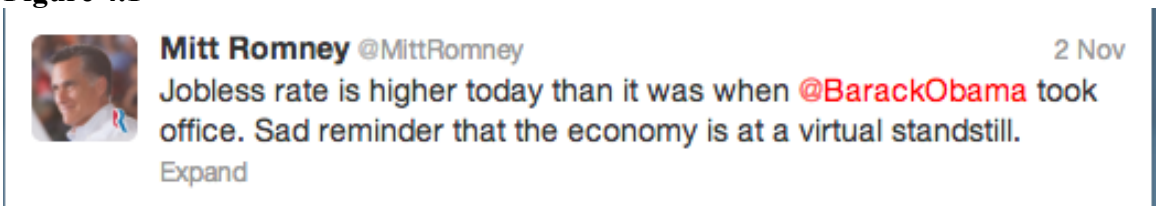


Figure 4.2

Figure 4.3

Figure 4.4

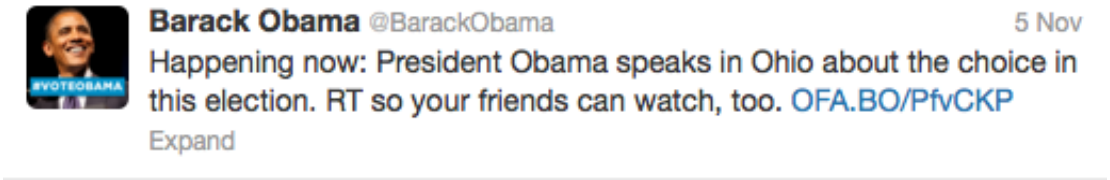


Figure 4.5

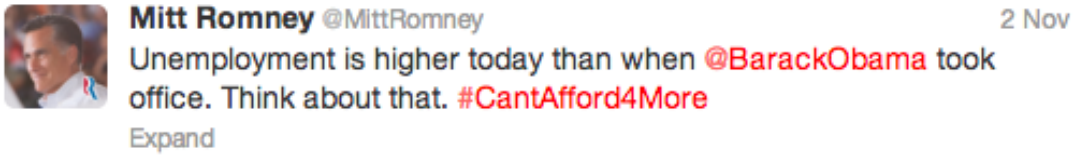


Figure 4.6

Figure 4.7

Figure 4.8

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

THIS CHAPTER WILL DETAIL the methodology I will employ to answer my empirical question: how did the two major presidential campaigns use created media during the 2012 election? For the purpose of this research, I will focus specifically on Twitter as a method of created media delivery. I already established Twitter's key terminology and definitions in Chapter 4 and included numerous examples of tweets that represented particular terms from the course of the 2012 campaign. I conducted a content analysis of 1,135 tweets published by @MittRomney and @BarackObama and coded each for 33 variables to form a data set capable of answering my research question.

The empirical question that I aim to answer is crafted in light of the conceptual question I answered in Chapter 2. I answered that question – what are created media? – by defining created media as *media content created originally by a campaign, party or political organization that are made available to the public without paid placement and/or targeting and without being delivered as news from a reporting entity.* This definition is upheld by four equally important characteristics: the point of origin, method of delivery, targeted audience and attempted virality of created media.

I aim to accomplish two things in this chapter. First, I will detail the rigorous process I employed to code over one thousand of Romney for President, Inc. and Obama for America's tweets for 33 different variables. Second, I will offer hypotheses about the four unique characteristics of created media and how they were embodied on Twitter during the course of the 2012 election.

The Sampling and Coding Process

THIS ANALYSIS OF created media consists of three weeks worth of tweets from both presidential candidates. The tweets gathered were limited to the main Twitter accounts operated by Obama for America (@BarackObama, accessible at www.twitter.com/BarackObama) and Romney for President, Inc. (@MittRomney, accessible at www.twitter.com/MittRomney). The reason I chose to analyze these two accounts, rather than the dozens of other Twitter accounts operated by both campaigns, is simple: by using the candidate's name as the Twitter handle, each operated as the flagship account of the campaign and were the most widely followed of all campaign accounts. Both campaigns linked to their respective candidate's Twitter account on their campaign websites, Facebook pages, YouTube channels and more.

Because these two accounts were the most highly publicized and followed Twitter presences of each campaign, the ability to widely disseminate a message, attempt virality and alter the online discussion is greater with the official candidate account than any of the other Twitter accounts operated by either campaign. And because the reach of created media delivered through these accounts is larger than the reach of other accounts associated with the campaign, the content produced provides the strongest available example of how both presidential campaigns used Twitter as a method of created media delivery during the course of the 2012 election.

The timeframe selected is equally specific. By tracking tweets published during the course of the final three weeks of the election, my data set will detail the strategies employed by both campaigns as they made their final pitches to voters leading up to election day. However, the span of three weeks is also large enough to cover some of the major political events of the election's last month: two presidential debates (the town hall

format debate on October 16 and the foreign policy debate on October 22), the final Federal Election Commission fundraising reporting deadline of the general election cycle (October 31) and election day itself (November 6).

With my selected accounts and timeframe of analysis, I transitioned into the coding process on November 7, 2012 – the day after election day – by taking screen shots of three weeks worth of tweets from each account. These screen shots captured the entirety of each tweet, including all text, date of origin and the URL of any link included. The screenshots were taken to ensure that each tweet during the timeframe of analysis would be stored even if either campaign opted to delete any tweets following the election.

These screenshots served as the content to be coded. In total, the two campaigns published 1,135 tweets over the course of the final three weeks of the 2012 general election. The coding of these tweets occurred between November 2012 and March 2013 and was entered directly into a single input file within the statistical analysis program SPSS. Each tweet was coded for 33 variables resulting in a data set entitled "Created Media: Twitter and the 2012 Election" (heretofore Twitter 2012). One such variable is the "candidate" variable, for which each tweet was coded for one of two values: 1 if the tweet originated from @BarackObama and 2 if the tweet originated from @MittRomney.

Through Twitter 2012 I will test hypotheses regarding the four characteristics of created media. I will discuss those hypotheses below. Furthermore, I will provide definitions and details for each of the variables that I will use to test the hypotheses regarding the four characteristics of created media. My entire codebook, including the many variables in Twitter 2012 that are not required to test my hypotheses, is provided in **Appendix B**.

Point of Origin

IN ORDER TO STUDY the characteristic of point of origin as it pertains to Twitter and the 2012 election, I developed the following hypotheses about the point of origin on the campaign calendar of each tweet within Twitter 2012:

- H_{1A}: The candidates will tweet most frequently on the day of major political events.
- H_{1B}: The candidates will tweet less frequently during the time that Hurricane Sandy damaged much of the eastern seaboard.
- H_{1C}: @BarackObama will tweet more during major political events than @MittRomney.

To test this hypothesis, I coded for a "date" variable within Twitter 2012.

Date

Each tweet is labeled with a date of publication above and to the right of the tweet's text. Coding for the "date" variable required the manual input of the exact date of publication, as labeled on the tweet itself, into Twitter 2012 in the following format: DD/MM/2012. Because the tweets input into Twitter 2012 are limited to the final three weeks of the 2012 presidential election, the "date" variable is limited to the timeframe, in this format, between 10/16/2012 and 11/06/2012. A frequency analysis of the date variable will reveal an aggregate count per date within the analysis.

Method of Delivery

NUMEROUS VARIABLES WITHIN Twitter 2012 were coded in order to test how both Romney for President, Inc. and Obama for America used Twitter as a method of delivery of created media. I will test three hypotheses using these variables. The hypotheses regarding method of delivery are:

- H_{2A}: @BarackObama tweeted more photos than @MittRomney.
- H_{2B}: @BarackObama tweeted more links to content outside of Twitter than @MittRomney
- H_{2C}: @BarackObama tweeted more links to its campaign's web videos, candidate website and earned media than @MittRomney.

Link

"Link" is a dichotomous variable within Twitter 2012. If a tweet includes a hyperlink to content outside of Twitter, discernable by the presence of a clickable uniform resource locator within the body of the tweets' text, it is given the value 1 for "yes." If the tweet does not include such a link, it is given the value 0 for "no." Both campaigns used hyperlink shorteners to preserve each tweet's character counts, so links for each are usually easily discernable. Many of Obama for America's tweets were shortened into the following format: OFA.BO/[webpage], while Romney for President, Inc. shortened its tweets to mi.tt/[webpage]. Links that were not shortened began with the familiar format of www.[domainname].com/[webpage].

Link Type

The "link type" variable is a nominal measure that codes for 10 different categories of links. The value and corresponding labels for the "link type" variable are as follows:

1. Press release
2. Web video
3. Campaign social media account (i.e. Facebook, Tumblr, etc.)
4. Microsite (a page operated by the campaign – as denoted by the FEC required disclaimer – but with a unique URL separate from the candidate's website)
5. Fundraising ask
6. Earned media
7. Candidate website
8. Volunteer ask
9. Other
10. None

I determined the type of each link by copy-and-pasting the original link from the tweet into an internet browser to access the hyperlinked webpage. Every tweet that was coded with a "1" for the "link" variable was coded with a measure between 1 and 9 for the "link type" variable. All tweets coded with a "0" for the "link" variable was coded with a "10" for "link type."

In some cases, depending on when the coding was being performed, the original version of the linked webpage was no longer available for live access. This occurred in instances for links from both candidates. In Romney's case, the candidate's website was simplified to a landing page with links to his Facebook and Twitter accounts and an email

sign up form, thus deleting the live versions of many webpages within MittRomney.com. In Obama's case, his campaign infrastructure became Organizing for Action, a non-profit group that maintained BarackObama.com as its website. As such, many of the website's pages from the campaign season were replaced with new content. When I encountered a situation where the live page linked by either candidate was no longer accessible, I used the website CachedPages.com, which allowed me to search through three services that track cached webpages as they existed previously: Google Cache, Coral Cache and Archive.org. There were no instances where a cached version of a webpage linked to in the body of a tweet within Twitter 2012 was not accessible through one of these three services.

Twitpic

The "twitpic" variable is dichotomous with a simple "yes" (1) or "no" (0) coding for the presence of a photo in tweets within Twitter 2012. During the course of the 2012 election, both presidential campaigns used two photo sharing services on Twitter: Twitpic, the official photosharing platform within Twitter, and Instagram, which before December 2012 was fully integrated within Twitter (meaning photos posted on Instagram and shared on Twitter appeared directly in one's news feed, just like a twitpic, rather than operating as an external link). Photos shared via Twitpic or Instagram were both coded with a "1" for the "twitpic" variable.

Targeted Audience

SIX VARIABLES WITHIN the Twitter 2012 data set allow for the testing of characteristics pertaining to targeted audience. These six variables are "state," "swing state," "demographic," "swing demographic," "issue," and "swing issue." The subsequent six hypotheses I will test for this characteristic are:

- H_{3A}: @BarackObama tweeted about specific states more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{3B}: @BarackObama tweeted about specific demographic groups more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{3C}: @BarackObama tweeted about specific public policy issues more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{3D}: @BarackObama tweeted about the key swing states Florida, Iowa and Ohio more often than @BarackObama.
- H_{3E}: @BarackObama tweeted about the key demographic groups of women, the middle class and veterans more often than @MittRomney.
- H_{3F}: @BarackObama tweeted about the key public policy issues of jobs and the economy, women's issues and taxes more often than @MittRomney.

State

The "state" variable is a dichotomous measure that provides a "yes" (1) or "no" (0) code for the specific mention of a state within the body of a tweet within the period of analysis. In order to be coded as a "yes," at least one of the 50 states must be specifically mentioned, either in full or through the official two-letter abbreviation, within the text of

the tweet. If a particular state was not mentioned but another geographic characteristic was, like the name of a city, the tweet was still coded with a "no."

Swing State

The variable "swing state" is a nominal measure that codes for the specific state mentioned within each tweet that received a code for "yes" under the "state" variable. The values for "swing state" are between 1 and 11, with 10 states specifically named, chosen by their categorization as a swing state being challenged by both Romney for President, Inc. and Obama for America. Those states and their corresponding values are:

1. Florida
2. North Carolina
3. Virginia
4. New Hampshire
5. Pennsylvania
6. Ohio
7. Iowa
8. Wisconsin
9. Nevada
10. Colorado
11. Other
12. None

Any tweet that was coded with a "no" under the "state" variable received the value "12" under "swing state," signifying, once again, that no state was mentioned. If a state other

than the 10 swing states listed, or if more than one state – including those valued 1-10 – is listed in a single tweet, it is coded with the value "11" for "other."

Demographic

The "demographic" variable is a dichotomous measure that codes for the presence of a specific mention of a demographic group within the body of a tweet. Such demographic groups could include (but are not limited to) women, Hispanics, small business owners, veterans, or more. Any tweet that does include a mention of a specific demographic group is coded with a "1" for "yes." All tweets that do not include such a reference are coded with a "0" for "no."

Swing Demographic

If a tweet is coded with a "yes" for the "demographic" variable, it is then coded with the nominal variable "swing demographic," which codes for seven demographic groups, an "other" category and a "none" category. The specific values for the "swing demographic" variable are:

1. Women
2. Hispanics or Latinos
3. The middle class
4. Veterans or members of the military
5. Students or "young adults"
6. Small business owners
7. Jews

8. Other
9. None

If the demographic mentioned in a tweet matches categories 1 through 7, it receives the respective numeric value for that group. If another group, like senior citizens, is mentioned (or if more than one demographic group is mentioned within a tweet), it receives the value 8 for "other." If no demographic group is mentioned, as coded for under the "demographic" variable, then the value 9, or "none," is assigned.

Issue

"Issue" is a dichotomous variable that codes for the presence of public policy issue within the text of each tweet. If a specific public policy issue is mentioned, including issues with the economy, women's access to contraception, abortion, or equal pay, issues with government spending and the federal debt, etc., the tweet is assigned the value "1" for "yes." If no such issue is mentioned within the body of the tweet, it is assigned the value "0" for "no."

Swing Issue

The "swing issue" variable is a nominal measure that corresponds with the "issue" variable mentioned above. If a specific issue of public policy is mentioned in a tweet, it receives a value from 1 to 18 that matches the issue mentioned. If no issue is mentioned, meaning every tweet coded with a "no" under the "issue" variable, then it receives a value of "19" for "none." The full 19 values coded for under "swing issue" are:

1. Jobs, unemployment, or the economy

2. Federal debt or deficit
3. Energy (including oil, coal, solar power, natural gas, etc.)
4. Women's rights (access to contraception, abortion, or equal pay)
5. Gay rights
6. Education
7. Tax code
8. Health care
9. Entitlement reform, including Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid
10. Foreign policy
11. Technology
12. Manufacturing
13. Auto industry
14. Real estate
15. More than one issue in the same tweet
16. Other
17. None

If the issue mentioned within the tweet matches any of the categories with the values 1 through 14, it is assigned the corresponding value for that issue. If more than one issue is mentioned in the same tweet, it is assigned the value "15." If an issue other than those specified with values 1-14 is mentioned, it is assigned the value "16." If no issue is present in the tweet – meaning every tweet assigned the "no" value for the "issue" variable – it is assigned the value "17."

Attempted Virality

THE FINAL CHARACTERISTIC of created media, attempted virality, is the subject of four variables within the Twitter 2012 data set: "hashtag," "retweet ask," "retweet" and "retweet type." I will use those variables to test the following four hypotheses:

- H_{4A}: @BarackObama used hashtags more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{4B}: @BarackObama asked for followers to retweet its messages more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{4C}: @BarackObama retweeted messages published by other accounts more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{4D}: @BarackObama predominately retweeted messages originally published by campaign staffers and other campaign accounts while @MittRomney did not.

Hashtag

The "hashtag" is a dichotomous measure that accounts for the presence of a hashtag within the body of a tweet. As I discussed in Chapter 4, a hashtag is text that is preceded by a number sign (#) that makes the following phrase a clickable hyperlink within Twitter that shows other tweets that include the identical hashtag. If a tweet includes at least one (or more) hashtag within its text, it is assigned the value "1" for yes. If it does not contain a hashtag, it is coded with a "0" for "no."

Retweet Ask

The "retweet ask" variable is a dichotomous measure that codes for whether or not a tweet directly asks for the reader to retweet the original tweet. A retweet ask can

take numerous forms. In some instances, the tweet will begin with a simple "RT this" before the content of the tweet. In other instances, a tweet may say that the information provided is "worth a RT." In these cases, or any other variation of such a retweet ask, the tweet is assigned the value "1" for "yes." If the candidate's Twitter account does not ask for a retweet in a specific tweet, it is coded with a "0" for "no."

Retweet

Similarly, the "retweet" variable is a dichotomous measure that codes for whether the tweet in question was originally crafted by either @BarackObama or @MittRomney, or if it is a retweet of content originally published by a different account. If the content is a retweet, it is coded with a "1" value for "yes." If not, it is assigned the "0" value for "no."

Retweet Type

Finally, each tweet that is assigned the "yes" value under the "retweet" variable is then assigned a value between 1 and 8 that denotes the type of account from which the original tweet was published. If the tweet in question is not a retweet, and therefore is assigned the "no" value under the "retweet" variable, it is assigned the value "9" for "none." The full values for this nominal measure are:

1. Supporter
2. Staffer or other campaign account
3. Celebrity Surrogate
4. Political surrogate

5. Reporter or pundit
6. Spouse
7. Running mate
8. Other
9. None

Intercoder Reliability

TO COMPUTE INTERCODER RELIABILITY, I provided an additional coder with the codebook, which is included in **Appendix B**, and had this individual code 10% of the Twitter 2012 sample, or 104 different tweets. As such, I provided the coder with 52 tweets from both the @BarackObama and @MittRomney accounts. After supplementing the codebook with oral instructions and time to answer any questions in order to train the coder, the individual was left to her own devices to code the provided set of tweets over a two week period.

After the coding of 104 tweets, or 3,342 variables, intercoder reliability was achieved. After coding the 104 tweets for 33 variables each, the second coder matched my coding at a 98.1% rate (3,367 out of 3,432 variables shared identical codes). Of the 51 instances of divergence between the second coder and myself, a majority (42 out of 65, or 65%) were differences in coding the tone of tweets as positive, negative or contrasting. These three variables are not included in the analysis of my research. The remaining 12 instances of divergence can all be attributed to human error in the mistyping (or simply missing certain characteristics) of dichotomous variables or nominal measures with the input off by one digit.

In all, the data within Twitter 2012 and the ensuing results can be trusted as reliable and accurate with a 98.1% rate of intercoder reliability. With Cohen's Kappa = .996, I can confirm almost perfect agreement between the second coder and myself.

Conclusions

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDED a detailed outline of the methodology used through the sampling and coding process that resulted in the Created Media: Twitter and the 2012 Election data set. It also discussed numerous hypotheses, plus the specific variables I used to test those hypotheses, and how they relate to the four characteristics of created media: point of origin, method of delivery, targeted audience and attempted virality. Lastly, it provided the results of an intercoder reliability test that confirms the accuracy of the Twitter 2012 data set. In the following chapter, I will provide the results and analyses after testing each of the hypotheses I discussed above.

CHAPTER 6: 2012 CASE STUDY

THIS CASE STUDY of Twitter and the 2012 election aims to answer my second research question: how did both major presidential campaigns use created media during the course of the 2012 election? I will answer this question through a statistical analysis of the data within my Created Media: Twitter and the 2012 Election data set and the testing of the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 5. These hypotheses pertain to the characteristics of created media: point of origin, method of delivery, targeted audience and attempted virality. Moreover, my findings will paint a larger picture of how both campaigns used created media and will compare and contrast the strategies employed by Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc.

In Chapter 3, I defined created media as *media content created originally by a campaign, party or political organization that is made available to the public without paid placement and/or targeting and without being delivered as news from a reporting entity.* Tweets, which are published on Twitter without a paid delivery to an audience and are accessed directly by members of the public without first being reported as news, are an example of created media. As such, my content analysis of tweets will provide context with respect to how both presidential campaigns used created media during the 2012 election campaign.

By coding over one thousand tweets published during the last three weeks of the campaign, I aim to quantify how both presidential campaigns used created media as they made their closing arguments to potential voters. Descriptive statistics will allow me to establish general trends on how the campaigns used Twitter, and comparative analyses will illustrate how Obama for America's created media strategy outperformed the

strategy employed by Romney for President, Inc. by reaching a larger audience with more frequent messages.

I will demonstrate the disparity between the two campaigns through the commonly accepted concept of the gross rating point, which uses the reach and frequency of a message to gauge the effectiveness of television advertising, to created media more broadly and Twitter more specifically. Like gross rating points, gross created media, as I call it, judges the created media by the size of an audience and the number of times an audience sees that message. I will compare the tweets of @BarackObama and @MittRomney in this fashion by analyzing frequency within the characteristics of point of origin, method of delivery and targeted audience and reach through the attempted virality of both campaigns.

Finally, through a content analysis of tweets, this chapter will illustrate the significant advantage in both frequency and reach enjoyed by Obama for America on Twitter and the failure of Romney for President, Inc. to compete with Obama's created media strategy on Twitter.

Gross Created Media

ACCORDING TO THE *WASHINGTON POST*, Romney for President, Inc. spent $492 million on television advertising between April 11, 2012 – the day after former Senator Rick Santorum dropped out of the Republican primaries – and election day on November 6 (Andrews, Keating and Yourish). The vast majority of this $492 million, based on price alone, went toward advertising on broadcast television, which generally dominates a

campaign's media spending. I discussed television's role in the campaign media mix and budget in Chapter 2.

Advertisers and broadcasters use a common metric to gauge media buys on broadcast airwaves. Gross rating points, or GRPs, are measured through simple arithmetic: frequency multiplied by reach. Reach is the size of the audience that will see an ad, based on network, day-part and the show during which the ad is run. Frequency is the number of times the ad is run in front of that audience. Generally speaking, an advertiser can trust that the average member of his or her target audience will see an ad one time if it has 100 GRPs behind its media buy. In political advertising, 1,000 GRPs behind an ad buy is the gold standard: a message fully saturates and resonates with an audience after it is seen ten times. Accordingly, broadcasters sell advertising time on a cost-per-point basis (CPP), meaning if the CPP in a specific media market is $120, a campaign must spend $120,000 on a media buy to reach 1,000 GRPs in that market.

The ongoing desire to expand the reach and frequency of a message is a basic tenant of political messaging. I argue that these same fundamentals apply to created media just as it does to paid media. Therefore, the reach and frequency of a campaign, party or political organization's created media determines its gross created media (GCM), which speaks to the overall effectiveness of a campaign's created media strategy. The premise, like the gross rating point, is simple: the more often a message is published and the more members of the public who consume that message, the more powerful it is as a politically persuasive tool.

On Twitter, a campaign has complete control over the frequency of its messaging. It is not reliant on funding, as tweets, like all created media, do not require paid delivery.

Frequent tweeting from a campaign, party or political organization merely requires an allocation of human resources so that individuals are free to publish tweets regularly from the campaign's account. Likewise, a campaign has some control over the reach of its message through attempted virality, which I discussed at length in Chapter 3, by using hashtags, which expand the reach of a message through social sharing.

I will analyze the effectiveness of both Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc. at using frequency through the point of origin, method of delivery and targeted audience of tweets and reach through attempted virality. Combined, the frequency and reach of each campaign's created media on Twitter will determine its overall GCM.

Frequency

CAMPAIGNS, PARTIES AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS have complete control over the frequency of their created media. The current examples of created media, such as posts on Twitter, Facebook or Tumblr make this painfully obvious. It is incumbent upon the campaign to update these online profiles regularly and routinely, especially since they do so with no cost of production. In other instances, the campaign may face production costs (as I discussed in Chapter 3), however the campaign has complete control over these costs. Rather than having a television station dictate the cost-per-point for broadcast time – thus limiting frequency – the campaign can both control and accurately plan for production costs of these created media.

Consider web videos, for example. Campaigns, whether they produce web videos in house or contract the business out to a consultant, can handpick the content and

production styles of these videos to control quality and limit costs. Similarly, they can predict much more accurately the cost of production of web videos and, based on their created media plan, budget for their frequent production. Conversely, the CPP on broadcast stations is dictated by demand for the air space, meaning that the frequency a campaign can afford varies and cannot be fully predicted.

Furthermore, following the production of a web video, the campaign has complete control over the frequency at which that video is made available to the public. In addition to uploading it to a video sharing platform like YouTube, campaigns can make it available on social media by linking to the video on their Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr accounts (to name a few possibilities) and embedding it on a microsite or the candidate's website.

One concern about increasing the frequency of created media will be over-saturating an audience or, in the case of subscription services like Twitter or Facebook, causing a member of the public to opt-out of receiving such messages to avoid frequent updates. This logic shows that campaigns fail to consider created media in the form of GCM. First, by over-saturating airwaves with advertising on television, campaigns willingly risk alienating audiences and causing them to mute their volume, change the channel during commercial breaks or turn off the television completely. And in the instances of paid media on television, viewers do not have to opt-in to receiving political messaging – it is delivered to them directly without any form of a subscription – meaning that the possibility of alienating these audiences is increased. With created media, the audience is active – it must seek out the information for itself and engage in it through an opt-in. Because the audience of created media is engaged and invested in the campaign's

message, the likelihood of that audience being driven away by frequent messaging is decreased. If campaigns risk alienating audiences of paid media in order to increase the GRPs behind its message, so too should it take this risk to increase their message's GCM, especially when the audience of created media is engaged, invested and less likely to be driven away.

Frequency can also be used to expand the reach of a campaign's created media. Simple logic dictates that the production of more messages provides the audience with more opportunities to share that message socially and, as a result, more opportunities for the campaign to achieve virality. For example, if a campaign tweets frequently, its followers have more opportunities to retweet those messages, meaning the users who follow those followers have a higher likelihood of being reached with the campaign's message. Not only are these users confronted with the campaign's message, they are also confronted with ability to follow the campaign's account that produced the message originally. In these instances, not only is the reach of that particular message expanded, but also the reach of all future messages are expanded by increasing the total follow count of the campaign's account.

The ability to expand the reach of a message makes the argument for frequency that much stronger. Even if certain members of the audience are driven away because of the increased frequency and choose to unfollow the campaign's account, if the increased frequency results in more retweets and new followers, the campaign still enjoys a net gain in the reach of its message.

I will use statistical techniques to analyze how both presidential campaigns used frequency on Twitter to expand their messages and how frequency applies to three of the

four characteristics of created media: point of origin, method of delivery and targeted audience. I hypothesize that Obama for America will think of Twitter in the context of gross created media, and that this will be illustrated with the frequency in which it tweeted.

In total, @BarackObama tweeted nearly ten-times more frequently than @MittRomney by publishing 1,031, or 90.8%, of candidate tweets between October 16 and November 6. @MittRomney, meanwhile, published 104 tweets during the final three weeks of the election, which consists of 9.2% of the total sample. These figures are shown in **Table 6.1.**

Although these data show that both @BarackObama and @MittRomney used Twitter, they also reveal that Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc., at least in regards to frequency, used Twitter very differently as each campaign made its closing argument to voters over the final weeks of the election. By producing almost ten-times more created media content on Twitter than Romney for President, Inc., Obama for America made more information available to voters and, therefore, had more opportunities for its message to be accessed, consumed and shared virally than the Romney campaign.

From the start, the discrepancy in the frequency of created media output between the Obama and Romney campaigns is clear. Below, I will use frequency analyses of multiple variables within the Twitter 2012 data set to illustrate the general trends on Twitter in regards to point of origin, method of delivery and targeted audience. Next, I will test my hypotheses to illustrate the different strategies adopted by Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc. to deliver messages to the public frequently

through created media. I will conclude that the Obama campaign increased its gross created media at the point of origin, method of delivery and targeted audience in sharp contrast to the Romney campaign, whose depleted gross created media resulted from infrequent messaging on Twitter.

Point of Origin

I already established the general trend that 1,135 tweets were published by @MittRomney and @BarackObama over the final 21 days of the 2012 general election, amounting to just over 54 tweets per day on average. In addition to the account that published these tweets – 1,031 by @BarackObama and 104 by @MittRomney – how the tweets are dispersed by date during the period of analysis will reveal further trends within the point of origin characteristic of created media.

Date

The three weeks that construct the period of analysis contain what I categorize as major political events: two of the three presidential debates (the second on October 16 and the third on October 22), the day before election day (or election eve), in which both candidates make their final pushes to get out the vote, and election day itself. I contend that campaigns tweet more in response to such major political events. However, the period of analysis was also interrupted by a major historical event. Hurricane Sandy, a destructive storm that ravaged much of the eastern seaboard, virtually brought the campaign operations of both candidates to a halt as some of the country's most populous states braced for damage between October 26 and 31. As such, I will test three

hypotheses with the "date" variable that pertain to major political events, Hurricane Sandy and differences between the Obama and Romney campaigns:

- H_{1A}: The candidates will tweet most frequently on the day of major political events.
- H_{1B}: The candidates will tweet less frequently during the time that Hurricane Sandy damaged much of the eastern seaboard.
- H_{1C}: @BarackObama will tweet more during major political events than @MittRomney.

A frequency analysis of the "date" variable shows an obvious spike in tweet totals on the day of major political events: the most-tweeted day during the period of analysis is November 5, or election eve, when 141 tweets, or 12.4% of the entire sample, were published. The second most-tweeted day is October 22, when the final presidential debate was held. The two campaigns combined to tweet 121 times, or 10.7% of the sample. The third most-tweeted day of the analysis is October 16, the same day as the second presidential debate, when both campaigns combined to tweet 96 times, or 8.5% of my sample. Finally, 75 tweets, or 6.6% of the sample (and a total well above the 54-tweets-per-day average), were published on election day itself.

Likewise, the frequency analysis of the "date" variable shows a decrease in tweeting on the days in which Hurricane Sandy hit much of the east coast. Sandy made landfall in Florida on October 25 and slowly worked its way up the eastern seaboard. By October 29, the worst of the storm hit New Jersey, New York and much of New England, causing significant property damage and forcing both Obama and Romney to cancel campaign events in key swing states affected by the storm, including Florida, North

Carolina, Virginia and New Hampshire (CNN Political Unit). Both campaigns significantly altered the production of content on Twitter. During the worst of the storm – October 26 through October 31 – the frequency at which both campaigns tweeted dwindled, with only 27 tweets published on October 26 (2.4%), 24 on October 27 (2.1%), 15 on both October 28 and 29 (1.3% each), 10 on October 30 (.9% - the lowest single day total during the period of analysis), and 20 (1.8%) on October 31. Overall, this time period consisted of six of the eight daily lowest tweet totals during the campaign.

While the frequencies show an obvious spike in tweet totals on the day of major political events and a decrease in tweet totals during Hurricane Sandy, they alone do not verify that the spikes in tweet totals can be attributed to the political events in a statistically reliable way. To test the statistical significance of these increases – and thus my H_{1A} and H_{1B} – I conducted a pooled time series analysis incorporating dummy variables within the Twitter 2012 data for the major political events. The dummy variables, called "second debate," "third debate," "election eve," "election day" and "Sandy" for their respective events during the period of analysis, were each dichotomous, with every tweet published on the day of its respective event coded "1" and the remaining tweets assigned the value "0."

To run my pooled time series analysis, which is used to explain a phenomenon that is time related, I assigned "date" as the dependent variable and each of the aforementioned dummy variables as independent variables. The results of the pooled time series analysis show that the changes in tweet frequency can, in varying degrees, be attributed to major political events or Hurricane Sandy. The standardized beta coefficients for each dummy variable, which confirm the relationship between the change

in frequency and the corresponding events, are as follows: for "second debate," .374, for "third debate," .154, for "Sandy," -.110, for "election eve," .476 and for "election day," .404. The adjusted R^2 for the pooled series analysis is .610, and in each case – the standard beta coefficient for each and the adjusted R^2 – the F tests = .00, indicating statistical significance. The results of the pooled time series analysis are presented in **Table 6.2**.

As such, both hypotheses H_{1A} and H_{1B} are upheld, meaning the trends shown in **Figure 6.3**, with obvious up upticks in accordance with major political events and decreases around Hurricane Sandy, are statistically significant.

My third hypotheses within the characteristic of point of origin pertains to the comparison in frequency of tweeting between @BarackObama and @MittRomney on the day of major political events. To test this hypothesis, I ran a crosstab analysis of both candidates with the "date" variable and the resulting contrast between the two candidates is clear. @BarackObama tweeted 88 times on the day of the second debate, compared to only 8 tweets from @MittRomney, meaning that Obama for America published 91.7% of all tweets within Twitter 2012 with the date value 10/16/2012. Similarly, the Obama account tweeted 106 times on the day of the third debate, constituting 87.6% of all tweets from 10/22/2012. The Romney account only tweeted 15 times on the same day. On election eve, Obama tweeted 135 times to Romney's 6, meaning that Obama for America produced 95.7% of all content from both accounts on 11/05/2012. Finally, Obama tweeted 66 times on election day itself, producing 88.0% of all tweets that day as Romney only tweeted 9 times on 11/06/2012. The crosstab analysis produced a χ^2 p = .02, meaning that the differences between the two campaigns are statistically significant.

In all, these findings confirm H_{1C}: @BarackObama tweeted at a much higher frequency than @MittRomney on days corresponding with major political events. The contrast in tweet totals across the entire period of analysis, including both debates, election eve and election day, is shown in graph form in **FIGURE 6.4**.

Point of Origin Conclusions

The statistical analysis of the "date" variable is indicative of the point of origin of created media. Not only did both campaigns serve as the point of origin for content published on Twitter, but the frequency and crosstab analysis of the date of publication also shows that the point of origin on a campaign's media production calendar varies with major political events, including presidential debates, election eve and election day. My pooled time series analysis indicates the statistical significance of these changes in frequency.

These findings support the notion of an integrated messaging campaign across platforms, with both campaigns increasing the rate of production of created media in tandem with debates, which Burton and Shea define as a method of earning media, and the final two days of the election. Not only does this allow campaigns to have unmediated contact with the public before, during, and after political events, but it also allows each campaign to spin its message without that spin being miscommunicated (or disagreed with) by the press. As a result, both campaigns can take to Twitter to declare victory after presidential debates and accentuate the gaffes and flaws of their opponents.

The contrast in frequency daily between @BarackObama and @MittRomney is striking. The Obama account's tweet totals exceeded the totals produced by the Romney

account each day of the period of analysis. Even more prominently, Obama accounted for an overwhelming majority of tweets responding to key political events, a trend that my analysis shows is not only intuitively obvious but also is statistically significant.

This contrast is remarkable. Would Mitt Romney have allowed President Obama to control roughly 90% of the speaking time in any of the presidential debates? The answer is obvious, yet the Romney campaign ceded control of the Twitter discussion on the day of both presidential debates within the period of analysis, when Obama published 91.7% and 87.6% of all tweets on October 16 and 22, respectively.

Similarly, would the Romney campaign have allowed Obama for America to contact 19 voters for every one reached by the Republican campaign on the day before election day, when both campaigns were in the heart of their get-out-the-vote operations? Again, of course not, yet @BarackObama published over 19 tweets for every one tweet published by @MittRomney on November 5. To be clear, I am not arguing that a tweet is equivalent in value to a debate performance or face-to-face voter contact. I do, however, argue that the premise of frequent messaging applies to Twitter as it does to other forms of voter contact. My findings are clear: @MittRomney allowed @BarackObama to control the discussion and contact more potential voters on the day of major political events with little competition.

In all, Obama published 357 tweets on the day of major political events, meaning @BarackObama was responsible for 91.2% of all tweets produced on those days. The result is clear. Members of the public seeking political information on Twitter on the day of major political events – exactly when the public is more likely to be engaged and seeking such information – had a much greater likelihood of accessing messages from

Obama than from Romney. Similarly, Twitter users who followed reactions to these political events received messages from @BarackObama more than 10-times more frequently than from @MittRomney. And supporters who followed the Obama account had 357 more opportunities to retweet messages on to their followers than supporters of Romney who followed his Twitter feed.

The results of my pooled time series and crosstab analyses of the "date" variable makes it abundantly clear that Obama for America valued frequency in its production of created media on Twitter while Romney for President, Inc. did not. The consequences of Romney's abandonment of frequency on the day of major political events are many. Twitter users had fewer opportunities to see Romney's messages and fewer opportunities to retweet those messages on to their respective followers. Moreover, Romney allowed @BarackObama to control the conversation on the day of these major political events, causing the messaging produced by @MittRomney to be drowned out. Any campaign that had 395 ads run on television against them for every 38 ads run for them would acknowledge it was in serious trouble. While Twitter is not television, the importance of frequency remains the same. Simply put, on the day of major political events, Romney for President, Inc. ceded the conversation on Twitter to Obama for America.

Method of Delivery

Twitter is a method of delivery for created media in the form of textual messages of 140-characters or less. But Twitter also serves as a method of delivery for other created media, including photos (or twitpics) and other web content delivered by way of an active hyperlink included in the body of the tweet. A frequency analysis of three

variables within Twitter 2012 – "twitpic," "link" and "link type" – reveal general trends of how the presidential campaigns used Twitter as a method of delivery for photography and links during the final three weeks of the 2012 general election.

Fully 174 tweets, or 15.3% of the entire sample, included a photo as part of the tweet. Many more tweets – 473 in total, or 41.7% - included a link to content outside of Twitter. And of those links, 215 (18.9%) were to a candidate's website, 159 (14.0%) linked to a web video, 42 (3.7%) linked to a volunteer ask, 23 (2.0%) linked to a earned media, 14 (1.2%) linked to a fundraising ask, 12 (1.1%) linked to other content, 5 (0.4%) linked to a microsite and 2 (0.2%) linked to another form of social media. In these cases, the "other" category consists primarily of links to the American Red Cross during Hurricane Sandy as well as any other content that did not meet the criteria of the other categories. The frequency analysis of the "twitpic," "link" and "link type" variables are presented in **Table 6.5**

However, these trends do not reveal the differences in how Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc. used Twitter as a method of delivery for photos and links. Below, I will explore any variances in strategy by testing the following hypotheses:

- H_{2A}: @BarackObama tweeted more photos than @MittRomney.
- H_{2B}: @BarackObama tweeted more links to content outside of Twitter than @MittRomney
- H_{2C}: @BarackObama tweeted more links to its campaign's web videos, candidate website and earned media than @MittRomney.

Twitpic

A crosstab analysis of the "twitpic" and "candidate" variables reveals that Obama for America accounted for all but four – or 97.7% - of the twitpics published during the final three weeks of the campaign: 170, or 16.5%, of @BarackObama's tweets included a photo, compared to only 4 (3.8%) of Romney's tweets that did the same. For added perspective, Obama published 66 more photos than Romney did tweets of any type during the period of analysis. With a χ^2 p = .01, the findings are statistically significant and therefore support H_{2A}: that @BarackObama tweeted more photos than @MittRomney. Not only did Obama for America tweet more twitpics in total, it also devoted a higher percentage of its tweets to delivering photos. The full crosstab analysis of the "twitpic" and "candidate" variables is presented in **Table 6.6.**

Link

Table 6.6 also illustrates the crosstab analysis of the "link" and "twitpic" variables, which shows that @BarackObama accounted for 83.5% of all links tweeted during the period of analysis. In total, the Obama account tweeted 395 links, meaning that links were included in 38.3% of its tweets. Although @MittRomney tweeted links to content outside of Twitter at a higher frequency than Obama – 75.0%, or 78, of Romney's tweets included links – the total number of links tweeted is still dwarfed in comparison to Obama's total. With χ^2 p = .00, H_{2B}: is upheld and statistically significant: @BarackObama tweeted more links to content outside of Twitter than @MittRomney.

Link Type

In H_{2C}: I hypothesize that @BarackObama tweeted links to web videos, the candidate's web site and earned media more frequently than @MittRomney. I tested this hypothesis with a crosstab analysis of the "link type" and "candidate" variables, which shows that @BarackObama linked to more diverse content online than @MittRomney. The Romney account linked primarily to MittRomney.com – 48.1% of all of Romney's tweets included a link to a page on the candidate website (50 tweets total). The remaining links went to web videos (17 links, 16.3% of all tweets), volunteer asks (3 links, 3.8% of all tweets) and "other" links (2 links, both to the American Red Cross during Hurricane Sandy, for 1.9% of all tweets).

Although Obama's account also linked to his website more often than any other link type – 165 links, or 16.0% of all published tweets directed to BarackObama.com – the campaign's dispersion of links was more evenly distributed across link types. Nearly 14%, or 142, of all of Obama's tweets linked to a web video, 39 (3.8%) linked to a volunteer ask, 23 (16.0%) linked to earned media, 10 (1.0%) went to "other" content, 8 (0.8%) linked to fundraising asks, 5 (0.2%) linked to microsites and 2 (0.2%) linked to other social media content.

With χ^2 p = .00, this analysis confirms my hypothesis that the Obama account tweeted links to web videos, the candidate's website and earned media more often than the Romney account with statistical significance. Moreover, it reveals that @BarackObama tweeted more links to every link type than @MittRomney, and that Romney failed to link to other social media, microsites or earned media even a single time. Instead, @MittRomney predominately used Twitter as a direct link to MittRomney.com: nearly half (48.1%) of all of Romney's tweets linked to the

candidate's website, while @BarackObama more evenly distributed links across link types.

Method of Delivery Conclusions

There are many conclusions to be drawn from this analysis of Twitter as a method of delivery of created media. First, political campaigns clearly consider Twitter a viable option for delivering created media to interested members of the public, as made evident by the 1,135 tweets published during the period of analysis and the 473, or 41.7%, of those tweets that linked to content outside of Twitter. Second, campaigns actively use Twitter as a method of delivering photographic content, with the two campaigns combining to post 174 twitpics during the period of analysis.

These results combine to create a clear picture of Twitter as a method of delivering created media. Individual tweets in their own right are created media, but tweets also facilitate other methods of created media delivery by driving traffic to the candidate's website, web videos, and more. All of these created media, as delivered by Twitter, meet the criteria set forth in Chapter 3 by simply being made available to the public without paid placement or coverage from a reporting entity. Based on the number of tweets and the frequency at which both campaigns posted created media content on the micro-blogging platform, Twitter is an effective method of delivery for created media content.

The comparison between @MittRomney and @BarackObama, and the confirmation of H_{2A}:, H_{2B}: and H_{2C} is similarly telling. By more frequently posting photos and links, including every category within the "link type" variable, the Obama account

gave its followers many more opportunities to access content beyond the tweet itself than its Republican counterpart. This is an important distinction. Because tweets are limited to only 140-characters, the content of each tweet's message is decidedly limited. Posting photos and links allows campaigns to expand the content and depth of the message within a single tweet. Surely a post on the candidate's website, a web video or positive earned media contain richer political content than a 140-character tweet, meaning that Obama for America used Twitter to draw interested members of the public into more in-depth political messaging through links much more adeptly than Romney for President, Inc.

@BarackObama also leveraged Twitter as an organizational tool much more frequently than @MittRomney. For every instance that Romney published a link to a fundraising ask, Obama published 13 such links, meaning that the Obama account not only used Twitter as a means of delivering persuasive created media, but also that it used Twitter as a means of delivering organizational created media. This usage speaks to the versatility of created media as a strategy tool for campaigns and to the willingness of Obama for America to use Twitter for a variety of strategic goals. Moreover, it is in sharp contrast to Romney for President, Inc., which brought a single-minded approach to its Twitter strategy by posting links almost exclusively to MittRomney.com and web videos while neglecting other social media, microsites and earned media altogether.

Overall, this data speaks to Obama for America's adoption of the value of frequency with created media. By producing more photos, more links, and more links of every type than Romney for President, Inc., the Obama campaign ensured that members of the public would be far more likely to both see and click its content simply due to the

frequency of the messaging than to do the same with its opponent's created media content.

Targeted Audience

In Chapter 3, I specified that created media are not targeted media but are rather made available to the public to be accessed by those seeking political information. That said, this limitation does not prevent campaigns from making content available to the general public that specifically references particular target audiences. Six variables within Twitter 2012 address the concept of targeted audience: "state," "swing state," "demographic," "swing demographic," "issue" and "swing issue."

A frequency analysis of these variables illustrates general trends of how both presidential campaigns used Twitter to target audiences with specific content. First, it is evident that both campaigns used Twitter to mention specific states within its messaging. Fully 22.4% (254 in total) of all tweets published during the period of analysis mentioned specific states by name. The most frequently mentioned states were Ohio, with 43 tweets (or 3.8% of the entire sample), Iowa (34 tweets, 3.0%), Florida (27 tweets, 2.4%), Virginia and Wisconsin (21 tweets, 1.9% each. Interestingly, 29 tweets – or 2.6% - met the criteria of the "other" category, which includes any other state or more than one state mentioned in a single tweet. The frequency analysis of the "state" and "swing state" variables is presented in **Table 6.8**.

Similarly, both candidates combined to target demographic groups as the subject of multiple tweets. In total, 12.3% of the analyzed tweets – a total of 140 – included a demographic specific message. Within those 140 tweets, the following demographic

groups received the attention of @MittRomney or @BarackObama: women were the subject of 61 tweets (5.4% of entire sample), the middle class 28 tweets (2.5%), veterans or the military 17 tweets (1.5%), small business owners 13 tweets (1.1%), students or young adults 12 tweets (1.1%), other groups (or more than one group) 8 tweets (.07%), Jews 3 tweets (0.3%), and Hispanics or Latinos 1 tweet (0.1%). The full frequency analysis of both the "demographic" and "swing demographic" variables is shown in **Table 6.9**.

Finally, the two campaigns actively messaged about specific public policy issues on Twitter and did so more often than they tweeted about geographic or demographic groups. In total, one-third of all tweets – 376, or 33.1% - included some sort of messaging about specific policy issues. The most frequently tweeted about issue was foreign policy, which garnered the attention of 93 tweets, or 8.2% of the entire sample, although this number is certainly skewed upward due to the fact that the third presidential debate, which focused solely on foreign policy, was held during the period of analysis.[i] Women's issues were mentioned in the next-largest number of tweets, with 59 tweets (5.2% of sample), followed by jobs and the economy (52 tweets, or 4.6%), and more than one issue in a single tweet (47 tweets, or 4.1%). Other discussed issues include taxes (28, 2.5%), health care (20, 1.8%), education (19, 1.7%), the auto industry (18, 4.6%) and energy (15, 1.3%). Matters of the national debt and deficit were only tweeted about 11 times, or 1.0% of the entire sample. The only issues tweeted about less frequently than the debt or deficit were manufacturing (7, 0.6%), "other" (6, 0.5%), entitlement reform (5, 0.4%), LGBT issues (3, 0.3%) and technology (1, 0.1%). The full frequency analysis of "issue" and "swing issue" is presented in **Table 6.10**.

With the general trends of targeted audiences established by the above frequencies, I posit six hypotheses about how the Obama and Romney campaigns targeted audiences geographically, demographically, and through public policy issues during the final three weeks of the 2012 campaign. More specifically, I hypothesize that Obama for America more frequently targeted audiences on Twitter than Romney for President, Inc.:

- H_{3A}: @BarackObama tweeted about specific states more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{3B}: @BarackObama tweeted about specific demographic groups more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{3C}: @BarackObama tweeted about specific public policy issues more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{3D}: @BarackObama tweeted about the key swing states Florida, Iowa and Ohio more often than @BarackObama.
- H_{3E}: @BarackObama tweeted about the key demographic groups of women, the middle class and veterans more often than @MittRomney.
- H_{3F}: @BarackObama tweeted about the key public policy issues of jobs and the economy, women's issues and taxes more often than @MittRomney.

State

A crosstab analysis of the "state" variable with the "candidate" variable reveals that both candidates specifically mentioned particular states over Twitter, however @BarackObama did so at a much higher frequency. Fully 246 of Obama's tweets, or

23.9% of all tweets published by @BarackObama, included a state specific message. Only 8 (7.7%) of @MittRomney's tweets mentioned specific states. These findings confirm H_{3A}: @BarackObama tweeted about specific states more frequently than @MittRomney, and does so with statistical significance (χ^2 p = .00). The results of the crosstab analysis of "state" and "candidate" are presented in **Table 6.11**.

Demographic

Table 6.11 also shows the findings of a crosstab analysis of the "demographic" and "candidate" variables. These findings uphold H_{3B}: 134 of Obama's tweets, or 13.0%, included a demographic-specific message, while only 6, or 5.6%, of Romney's did the same. With χ^2 p = .033, the results of this analysis – that @BarackObama tweeted more frequently about demographic groups than @MittRomney – are statistically significant.

Issue

Finally, **Table 6.11** presents the findings of the crosstab analysis of the "issue" and "candidate" variables used to test H_{3C}:. In full, the Obama account published 351 issue-specific tweets, or 34.0% of all of @BarackObama's tweets. The Romney account, meanwhile, published 25 tweets or 24.0%, about policy issues. Despite devoting nearly a quarter of its tweets to policy issues, the @MittRomney was outpaced by @BarackObama in this category both in rate (10% difference) and raw total: Obama published more than three-times as many tweets about policy issues than Romney's entire tweet total. With χ^2 p = .039, the findings of this crosstab analysis are statistically significant.

Swing State

A crosstab analysis of the "swing state" variable with the "candidate" variable shows that @BarackObama accounted for nearly all of the state-specific mentions discussed above and outpaced its opponent by mentioning key swing states like Florida, Iowa and Ohio more frequently than @MittRomney. This confirms H_{3D}:, although the findings cannot be trust as statistically significant: χ^2 p = .120 because 12 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5 while the expected count is .27. This result is indicative of @MittRomney's failure to tweet about many key states accounted for in the Twitter 2012 data set: Florida, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Nevada all were not mentioned by the Romney account.

Even the states that were mentioned by @MittRomney during the period of analysis received very little attention from the Republican nominee. Romney only mentioned two states more than once (Ohio and Colorado, twice each, or 1.9% of all of Romney's tweets) and an additional four states once (North Carolina, Virginia, Iowa and Colorado, 1.0% of all of Romney's tweets). Romney also mentioned an "other" state one time. Of course, Romney for President, Inc. lost each of these states save for North Carolina to Obama for America.

@BarackObama, meanwhile, made a practice out of specifically mentioning swing states and did so frequently. The Obama campaign targeted Ohio 41 times (4.0% of all tweets), Iowa 33 times (3.2%), Florida 27 times (2.6%), Colorado 23 times (2.2%), Wisconsin 21 times (2.0%) and Virginia 20 times (1.9%). Obama's account also mentioned "other" states 38 times (3.7%). Of course, Obama won all six of his most

tweeted about swing states. The full crosstab analysis of "swing state" and "candidate" is shown in **Table 6.12**.

Swing Demographic

I used a crosstab analysis of the "swing demographic" and "candidate" variables to test H_{3E}: @BarackObama tweeted about the key demographic groups of women, the middle class and veterans more often than @MittRomney. The results of the analysis support this hypothesis, although once again the findings cannot be trusted as statistically significant because the Romney account failed to mention numerous demographic groups even once (χ^2 p = .685, 9 cells, or 50.0%, have expected count less than 5 while the expected count is .09).

In all, @BarackObama devoted 5.6% of its tweets (58 in total) to women, 27 (2.6%) to the middle class, 16 (1.6%) to veterans, 12 (1.2%) to both students and small business owners, 8 (0.8%) to the "other" category, 3 (0.3%) to Jews and 1 (0.1%) to Hispanics. Obama mentioned each of the demographic groups within the analysis at least once.

Conversely, @MittRomney only mentioned four demographic groups during the period of analysis: women received 3 mentions (2.9% of Romney's tweets) and the middle class, veterans and small business owners received 1 mention each (1.0%). Romney failed to mention Hispanics, students, Jews or any other group even once. The full crosstab analysis is shown in **Table 6.13**.

Swing Issue

The final hypothesis within the characteristic of targeted audience is H_{3F}: @BarackObama tweeted about the key public policy issues of jobs and the economy, women's issues and taxes more often than @MittRomney. A crosstab analysis of the "swing issue" and "candidate" variables confirms this hypothesis. Although χ^2 p = .002, suggesting statistical significance, 18 cells (52.9%) have expected count less than five while the expected count is .09. Once again, these results are indicative of @MittRomney's failure to tweet about a number of public policy issues during the final three weeks of the 2012 election.

@MittRomney tweeted most frequently about jobs and the economy (7 tweets, 6.7% of Romney total). The Republican nominee also tweeted about the debt or deficit, foreign policy and more than one issue five times each, or 4.8% of the Romney total. The only other issue-specific tweets from Romney discussed energy (2, 1.9%), and women's issues (1, 1.9%). Romney did not tweet at all about gay rights, education, taxes, health care, entitlement reform, technology, manufacturing, the auto industry, real estate or other categories at all during the final three weeks of the 2012 election.

@BarackObama tweeted about a wider variety of public policy issues than @MittRomney, and did so much more frequently. Obama mentioned each issue at least once, but tweeted most about foreign policy (88 tweets, or 8.5% of Obama's total), women's issues (58, 5.6%), jobs and the economy (45, 4.4%) and more than one issue (42, 4.1%). Other issues that commanded the Obama account's attention were taxes (28, 2.7%), health care (20, 1.9%) and the auto industry (18, 1.7%). Despite publishing nearly ten times as many tweets as @MittRomney, @BarackObama only published one more tweet about the debt or the deficit (6, 0.6%) than his opponent. The other issues that

garnered a similar amount of attention from @BarackObama were LBGT issues (3, .03%), entitlement reform (5, 0.5%), technology (1, 0.1%), manufacturing (7, 0.7%), and real estate (2, 0.2%). The full crosstab analysis is presented in **Table 6.14**.

Targeted Audience Conclusions

The seven hypotheses tested above reveal the ways in which political campaigns are able to manipulate created media – which are, by definition, not targeted media – and still target specific audiences based on geography, demography and public policy interests. Campaigns are able to accomplish this end by making certain swing states, demographics or policy issues the subject of these created media that, in this case, are tweets rather than by paying to have these messages delivered directly to those states, groups, or issue-interested voters.

The results in this section are indicative of the versatility and strengths of created media in general and Twitter more specifically. The campaign, party or political organization behind the message does not have to pay for its delivery to specific audiences, and yet it can target those audiences by making geographic, demographic or policy issues the subject of the message. There is a clear upside to mentioning specific groups within the content of created media: the members of the public seeking political information access information that pertains to them (and their interests) specifically, while members of the public who do not care about the specific groups mentioned can simply (on Twitter, at least) scroll past the state, demographic or issue-specific message and on to the next tweet from the candidate.

Even so, the likelihood of campaigns during the 2012 election to make specific public policy issues the subject of tweets, rather than demographics or particular states, is understandable. Public policy issues are more ubiquitous than demographics or geography: foreign policy, women's issues, jobs and the economy, which were the most frequently tweeted-about issues during the period of analysis, apply to the vast majority of the politically engaged public while geographic and demographic limitations do not. Because created media like Twitter are not targetable by audience, targeting members of the public with more ubiquitous issues makes more sense. This is not to say, however, that mentioning specific demographic or geographic groups cannot or should not be done by campaigns using created media, as evidenced by the data above.

In all, this data reveals the ways in which both presidential campaigns turned non-targetable created media into targeted media by mentioning specific swing states, demographic groups or public policy issues within the bodies of tweets. Although such content remains available to any member of the interested public, those who access content that they are not interested in can simply move on to the next form of created media. In this way, the upside – engaging interested members of the public with specific messages that draw them in – significantly outweighs the downside of having a less-interested member of the public access that message.

Moreover, it provides more context for the targeted audience characteristic of created media. Although each tweet in my sample was available to the general public, thus matching my definition of created media, campaigns specify audiences within their tweets to capture the attention of those members of the public who are of particular political value due to geographic and demographic characteristics.

The confirmation of my six hypotheses makes Obama for America's frequency advantage abundantly clear. Not only did @BarackObama target specific states, demographic groups and policy issues more frequently than @MittRomney, but it also targeted every category within the "swing state," "swing demographic" and "swing issue" more frequently than its Republican adversary. As such, the Obama campaign was able to frame the debate on Twitter and drown out any competing messages coming from the Romney campaign.

First, Obama tweeted about every major swing state at least once and dominated the messaging geared toward the most highly contested states. @BarackObama tweeted 27 more messages than @MittRomney about Florida, 39 more about Ohio, 32 more about Iowa, 15 more about Nevada and 21 more about Colorado. Many of Obama's tweets about these states summarized remarks made by the president on the campaign trail. At the very least, these tweets reminded Twitter users that Obama was spending valuable time in these states in an effort to win votes, meaning even if followers of @BarackObama did not attend campaign events themselves, or if they missed local coverage of the events through earned media, they still knew the President visited their state. Because tweets, like all created media, are not targeted by geographic location, tweeting about specific key states more frequently ensures that members of the public from those states were that much more likely to see those state-specific messages. @BarackObama used this to its advantage. @MittRomney did not.

The same can be said about key demographic groups, which like swing states, @BarackObama tweeted about more frequently and about a more diverse group of demographics than @MittRomney. The differences in this category are stark, especially

in one category: Obama tweeted about women 55 more times than Romney. In 2012, women and the so-called gender gap were frequent topics of political discussion, and @BarackObama ran up the score in this category on Twitter. More so than any other demographic group – although Obama did tweet substantially more frequently than Romney about the middle class (26 more tweets), veterans and the military (15 more tweets), students or young adults (12 more tweets) and small business owners (12 more tweets) – @BarackObama controlled the demographic discussion on Twitter and forced the conversation to be about groups that favored his re-election. Moreover, by tweeting about women so much more frequently than Romney, @BarackObama gave his followers more opportunities to retweet those messages, thus expanding his outreach to female voters strengthening the possibility that the political discussion on Twitter occurred on its terms and not its opponent.

Finally, the disparity between Obama and Romney is greatest in the area of tweeting public policy issues: @BarackObama published 247 more issue-specific messages than @MittRomney published tweets touching on any topic. All of Obama's tweets on foreign policy combine to equal 85% of Romney's entire Twitter production over the 21-day period of analysis. Head-to-head, the difference in frequency is equally obvious. Obama tweeted about women's issues 57 more times than Romney, jobs and the economy 38 more times, taxes 28 more times, health care 20 more times, education 19 more times and the auto industry 18 more times.

That Romney for President, Inc. did not pick up on the importance of frequency behind created media is particularly surprising in this instance. The Republican campaign made it no secret that the former Massachusetts governor would be focusing on high

unemployment and a weak economic recovery throughout President Obama's first term, and yet on Twitter it allowed Obama for America to define the terms of the discussion about jobs and the economy through frequent messaging. Furthermore, the Romney campaign failed to capitalize on the issues of federal debt and deficits – which only commanded .06% of Obama's tweets, showing that the President would have rather not discussed such topics – by not forcing the discussion through more frequent messaging on these topics.

Overall, Obama for America set the terms of the political debate on Twitter by more frequently producing created media targeting specific states, key demographic groups and major issues of public policy. @MittRomney's engagement on geographic, demographic and policy issues is feeble in comparison to the frequent publication of content from @BarackObama. The result of Romney's failed strategy is obvious. Members of the public, including those who live in key swing states or are members of certain demographic groups, seeking political information on Twitter were exceedingly more likely to receive content from Obama for America than they were from Romney for President, Inc.

Reach

DETERMINING AND EXPANDING the reach of a campaign, party, or political organization's created media is more difficult than doing the same through paid media. The reach of paid advertising is determined by the size of a media market and the popularity of a network and show. The advertising space on more popular shows is justifiably more expensive, meaning that a campaign can expand the reach of its paid media messaging

only by increasing the dollar amount of its media buy to place ads during those popular shows.

With created media, the audience size varies across methods of deliveries and differs by campaign. Determining the size of these audiences is not always easy. While campaigns can track the number of users that follow their account on Twitter or like their Facebook page, the validity of those accounts (i.e. whether they are operated by an actual human being) or whether the message is seen are not guaranteed. On YouTube, campaigns can track the view totals for its web videos, however the number of those views that watched the video to completion is not apparent. And campaigns can use web analytics to track the number of unique visitors to each campaign site and page within the site.

That said, campaigns are all offered the same means of expanding the reach of their created media, all of which I discussed in Chapter 3. First, campaigns can turn to paid media (or created-turned-paid media) to increase the reach of its created media by way of promoted content and featured accounts on social media like Facebook and Twitter. Similarly, campaigns can make their YouTube channel a featured account to attract subscribers. And on the web, campaigns can use paid media on search engines like Google or banner advertising on other websites to drive traffic to microsites or the candidate's website. All of these paid media are geared to increasing the reach of created media.

Second, campaigns can attempt virality to expand the reach of its created media. Any measure of social sharing – even if the rate of sharing fails to approach virality – expands the reach of a campaign's message. And although such sharing is incumbent

upon the audience, campaigns can employ (free) tactics to attempt virality. I illustrated the ways that @BarackObama and @MittRomney did just that on Twitter through retweet asks, retweets and hashtags in the previous chapter. The same concept can be applied across other created media, where Facebook enables sharing, Tumblr enables re-blogging, and YouTube videos can be linked or embedded across all three social media platforms (and more).

The potential for virality makes measuring the reach of created media that much more difficult. While follower counts and analytics can inform a campaign of the foundation of an audience, social sharing expands reach beyond the scope of Twitter followers and Facebook likes. For example, if @MittRomney tweeted a message on election day to 1.8 million followers and it was retweeted by three users, with 100, 1,000 and 10,000 followers respectively, suddenly the reach of that message has expanded by 11,100. With many tweets from presidential candidates being retweeted by thousands of users, all with follower counts of various sizes, the reach of the message expands exponentially. For that reason, the reach of social media like Twitter and Facebook, and how that reach pertains to the greater concept of GCM, must be a combined understanding of the explicitly listed audience (i.e. followers or likes) and attempted virality from the campaign reach users who do not follow or like the campaign's account.

Romney for President, Inc. began the 2012 election with a severe disadvantage in reach online. Obama for America had the benefit of having operated for six years, including a successful presidential campaign, and the power of the presidency to build its following on Twitter, Facebook, and other online presences, while the Romney campaign had only seven months after the Republican primary to engage the Obama machine in a

general election. This disadvantage is evident in the followings of @BarackObama and @MittRomney on election day: Obama had 22.7 million followers compared to Romney's 1.8 million on November 6 (Foulger).

In this section, I will quantify how both presidential campaigns extended the reach of their messages through attempted virality on Twitter through three variables within the Twitter 2012 data set.

Attempted Virality

I discussed the concept of attempted virality at length in Chapter 3, and a frequency analysis of three variables in the Twitter 2012 data set – "retweet ask," "retweet" and "retweet type" – reveal general trends about how the two candidates attempted virality on Twitter during the final 21-days of the 2012 campaign.

First, hashtags were used in 320 tweets, or 28.2% of the entire sample. Second, 33 tweets, or 2.9%, directly asked followers to retweet the message that contained the retweet ask. Third, 179 tweets, or 15.8%, were retweets of content published originally by accounts other than @MittRomney and @BarackObama. And fourth, of those retweets, 120,or 10.6% of the entire sample were retweets of tweets originally published by campaign staffers or other Twitter accounts controlled by the campaign, while 12 retweets (1.1%) were of reporters or pundits, 10 (0.9%) each were of celebrity surrogates or the candidates spouse, and campaign supporters and "other" accounts accounted for 9 retweets each (0.8%). The remaining retweets were of tweets from the candidates' running mates (6, 0.5%) and political surrogates (5, 0.4%). The full frequency analysis of these three variables is presented in **Table 6.15**.

Although the Romney Twitter account began the 2012 general election at a distinct disadvantage to President Obama's Twitter account, I hypothesize that @MittRomney did very little to make up ground and extend its reach through attempted virality. More specifically, my hypotheses are:

- H_{4A}: @BarackObama used hashtags more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{4B}: @BarackObama asked for followers to retweet its messages more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{4C}: @BarackObama retweeted messages published by other accounts more frequently than @MittRomney.
- H_{4D}: @BarackObama predominately retweeted messages originally published by campaign staffers and other campaign accounts while @MittRomney did not.

Hashtag

A crosstab analysis of the "hashtag" and "candidate" variables confirms H_{4A}: @BarackObama did use hashtags more frequently than @MittRomney. In full, Obama accounted for 95.0% of all tweets with a hashtag within Twitter 2012, or 304 in total, meaning 29.5% of all of @BarackObama's tweets included a hashtag. @MittRomney, on the other hand, only used a hashtag in 16, or 15.4%, tweets. With χ^2 $p = .002$, the results of this crosstab analysis can be trusted as statistically significant. They are shown in **Table 6.16**.

Retweet Ask

Similarly, a crosstab analysis of "retweet ask" and "candidate" upholds H_{4B}: @BarackObama asked followers to retweet content more frequently than @MittRomney. In fact, Obama accounted for all 33 retweet asks during the period of analysis. Because Romney did not ask followers to retweet a single message, χ^2 p = .064 and one cell (25.0%) have expected count less than five when the minimum expected count is 3.02, these findings cannot be considered statistically significant. These findings are also presented in **Table 6.16**.

It is important to note that followers do not have to be asked to retweet content; all 104 of @MittRomney's tweets, with or without a direct ask, were available to be retweeted. This speaks to the larger characteristic of virality, which, as I discussed in Chapter 3, is reliant on user engagement and social sharing. By asking directly for a retweet, Obama for America is explicitly stating its attempt at virality, but virality can be achieved with or without such an ask.[ii]

That said, the data suggest that @BarackObama more completely grasped the concept of attempted virality. By directly asking followers, who already opted-in to receiving Obama for America's messages on Twitter, to retweet content on to their followers, the Obama account actively sought to expand the reach of its messages beyond the confines of its follower count. The Romney campaign, on the other hand, let the attempt at virality to remain implicit and, therefore, could have missed opportunities to expand the reach of its message on Twitter. Overall, the result of this frequency analysis upholds my first hypothesis and explicitly confirms attempted virality on Twitter.

Retweet

Table 6.16 also presents a crosstab analysis of "retweet" and "candidate." The findings from this analysis confirm H_{4C}: @BarackObama retweeted content originally published by other accounts more often than @MittRomney. In total, 99.4%, or 178, of all retweets were retweeted by the Obama account. Mitt Romney's account only retweeted a single message, meaning it only devoted 1.0% of its tweets to retweeting other's content. This is a sharp contrast to Obama, which used 17.3% of its tweets on retweets. With χ^2 p = .00, these findings are statistically significant.

Retweet Type

Finally, a crosstab analysis of the "retweet type" and "candidate" variables shows what type of accounts originally published the content retweeted by either @BarackObama or @MittRomney. These findings confirm H_{4D}: @BarackObama retweeted campaign staffers or other accounts controlled by the campaign more frequently than @MittRomney. In fact, the Obama account retweeted every account type more frequently than the Romney account, which used its single retweet on a message originally published by the candidate's spouse. In full, Obama retweeted staffers or other Twitter accounts controlled by Obama for America 120 times, meaning that 11.6% of all of Obama's tweets were retweets of this type. Obama also retweeted reporters or pundits 12 times (1.2%), celebrity surrogates 10 times (1.0%), other accounts and supporters 9 times each (0.9%), @MichelleObama 8 times (0.8%), @JoeBiden, his running mate, 6 times (0.6%), and political surrogates 5 times (0.5%).

Because @MittRomney failed to retweet content produced by any account other than the one representing the candidate's wife, eight cells (44.4%) have expected count less than

five when the expected count is .46. As such, χ^2 p = .06 and cannot be trusted as statistically significant. The full results of the crosstab analysis are presented in **Table 6.17**.

Attempted Virality Conclusions

The combined analysis of the "hashtag," "retweet ask," "retweet," and "retweet type" variables paints a clear picture of both campaigns attempts at virality on Twitter during the final 21 days of the 2012 presidential election. In short, Obama for America employed the various means of attempting virality on Twitter, much more frequently than the Romney campaign. This is not to say that Romney for President, Inc. did not attempt virality with its created media on Twitter, but rather relied more completely on organic social sharing from followers and less on the tools offered by Twitter to promote virality through retweets and hashtags. This is true across the board, not just in the number of occurrences – after all, @BarackObama tweeted nearly ten times more frequently than @MittRomney – but also in the rate at which these occurrences happened.

These findings suggest two primary conclusions. First, Obama for America more fully grasped the concept of gross created media by actively seeking to extend the reach of @BarackObama and other officially affiliated accounts. Second, Romney for President, Inc., already saddled with a disadvantage in reach on Twitter, almost completely neglected the notion of expanding its reach through attempted virality. As a result, fewer members of the public were reached with @MittRomney's created media on Twitter while the exact opposite was true for @BarackObama, which bolstered its

significant lead in follower count with overt attempts at virality to further the reach of its created media.

Conclusions

The results of this analysis could not be clearer or more straightforward. By tweeting at a much higher frequency and extending reach through attempting virality (and a significant advantage in follower count), Obama for America had significantly higher gross created media than Romney for President, Inc. My findings reveal that Obama dominated Romney on Twitter by tweeting more on the day of major political events, tweeting more photos, links, and link types, targeting specific geographic, demographic and key policy issues more frequently, and attempting virality more frequently through the use of hashtags, retweet asks, retweets and retweet types.

Twitter as a Viable Campaign Medium

These results do not imply great sophistication within the created media strategy employed by Obama for America. Rather, they are indicative of the failure of Romney for President, Inc. to apply basic tenants of communications strategy – that a message is most effective when more people see it more often – to its created media on Twitter. Expanding the frequency and reach of a message is a basic fundamental of political messaging, as illustrated by the concept of gross rating points, which measure the effectiveness of a television ad buys. I apply this same idea to my concept of gross created media, which simply asserts that, like paid media, created media are more effective when a larger audience sees a message more frequently.

These findings are not indicative of a difference in overall political strategy between the two campaigns. Some may contend that, due to President Obama's appeal to younger voters, it was tactical for Obama for America to allocate more resources to social media like Twitter, while the Romney campaign's appeal to older audiences made spending time and money on social media less strategically advantageous for the Romney campaign. Such an analysis, while broadly aligned with the different demographic coalitions that supported each campaign, is not supported by Romney's actual commitment to Twitter as a medium to contact voters.

In fact, the business arm of Twitter promoted Romney for President, Inc.'s use of the microblogging platform as a "success story," claiming that Romney's Twitter strategy embodied success through the use of promoted trends, promoted tweets and promoted accounts. In all, the Romney campaign used three promoted trends, promoted five different accounts (@MittRomney, @PaulRyanVP, @AnnDRomney, @TeamRomney and @RomneyResponse) and promoted multiple tweets. Furthermore, the report notes that the campaign promoted this content during major political events, including presidential debates, to "extend the reach of these pro-Romney tweets and shape dialogue in real time" While it does not indicate the dollar total Romney allocated to paid media on Twitter, I noted in Chapter 4 that promoted trends alone cost $200,000 each.

To be sure, Romney for President, Inc. viewed Twitter as a valuable medium in which to invest, especially during major political events. My findings, however, show that this investment is not evident in the production of created media on Twitter, especially during major political events. As such, my findings indicate that the Romney campaign valued Twitter as a campaign tool, but opted to spend heavily and call it

strategy rather than invest in human resources that would tweet frequently, expand reach and develop a strategy that rivaled how the Obama campaign used Twitter.

Like television advertising, spending more money on Twitter does help increase an account's reach by attracting followers and potential followers to the campaign's message. However, @MittRomney's commitment to expanding its reach subsided in the transition from paid to created media, as shown in its infrequent attempts at virality through the use of hashtags, retweet asks and retweets across all retweet types. @BarackObama, meanwhile, actively attempted virality through created media and, as a result, expanded its reach through unpaid mechanisms.

Unlike television advertising, spending more money on Twitter does not drastically increase frequency. Instead, it is incumbent on the campaign to increase frequency by publishing tweets itself at a high volume. My findings show that @BarackObama published tweets ten-times more frequently than Obama, and did so across all geographic, demographic and policy-oriented groups. @MittRomney, meanwhile, simply ceded the frequency battle on Twitter to @BarackObama, including during major political events.

In this way, my findings show dissonance within Romney's Twitter strategy. The campaign used paid media on Twitter during presidential debates to attract followers and gain attention. At the same time, it rarely used created media to frequently deliver messages to its followers – both new and old – during those same presidential debates. Essentially, Romney for President, Inc. paid to get people's attention on Twitter but then did nothing with that attention. Similarly, the Romney campaign paid to expand the reach of five accounts associated with the campaign, yet it did not use the free method of

extending reach – the retweet – to expand the reach of three of the five accounts (@PaulRyanVP, @TeamRomney and @RomneyResponse), and did so only once with the fourth account (@AnnDRomney).

These failures suggest a discordant Twitter strategy from Romney for President, Inc. and a greater failure to apply the basic tenants of communication strategy to created media by increasing reach and frequency during the course of the 2012 election.

Reach and Frequency of Created vs. Paid Media

The tangible result of the Obama campaign's application of GCM to Twitter is simple. Members of the public seeking political information were more likely to be reached with @BarackObama's messaging, and they were more likely to be reached with those messages at a higher frequency than @MittRomney's messages. While Romney for President, Inc. devoted nearly $500 million to expand the frequency and reach of its messages on television between April and November, 2012, it sat idly by and neglected the frequency and reach of its message on Twitter. This occurred despite the affordability of created media, which do not require paid delivery.

Although I use the concept of television's gross rating point to inform my concept of gross created media and judge the effectiveness of both 2012 presidential campaigns' effectiveness on Twitter, in no way do I intend to suggest that television advertising and created media like tweets are somehow equal forms of voter contact. Such a claim would be increasing problematic and in no way grounded in sound methodology or statistical findings.

The point that I am making, however, is that the same tenants of communication – that greater reach and frequency improves the likelihood that a message will be received and retained – can and should be applied to created media. The internet is a competitive marketplace for messaging and ideas, and this is especially true in the height of political campaign season. Publishing a tweet does not guarantee that every follower will read it, as countless followers may not be checking Twitter at that particular point in time, may scroll past older tweets in their timelines quickly or may not retain the message at all even if it is read. My point is simple: just as an individual is more likely to see and retain a television ad that is played frequently on broadcast television, so too is an individual more likely to see and retain tweets when they appear frequently in his or her news feed.

Romney for President, Inc. spent hundreds of millions of dollars expanding the reach and frequency of its messaging on television. Because created media do not require a paid delivery, frequency and reach can be increased on platforms like Twitter at a much lower cost. Assigning one staffer to tweet frequently and attempt virality from the @MittRomney account would have allowed the Republican campaign to compete with @BarackObama and prevent the Democrat from setting the terms of the online discussion. This strategic shift from Romney would have cost very little but would have produced the result that all political communicators seek: reaching more people with more messages as election day nears.

Twitter and Created-Turned-Earned Media

A further implication of increased gross created media is more opportunities for created media to transition into earned media. I think that this is particularly prevalent on

Twitter. Reporters and pundits who make up the political class that dictate the tone of earned media discussion concerning the viability and effectiveness of campaigns are almost universally Twitter users, and often are extremely active Twitter users. In fact, many news organizations integrate the Twitter feeds of their reporters on their websites and many cable news networks identify reporters and pundits by their title and Twitter handle.

As a result, it is necessary for campaigns to engage this political class on Twitter. Even if few persuadable voters are accessing a campaign's message on Twitter, the individuals who set the tone of campaign coverage are – and that carries onto mediums beyond Twitter. My findings indicate that reporters on Twitter, just like every other audience, received messages from Obama at a much higher frequency than those from Romney. This produced more opportunities for Obama for America to earn media through created media and more opportunities for reporters to be convinced of the effectiveness of Obama's message and the viability of the Obama campaign to win reelection.

Summary

In all, the frequency and reach of @BarackObama far exceeded @MittRomney, meaning that the value of Obama for America's gross created media was decidedly higher than that of Romney for President, Inc. More people received more messages from the Obama campaign on Twitter while fewer people received fewer messages from the Romney campaign. As such, Obama's Twitter strategy should serve as a model for future

political campaigns employing a created media strategy, while Romney's Twitter strategy should serve as a template of what not to do with created media.

---

[i] 60 of the 88 foreign policy tweets were published on the day of that debate. Seven more foreign policy tweets were published on the day after the debate (October 23). Without this sharp influx in foreign policy-oriented tweets in tandem with the debate, the sample would have included roughly 21 tweets about foreign policy, within the same range of tweets about taxes, health care and the auto industry.

[ii] The @BarackObama account famously published the most retweeted tweet ever on November 6 after it was announced that President Obama had defeated Mitt Romney. The tweet, which lacked a formal retweet ask or even a hashtag, simply read "Four more years" and included a twitpic of Obama hugging his wife. The tweet was retweeted over half a million times (Lee).

Table 6.1
Tweet Frequency by Candidate

Variable	Frequency
Candidate	
Obama	1031
% of Total	90.8%
Romney	104
% of Total	9.2%
n=1135	

Table 6.2
Pooled Time Series Analysis of Number of Tweets by Date and Major Political Events

Event	Date
Second Debate	.374*
Third Debate	.154*
Sandy	-.110*
Election Eve	.486*
Election Day	.404*

n=1135
Adj. R^2 = .610*
***F = .00**

Figure 6.3
Daily Tweet Totals Including Major Political Events

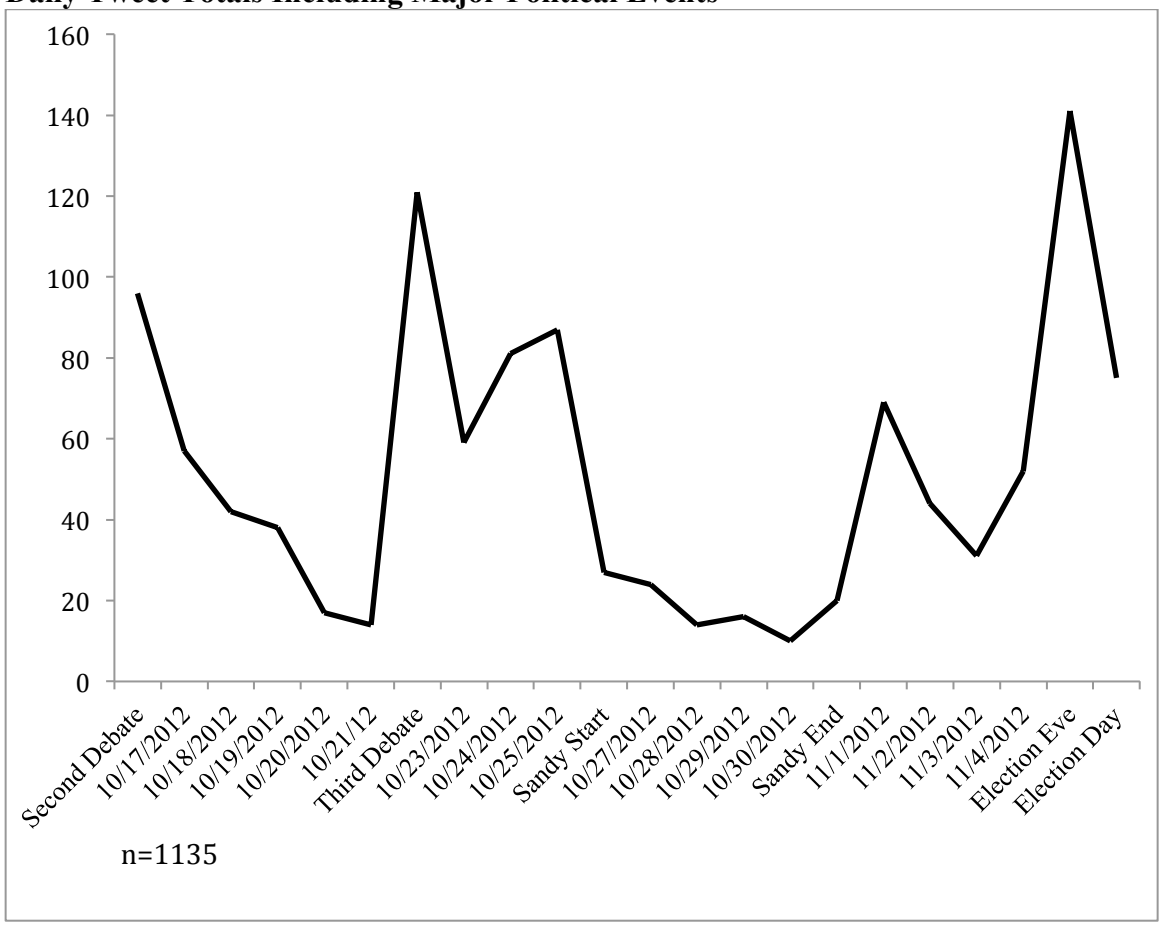


Figure 6.4
Daily Tweet Totals by Candidate Including Major Political Events

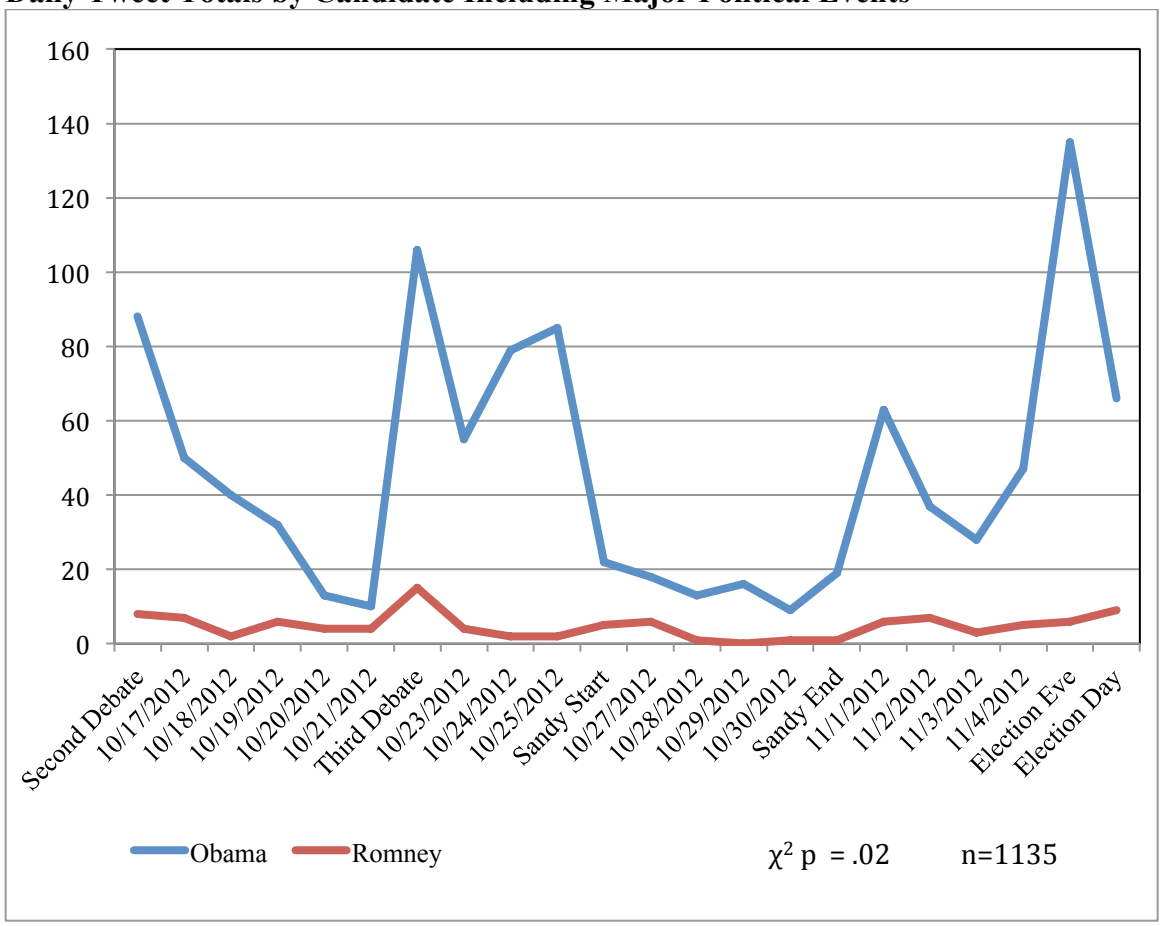


Table 6.5
Frequency Analysis of Twitpic, Link and Link Type

Variable		Frequency
Twitpic		
Yes		174
	% of Total	15.3%
No		961
	% of Total	84.7%
Link		
Yes		473
	% of Total	41.7%
No		662
	% of Total	58.3%
Link Type		
Web Video		159
	% of Total	14.0%
Social Media		2
	% of Total	0.2%
Microsite		5
	% of Total	0.4%
Fundraising Ask		14
	% of Total	1.2%
Earned Media		23
	% of Total	2.0%
Candidate Website		215
	% of Total	18.9%
Volunteer Ask		42
	% of Total	3.7%
Other		12
	% of Total	1.1%
None		663
	% of Total	0.584

n=1135

Table 6.6
Crosstab Analysis of Twitpic and Link by Candidate

Variable	Obama	Romney
Twitpic*		
Yes	170	4
% within Twitpic	97.7%	2.3%
% within Candidate	16.5%	3.8%
No	861	100
% within Twitpic	89.6%	10.4%
% within Candidate	83.5%	96.2%
Link**		
Yes	395	78
% within Link	83.5%	16.5%
% within Candidate	38.3%	75.0%
No	636	26
% within Link	96.1%	39.0%
% within Candidate	61.7%	25.0%

n=1135
***χ^2 p = .01**
****χ^2 p = .00**

Table 6.7
Crosstab Analysis of Link Type by Candidate

Link Type	Obama	Romney
Web Video	142	17
% within Link Type	89.3%	10.7%
% within Candidate	13.8%	16.3%
Social Media	2	0
% within Link Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.2%	0.0%
Microsite	5	0
% within Link Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.5%	0.0%
Fundraising Ask	8	6
% within Link Type	57.1%	42.9%
% within Candidate	0.8%	5.8%
Earned Media	23	0
% within Link Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	2.2%	0.0%
Candidate Website	165	50
% within Link Type	76.7%	23.3%
% within Candidate	16.0%	48.1%
Volunteer Ask	39	3
% within Link Type	92.9%	0.1%
% within Candidate	3.8%	16.7%
Other	10	2
% within Link Type	83.3%	16.7%
% within Candidate	1.0%	1.9%
None	637	26
% within Link Type	96.1%	3.9%
% within Candidate	61.8%	25.0%

n=1135
***χ^2 p = .00**
8 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The expected count is.18.

Table 6.8
Frequency Analysis of State and Swing State

Variable		Frequency
State		
Yes		254
	% of Total	22.4%
No		881
	% of Total	77.6%
Swing State		
Florida		27
	% of Total	2.4%
North Carolina		12
	% of Total	1.1%
Virginia		21
	% of Total	1.9%
New Hampshire		15
	% of Total	1.3%
Pennsylvania		3
	% of Total	0.3%
Ohio		43
	% of Total	3.8%
Iowa		34
	% of Total	3.0%
Wisconsin		21
	% of Total	1.9%
Nevada		15
	% of Total	1.3%
Colorado		25
	% of Total	2.2%
Other		39
	% of Total	3.4%
None		880
	% of Total	77.5%
n=1135		

Table 6.9
Frequency Analysis of Demographic and Swing Demographic

Variable		Frequency
Demographic		
Yes		140
	% of Total	12.3%
No		995
	% of Total	87.7%
Swing Demographic		
Women		61
	% of Total	5.4%
Hispanics / Latinos		1
	% of Total	0.1%
The Middle Class		28
	% of Total	2.5%
Veterans / Military		17
	% of Total	1.5%
Students / Young Adults		12
	% of Total	1.1%
Small Business Owners		13
	% of Total	1.1%
Jews		3
	% of Total	0.3%
Other		8
	% of Total	0.7%
None		992
	% of Total	87.4%

n=1135

Table 6.10
Frequency Analysis of Issue and Swing Issue

Variable		Frequency
Issue		
Yes		376
	% of Total	33.1%
No		759
	% of Total	66.9%
Swing Issue		
Jobs / Economy		52
	% of Total	4.6%
Debt / Deficit		11
	% of Total	1.0%
Energy		15
	% of Total	1.3%
Women's Issues		59
	% of Total	5.2%
LGBT Issues		3
	% of Total	0.3%
Education		19
	% of Total	1.7%
Taxes		28
	% of Total	2.5%
Health Care		20
	% of Total	1.8%
Entitlement Reform		5
	% of Total	0.4%
Foreign Policy		93
	% of Total	8.2%
Technology		1
	% of Total	0.1%
Manufacturing		7
	% of Total	0.6%
Auto Industry		18
	% of Total	1.6%
Real Estate		2
	% of Total	0.2%
More than one		47
	% of Total	4.1%

Table 6.10 (cont.)
Frequency Analysis of Issue and Swing Issue

Table 6.10

Variable		Frequency
Swing Issue		
Other		6
	% of Total	0.5%
None		749
	% of Total	66.0%

n=1135

Table 6.11
Crosstab Analysis of State, Demographic and Issue by Candidate

Variable	Obama	Romney
State*		
Yes	246	8
% within State	96.9%	3.1%
% within Candidate	23.9%	7.7%
No	785	96
% within State	89.1%	10.9%
% within Candidate	76.1%	92.3%
Demographic**		
Yes	134	6
% within Demographic	95.7%	4.3%
% within Candidate	13.0%	5.8%
No	897	98
% within Demographic	90.2%	9.8%
% within Candidate	87.0%	94.2%
Issue***		
Yes	351	25
% within Issue	93.4%	6.6%
% within Candidate	34.0%	24.0%
No	680	79
% within Issue	89.6%	10.4%
% within Candidate	66.0%	76.0%

n=1135
***χ^2 p = .00**
****χ^2 p = .033**
****χ^2 p = .039**

Table 6.12
Crosstab Analysis of Swing State by Candidate

Swing State	Obama	Romney
Florida	27	0
% within Swing State	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	2.6%	0.0%
North Carolina	11	1
% within Swing State	91.7%	8.3%
% within Candidate	1.9%	1.0%
New Hampshire	15	0
% within Swing State	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	1.5%	0.0%
Pennsylvania	3	0
% within Swing State	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.3%	0.0%
Ohio	41	2
% within Swing State	95.3%	4.7%
% within Candidate	4.0%	1.9%
Iowa	33	1
% within Swing State	97.1%	2.9%
% within Candidate	3.2%	1.0%
Wisconsin	21	0
% within Swing State	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	2.0%	0.0%
Nevada	15	0
% within Swing State	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	1.5%	0.0%
Colorado	23	2
% within Swing State	92.0%	8.0%
% within Candidate	2.2%	1.9%
Other	38	1
% within Swing State	97.4%	2.6%
% within Candidate	3.7%	0.1%
None	784	96
% within Swing State	89.1%	10.9%
% within Candidate	76.0%	92.3%

n=1135
χ^2 p = .120
12 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The expected count is .27.

Table 6.13
Crosstab Analysis of Swing Demographic by Candidate

Table 6.13

Swing Demographic	Obama	Romney
Women	58	3
% within Swing Demographic	95.1%	4.9%
% within Candidate	5.6%	2.9%
Hispanics/Latinos	1	0
% within Swing Demographic	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.1%	0.0%
The Middle Class	27	1
% within Swing Demographic	96.4%	3.6%
% within Candidate	2.6%	1.0%
Veterans / Military	16	1
% within Swing Demographic	94.1%	5.9%
% within Candidate	1.6%	1.0%
Students / Young Adults	12	0
% within Swing Demographic	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	1.2%	0.0%
Small Businesses	12	1
% within Swing Demographic	92.3%	7.7%
% within Candidate	1.2%	1.0%
Jews	3	0
% within Swing Demographic	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.3%	0.0%
Other	8	0
% within Swing Demographic	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.8%	0.0%
None	894	98
% within Swing Demographic	90.1%	9.9%
% within Candidate	86.7%	94.2%

n=1135
$\chi 2$ p = .685
9 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The expected count is .09.

Table 6.14
Crosstab Analysis of Swing Issue and Candidate

Swing Issue	Obama	Romney
Jobs / Economy	45	7
% within Swing Issue	86.5%	13.5%
% within Candidate	4.4%	6.7%
Debt / Deficit	6	5
% within Swing Issue	54.5%	45.5%
% within Candidate	0.6%	4.8%
Women's Issues	58	1
% within Swing Issue	98.3%	1.7%
% within Candidate	5.6%	1.0%
LGBT Issues	3	0
% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.3%	0.0%
Education	19	0
% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	1.8%	0.0%
Taxes	28	0
% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	2.7%	0.0%
Health Care	20	0
% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	1.9%	0.0%
Entitlements	5	0
% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.5%	0.0%
Foreign Policy	88	5
% within Swing Issue	94.6%	5.4%
% within Candidate	8.5%	4.8%
Technology	1	0
% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.1%	0.0%
Manufacturing	7	0
% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.7%	0.0%
Auto Industry	18	0
% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	1.7%	0.0%

Table 6.14 (cont.)
Crosstab Analysis of Swing Issue and Candidate

Swing Issue	Obama	Romney	
Real Estate		2	0
	% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
	% within Candidate	0.2%	0.0%
More than one		42	5
	% within Swing Issue	89.4%	10.6%
	% within Candidate	4.1%	4.8%
Other		6	0
	% within Swing Issue	100.0%	0.0%
	% within Candidate	6.0%	0.0%
None		670	79
	% within Swing Issue	89.5%	10.5%
	% within Candidate	65.0%	76.0%

n=1135
$\chi 2$ p = .002
18 cells (52.9%) have expected count less than 5. The expected count is .09.

Table 6.15
Frequency Analysis of Hashtag, Retweet Ask, Retweet & Retweet Type

Variable		Frequency
Hashtag		
Yes		320
	% of Total	28.2%
No		815
	% of Total	71.8%
Retweet Ask		
Yes		33
	% of Total	2.9%
No		1102
	% of Total	97.1%
Retweet		
Yes		179
	% of Total	15.8%
No		956
	% of Total	84.2%
Retweet Type		
Supporter		9
	% of Total	0.8%
Staffer		120
	% of Total	10.6%
Celebrity Surrogate		10
	% of Total	0.9%
Political Surrogate		5
	% of Total	0.4%
Reporter / Pundit		12
	% of Total	1.1%
Spouse		10
	% of Total	0.9%
Running Mate		6
	% of Total	0.5%

Table 6.15 (cont)
Frequency Analysis of Hashtag, Retweet Ask, Retweet and Retweet Type

Other		9
	% of Total	0.8%
None		954
	% of Total	84.1%

n=1135

Variable	Obama	Romney
Hashtag*		
Yes	304	16
% within Issue	95.0%	5.0%
% within Candidate	29.5%	15.4%
No	727	88
% within Issue	89.2%	10.8%
% within Candidate	70.5%	84.6%
Retweet Ask**		
Yes	33	0
% within Retweet Ask	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	3.2%	0.0%
No	998	104
% within Retweet Ask	90.6%	9.4%
% within Candidate	96.8%	100.0%
Retweet***		
Yes	178	1
% within Retweet	99.4%	0.6%
% within Candidate	17.3%	0.1%
No	853	103
% within Retweet	89.2%	10.8%
% within Candidate	82.7%	99.0%

n=1135

***χ2 p = .002**

****χ2 p = .064, 1 cell (25.0%) have expected count less than five. The minimum expected count is 3.02**

*****χ2 p = .00**

Table 6.17
Crosstab Analysis of Retweet Type and Candidate

Retweet Type	Obama	Romney
Supporter	9	0
% within Retweet Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.9%	0.0%
Staffer	120	0
% within Retweet Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	11.6%	0.0%
Celebrity Surrogate	10	0
% within Retweet Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	1.0%	0.0%
Political Surrogate	5	0
% within Retweet Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.5%	0.0%
Reporter / Pundit	12	0
% within Retweet Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	1.2%	0.0%
Spouse	8	1
% within Retweet Type	88.9%	11.1%
% within Candidate	0.8%	1.0%
Running Mate	6	0
% within Retweet Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.6%	0.0%
Other	9	0
% within Retweet Type	100.0%	0.0%
% within Candidate	0.9%	0.0%
None	852	103
% within Retweet Type	89.3%	10.8%
% within Candidate	82.6%	99.0%

n=1135
$\chi 2$ p = .006
8 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The expected count is .46.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Political campaigns, parties and organizations no longer have to rely on the structures of paid and earned media to contact voters with their persuasive messaging. Instead, by way of digital media, campaigns can simply make political content available to voters online for members of the public to access for themselves. I call this content created media. This reality became especially apparent during the course of the last two presidential elections, when Obama for America, the campaign structure that twice elected President Barack Obama, used new media tools like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and more to make content readily available to potential voters without paid placement or reporting by a news agency.

In this research, I set out to define and quantify the nature of these media, which represent how campaigns are bridging the gap between paid and earned media. To do so, I solicited two research questions. The first of my two questions was conceptual in nature: What are created media? The second question was empirical: How did the two major presidential campaigns in 2012 use created media? I addressed these questions separately in the course of this research. First, I developed a definition of created media and explored four characteristics that distinguish created media from their paid and earned counterparts. Second, I used statistical methodologies to perform a case study of Twitter and the 2012 election to quantify how Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc. – the campaign operation behind former Massachusetts governor and Republican nominee Mitt Romney – used created media during the final weeks of the 2012 presidential election.

Defining Created Media

CREATED MEDIA ARE *media content made originally by a campaign, party or political organization that are made available to the public without paid placement and/or targeting and without being delivered as news from a reporting entity*. Furthermore, created media serve as one of three message delivery options enjoyed by political campaigns, joining earned media and paid media in the campaign messaging arsenal.

Previous literature provides definitions for paid and earned media. However, media that are neither paid nor earned remained undefined prior to this research. Paid media are when "a candidate and/or party will pay for a form of…communication that promote their superior attributes or policies over those of their opponents and that is designed to elicit specific behaviors, such as voting, and/or increased awareness of the candidate or party" (Hughes, 164). Examples of such paid media are direct mail, print advertising, radio advertising, television advertising, digital advertising and more, all of which require a payment from the campaign, party or political organization behind the message for it to be delivered to potential voters. Campaigns benefit from paid media because they have complete control over the content, targeted audience and delivery of the message. However, paid media are expensive and, as such, many times they are cost-prohibitive.

Earned media are "news coverage on television, on radio, or on Web-based outlets, where others must be persuaded about the news value of one's message" (Burton and Shea, 177). Candidates and campaigns earn media through media events, debates, interviews, news conferences and more, all of which require a reporting entity to be convinced of the value of a campaign's message before it is covered as news for the

general public to consume as political information. Campaigns benefit from earned media because they do not require paid delivery (although they are not truly free) and they reach an audience actively seeking political information in the form of news. However, campaigns cede control of the content, audience and delivery of the message as it is transformed into news.

Created media complete the forms of messaging employed by campaigns, and occur almost exclusively in the digital space. Current examples of created media are a campaign's website, microsites, a candidate's blog, web videos, like those hosted on YouTube and social media profiles on networks like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram and Pintrest. It is important to note that as these forms of created media fall out of the political arsenal and new tools emerge, the definition will remain for all content that is neither paid nor earned, but rather made available to the public. I fully anticipate new forms of created media to emerge routinely and for campaigns to invest more of their time and content on created media going forward.

Created media complements – and at times intersects with – paid and earned media, yet is distinguishable by four key characteristics: point of origin, method of delivery, targeted audience and attempted virality. Created media share the same point of origin as both paid and earned media: they originate from a campaign, party or political organization behind the message.

However, created media differ from paid and earned media in their method of delivery. Created media are made available to the public without paid placement or being delivered as news from a reporting entity. Like paid media, the campaign has complete control of the content of created media and, like earned media, created media are cost-

effective in that they do not require paid delivery. Instead, by being made available to the public online, it is incumbent upon the members of the public seeking political information to opt-in to receiving created media messages, either by visiting a campaign's website, following a campaign's Twitter account, liking a campaign's Facebook page or viewing a campaign's web videos.

Similarly, created media differ greatly from paid and earned media in their targeted audience: created media are not *targeted* media, but rather *available* media. In that respect, created media actually target an audience consisting of members of the public seeking out political information and have opted-in – in some capacity – to receiving created media from a campaign. Herein lies a distinct advantage of created media, because the members of the public who opt-in to receiving campaign content, have invested in receiving campaign content to at least some extent. This attribute is in sharp contrast to paid media, which are highly targetable but are delivered involuntarily to an audience, and earned media, which are delivered to an audience seeking news but whose interest in campaign content uncertain. However, the unique method of delivery of created media limits their audience size. If the public is not engaged in a campaign or interested in a particular candidate, it can simply not opt-in to receiving created media from the campaign, whereas advertising and campaign messaging delivered as news do not face this challenge.

Like paid media content and strategy that earns media attention, created media can target members of the news media in order to earn media. I call this created-turned-earned media, wherein created and earned media overlap when created media content such as web videos earn media, thus expanding the size of the audience through more

traditional media like television, print, and journalistic web outlets. An Obama for America web video from the 2012 election featuring a celebrity surrogate, Lena Dunham, speaking of her "first time" voting, exemplifies the concept of created-turned-earned media.

Created media can also transition into paid media content. I call this created-turned-paid media, and such media can take multiple forms. Social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter allow campaigns to "promote" created media content to so that they appear in the news feeds of users who have not yet opted-in to receiving campaign updates. Not only does promoting created media content expand the potential audience of the campaign's message, but it also provides internet users an opportunity to opt-in to receiving future updates from the campaign. Created-turned-paid media can also take more traditional forms. A campaign can use the internet as a real-time focus group before transitioning content – like a web video, for example – into traditional forms of advertising which, in this case, would be video advertising on television.

Lastly, created media enjoy the unique characteristic of potential virality, wherein digital content is shared rapidly across social platforms on the web and thus its reach is greatly increased as more members of the public access and view the content. All created media have the potential to go viral, but virality is far from guaranteed. As such, this characteristic of created media is called attempted virality, because with the production of created media content, the campaign, party or political organization behind the content is hoping for the audience of the message to be expanded through social sharing.

Through created media and virality, campaigns can integrate their message across mediums and achieve what I call converged virality. Converged virality occurs when a

campaign leverages earned media and paid media to contribute to the virality of created media. In these instances, the combination of promotion of created media through paid delivery, the news media covering created media content as a development from the campaign trail and rapid social sharing lead a campaign's message to reach an apex of political messaging. Converged virality is part strategy, part chance, and is exemplified by Obama for America's "Big Bird" web video, which achieved virality through rapid social sharing, earned significant amount of media coverage and even ran as a traditional television ad during late night television.

Overall, created media are distinct from paid and earned media in their definition and characteristics. They necessitate their own place within the theoretical framework. By answering my conceptual question (what are created media?), this research provides the necessary framework for created media to enter the political science lexicon.

2012 Case Study

THE SECOND PORTION of my research aims to quantify created media by answering the empirical question: how did the two major presidential campaigns use created media in the 2012 election? To answer this question, I sampled tweets from @BarackObama and @MittRomney – the flagship Twitter accounts representing Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc., respectively – published during the final 21 days of the general election, from October 16 through November 6, 2012. I coded each tweet – 1,135 in total – for 33 variables and used statistical methodologies to explore general trends of how the campaigns used created media.

My data set, called Created Media: Twitter and the 2012 Election, offers a wealth of data that quantifies created media and their four characteristics. By including a "candidate" variable, which differentiates each tweet by which account published each tweet, I am able to compare the strategies of the Obama and Romney campaigns.

By applying the paid media concept of the gross rating point, which is derived from television advertising and calculates the value of a media based on frequency (how often the ad will be seen) and reach (how many people will see it), I analyzed the created media strategy of both 2012 presidential campaigns through the lens of gross created media, or the frequency and reach of the campaign's message. In my case study, I judged each campaign's gross created media on Twitter by analyzing frequency through the characteristics of point of origin, method of delivery and targeted audience and reach through attempted virality.

@BarackObama tweeted 10-times more frequently than @MittRomney by publishing 1,031 tweets during the final 21 days of the 2012 election when Romney only tweeted 104 times. Through a pooled time series analysis, I confirmed with statistical significance that each campaign altered its role as the point of origin of created media on the day of major political events within my period of analysis, which included two presidential debates, the day before election day and election day itself. I found that both @BarackObama and @MittRomney increased the frequency of tweets on the day of major political events. Through a crosstab analysis, I found that the Obama account published 91.2% of all tweets within the analysis on the day of these major political events, ensuring that its message would be seen more often than its opponent's on the days when more members of the public were seeking political information.

Within the category of method of delivery, I found that the Obama campaign accounted for 97.7% of all twitpics and 83.5% of all links within the period of analysis. I also found that Obama accounted for the majority of every link type, including linking BarackObama.com 115 more times than @MittRomney linked MittRomney.com. The Obama account also linked to web videos 125 more times than the Romney account. By tweeting photos and links at such a high frequency, Obama for America ensured that members of the public seeking political information were much more likely to view and click through to its content than they were to the content of Romney for President, Inc.'s content.

I quantified targeted audiences on Twitter by analyzing the frequency that each presidential campaigns specifically mentioned states, demographic groups and public policy issues within its tweets. In all, I found that @BarackObama published 96.9% of all state-specific tweets, 95.7% of all demographic-specific tweets and 93.4% of all issue-specific tweets. Obama targeted every major swing state more frequently than Romney, including 39 more messages about Ohio, 32 more about Iowa and 27 more about Florida. Obama also targeted every major demographic group more than Romney, including 55 more tweets about women and 26 more about the middle class. Finally, Obama targeted every major issue more frequently than Romney, including 57 more tweets about women's issues, 38 more tweets about jobs and the economy and 28 more tweets about taxes.

These results paint a clear picture on the frequency advantage enjoyed by Obama for America, as every geographic, demographic and policy-oriented group was more likely to see a message designed for its consumption than they were to receive similarly

crafted messages from Romney for President, Inc. At least on Twitter, the Romney campaign allowed Obama to define the terms of the debate on every major public policy issue and deliver those messages to every major demographic and geographic group. The contrast is stark and revealing of the strategic inadequacies of the Romney campaign.

Finally, I quantified how both campaigns aimed to expand the reach of its message through attempted virality. Romney for America, Inc. began the 2012 general election at a severe disadvantage to Obama for America, whose infrastructure had existed for 6 years and whose created media developed a following through the power of the presidency. This advantage was reflected on election day, when @BarackObama had nearly 13-times more followers than @MittRomney.

The data within Twitter 2012 reveals that the Romney campaign, which began the election cycle at a significant disadvantage in follower count to Obama, did little to make up ground on Twitter through attempted virality. Obama accounted for 95.0% of all hashtags, 100% of all retweet-asks and 99.4% of all retweets. Furthermore, the Obama account amplified messages from campaign staffers and other accounts controlled by the campaign 120 times – more than Romney tweeted throughout the entire period of analysis – and also retweeted content published by reporters and pundits, celebrity surrogates, supporters, the candidate's spouse and running mate and political surrogates. @MittRomney retweeted just a single message, which was originally published by the candidate's spouse.

By more frequently using methods of attempted virality like hashtags, retweet-asks and retweets, the Obama campaign more effectively expanded the reach of its audience than its Republican opponents. Furthermore, by tweeting at a much higher

frequency, the Obama account offered its followers 10-times more opportunities to retweet content onto their followers, again expanding the reach of its message and ensuring that more Twitter users would see its message than those that see Romney's message. Not only did Obama effectively increase the visibility of its message, but through attempted virality it also offered Twitter users more opportunities to follow @BarackObama, meaning that the reach of future messages was also expanded. By comparison, @MittRomney failed utterly.

Overall, my findings paint a very clear picture of how both presidential campaigns used created media as an asset during the 2012 election. By applying the concept of gross created media, it is obvious that Obama for America used Twitter more effectively than Romney for President, Inc. by tweeting more frequently and expanding its reach more effectively. The result is simple: more potential voters saw more messages from @BarackObama than they saw from @MittRomney.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

WHILE THIS RESEARCH is rich in data and the development of a new concept within political science, it barely scratches the surface of how political campaigns are using created media. In fact, it barely scratches the surface of the data available within my Created Media: Twitter and the 2012 Election data set.

My analysis only used 15 of the 33 variables for which all 1,135 tweets from the final three weeks of the 2012 presidential election were coded. Among the unused variables were codes for tone (positive, negative or contrast) and interaction with opponents, running mates and spouses on Twitter. I also coded for the subject of each

tweet, including whether a tweet offered a get-out-the-vote message, an early vote message, an absentee vote message, a fundraising message or a volunteering message. Lastly, I coded for the inclusion of either candidate's slogan within the tweet and, in the case of @BarackObama, whether a tweet included the official signature (-bo) signifying that the President personally tweeted the message (rather than his staff under his auspices).

There is much to be learned from these unused variables, including how the tone of created media differs from paid media, how political opponents interact with one another on Twitter and whether campaigns turn to created media to get-out-the-vote and promote early voting. With the amount of attention paid to the effect of early voting on electoral results, the amount of tweets each campaign devoted to early vote messages – and early vote messages targeted at specific swing states – would be particularly interesting. Lastly, an analysis of the slogan variable could provide keen insights into the realm of political branding, which is a budding area of political research.

The combination of the variables absent from my analysis with the data I present here would also provide further insight into the use of created media. Are fundraising asks usually accompanied by positive, negative or contrasting messages? What about the tone of tweets including a link to a web video? Did the campaigns get more positive as election day neared? Did each campaign devote a similar amount of tweets to attack its opponent, or was one campaign more inclined to do so? Were certain states prone to be targeted with positive messaging while others were targeted with negative messaging? What about demographic groups or specific issues? The questions are many, and the data exists to offer insight into these questions.

Final Conclusions

ALTHOUGH MANY QUESTIONS about created media remain, this research set out to answer two questions: what is created media, and how was it used during the 2012 presidential election? Through a definition of created media, the description of four characteristics that distinguishes created media from paid and earned media, and a statistical analysis of the Twitter strategies of Obama for America and Romney for President, Inc., this research answered those questions.

Furthermore, this research aimed to expand upon the current campaign media lexicon to allow scholarly research to keep up with the rapidly changing world of campaign strategy. It also aimed to provide a theoretical framework for future research on created media. I believe I achieved these goals.

Finally, this research should provide insight for future political campaigns by quantifying the successes of Obama for America and the failures of Romney for President, Inc. in the realm of created media. By applying the concept of gross created media, or frequency multiplied reach, to Twitter, the Obama campaign ensured that more people saw more messages from its campaign than from its opponent. This reality was especially apparent on the day of major political events, in the delivery of photos and links and in messages targeting specific geographic, demographic or policy-interested groups.

In all, the definition of created media – and the quantification of created media as they were used during the 2012 election – allows political scientists to study more completely political campaigns and allows those campaigns to use created media more

effectively to its benefit. Most importantly, it answers my research questions and clearly illustrates how campaigns are using created media to bridge the gap between paid and earned media.

APPENDIX A: TWITTER GLOSSARY

Despite its newness on the social media scene, Twitter and its users have developed a language of sorts, complete with original and Twitter-specific language and definitions. To aid new users (or simply confused users), the Twitter office in San Francisco produced a glossary of terminology with the Twitter-approved definitions for Twitter rhetoric. For the purposes of this research, the official Twitter definitions were adopted for the coding process of the research as well as the results and analysis portions of this thesis. A select group of terms, complete with their official Twitter definitions, are available below. The Twitter Glossary in its entirety is available at: https://support.twitter.com/articles/166337-the-twitter-glossary.

@ – The @ sign isused to call out usernames in Tweets, like this: Hello, @Twitter! When a username is preceded by the @ sign, it becomes a link to a Twitter profile.

Bio – A short personal description of 160 characters or fewer used to define who you are on Twitter.

Favorite – To favorite a Tweet means to mark it as one of your favorites by clicking the yellow star next to the message.

Follow – To follow someone on Twitter is to subscribe to their Tweets or updates on the site.

Follow Count – The number that reflects how many people you follow, and how many people follow you. Found on your Twitter Profile.

Follower – A follower is another Twitter user who has followed you.

Following – Your following number reflects the quantity of other Twitter users you have chosen to follow on the site.

Handle – A user's "Twitter handle" is the usernmane they have selected and the accompanying URL, like so: http://twitter.com/username.

Hashtag – The # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. IT was created organically by Twitter users.

Home – A real-time list of Tweets from those you follow. It appears on your Twitter hom page.

Mention – Mentioning another user in your Tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a "mention". Also refers to Tweets in which your username was included.

MT – Similar to RT, an abbreviation for "Modified Tweet." Placed before the retweeted text when users manually retweet a message with modifications, for example shortening a tweet.

Name – A name that can be different from your username and is used to locate you on Twitter. Must be 20-characters or fewer.

Profile – A Twitter page displaying information about a user, as well as all the Tweets they have posted from their account.

Profile Picture – The personal image uploaded to your Twitter profile in the Settings tab of your account.

Promoted Tweets – Tweets that selected businesses have paid to promote at the top of search results on Twitter.

Protected/Private Accounts – Twitter accounts are public by default. Choosing to protect your account means that your Tweets will only be seen by approved followers and will not appear in search.

Reply – A Tweet posted in reply to another user's message, usually posted by clicking the "reply" button next to their Tweet in your timeline. Always begins with @username.

Retweet (noun) – A Tweet by another user, forwarded to you by someone you follow. Often used to spread news or share valuable findings on Twitter.

Retweet (verb) – To retweet, retweeting, retweeded. The act of forwarding another user's Tweet to all of your followers.

RT – Abbreviated version of "retweet." Placed before the retweeted text when users manually retweet a message.

Timeline – A real-time list of Tweets on Twitter.

Timestamp – A note displaying when a Tweet was posted to Twitter. Can be found in grey text directly below any Tweet. Is also a link to that Tweet's own URL.

Trends – A subject algorithmically determined to be one of the most popular on Twitter at the moment.

Tweet (verb) – Tweet, tweeting, tweeted. The act of posting a message, often called a "Tweet," on Twitter.

Tweet (noun) – A message posted via Twitter containing 140 characters or fewer.

Tweeter – An account holder on Twitter who posts and reads Tweets. Also known as Twitterers.

Twitter – An information network made up of 140-character messages from all over the world.

Unfollow – To cease following another Twitter user. Their Tweets no longer show up in your home timeline.

URL – A Uniform Resource Locator is a web address that points to a unique page on the internet.

URL Shortener – URL shorteners are used to turn long URLs into shorter URLs. Shortening services can be found online.

Username – Also known as a Twitter handle. Must be unique and contain fewer than 15 characters. Is used to identify you on Twitter for replies and mentions.

Verification – A process whereby a user's Twitter account is stamped to show that a legitimate source is authoring the account's Tweets. Sometimes used for accounts who experience identify confusion on Twitter.

APPENDIX B: CODE BOOK

Name:	Date
Label:	Date
Values:	None
Definition:	Date of tweet.
Name:	Tweet
Label:	Tweet
Values:	None
Definition:	Text of tweet
Name:	Atoppo
Label:	@ Mention opponent
Values:	0 – No 1 – Yes
Definition:	0 – The text of the tweet does not include an @ mention of the opponent 1 – The text of the tweet does include an @ mention of the opponent
Name:	Oppo
Label:	Name opponent (without @ mention)
Values:	0 – No 1 – Yes
Definition:	0 – The text of the tweet does not include a mention of the opponent by name without an @ mention. 1 – The text of the tweet includes a mention of the opponent by name without an @ mention.
Name:	Atrunmate
Label:	@ Mention running mate
Values:	0 – No 1 – Yes
Definition:	0 – The text of the tweet does not include an @ mention of that candidate's running mate. 1 – The text of the tweet does include an @ mention of that candidate's running mate.
Name:	Runmate
Label:	Mention running mate (without @ mention)
Values:	0 – No 1 – Yes
Definition:	0 – The text of the tweet does not include a mention of that candidate's running mate without an @ mention. 1 – The text of the tweet includes a mention of that candidate's running mate without an @ mention..
Name:	Atspouse
Label:	@ Mention spouse
Values:	0 – No 1 – Yes
Definition:	0 – The text of the tweet does not include an @ mention of that candidate's

	spouse. 1 – The text of the tweet does include an @ mention of that candidate's spouse.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Spouse Mention spouse (without @ mention) 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet does not include a mention of that candidate's spouse without an @ mention. 1 – The text of the tweet does include a mention of that candidate's spouse without an @ mention.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	RT RT 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet is not a re-tweet of another user's tweet. 1 – The text of the tweet is a re-tweet of another user's tweet.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	RTtype RT type 1 – Supporter 2 – Staffer 3 – Celebrity Surrogate 4 – Political Surrogate 5 – Reporter/Pundit 6 – Spouse 7 – Spouse 8 - Other 9 – None 1 – The original author of the tweet re-tweeted is a campaign supporter. 2 – The original author of the tweet re-tweeted is a campaign staffer. 3 – The original author of the tweet re-tweeted is a celebrity surrogate for the campaign. 4 – The original author of the tweet re-tweeted is a political surrogate of the campaign. 5 – The original author of the tweet re-tweeted is a political reporter or pundit. 6 – The original author of the tweet re-tweeted is the candidate's spouse. 7 – The original author of the tweet is the candidate's running mate. 8 – The original author of the tweet does not fit any of the above categories. 9 – The text of the tweet was not a re-tweet, therefore there is no re-tweet type.
Name: **Label:** **Values:**	Hashtag Hashtag 0 – No 1 – Yes

Definition:	0 – The text of the tweet does not include a hashtag. 1 – The text of the tweet does include a hashtage.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Photo Photo 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet does not include a link to a photo. 1 – The text of the tweet does include a link to a photo.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Link Link 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet does not include a link to another web page. 1 – The text of the tweet does include a link to another web page.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Linktype Link Type 1 – Press Release 2 – Web Video 3 – Social Media (like Tumblr, Facebook, etc). 4 – Microsite 5 – Fundraising Ask 6 – Earned Media 7 – Candidate Website 8 – Volunteer Ask 9 – Other 10 – None 1 – The link included in the text of the tweet is to a campaign press release. 2 – The link included in the text of the tweet is to a campaign web video. 3 – The link included in the text of the tweet is to another form of social media. 4 – The link included in the text of the tweet is to a campaign microsite. 5 – The link included in the text of the tweet is to a campaign fundraising ask. 6 – The link included in the text of the tweet is to earned media. 7 – The link included in the text of the tweet is to the candidate website. 8 – The link included in the text of the tweet is to a volunteer ask. 9 – The link included in the text of the tweet does not fit any of the above categories. 10 – There is not a link included in the text of the tweet.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Positive Positive Message 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the message does not include a positive message about the candidate.

	1 – The text of the message includes a positive message about the candidate.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Negative Negative Message 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the message does not include a negative message about the candidate's opponent. 1 – The text of the message includes a negative message about the candidate's opponent.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Contrast Contrast Message 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the message does not include a message contrasting the candidate with his opponent. 1 – The text of the message includes a message contrasting the candidate with his opponent.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	GOTV GOTV Message 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet does not include a message encouraging the reader to vote. 1 – The text of the tweet does include a message encouraging the reader to vote.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Earlyvote Early Vote Message 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet does not include a message encouraging the reader to vote early. 1 – The text of the tweet includes a message encouraging the reader to vote early.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Absentee Absentee vote message 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet does not include a message encouraging the reader to vote by mail or via absentee ballot. 1 – The text of the tweet includes a message encouraging the reader to vote by mail or via absentee ballot.
Name: **Label:** **Values:**	State State specific message 0 – No

	1 – Yes
Definition:	0 – The text of the tweet does not include a state-specific message. 1 – The text of the tweet does include a state-specific message.
Name:	Swingstate
Label:	Which state
Values:	1 – Florida 2 – North Carolina 3 – Virginia 4 – New Hampshire 5 – Pennsylvania 6 – Ohio 7 – Iowa 8 – Wisconsin 9 – Nevada 10 – Colorado 11 – Other 12 – None
Definition:	1 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions Florida. 2 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions North Carolina. 3 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions Virginia. 4 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions New Hampshire. 5 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions Pennsylvania. 6 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions Ohio. 7 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions Iowa. 8 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions Wisconsin. 9 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions Nevada. 10 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions Colorado. 11 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions a state other than those listed above. 12 – The text of the tweet does not include a state-specific message.
Name:	Demo
Label:	Demographic specific message.
Values:	0 – No 1 – Yes
Definition:	0 – The text of the tweet does not include a demographic-specific message. 1 – The text of the tweet does include a demographic-specific message.
Name:	Swingdemo
Label:	Which demographic
Values:	1 – Women 2 – Hispanics/Latinos 3 – Middle Class 4 – Veterans/Military 5 – Students
Definition:	6 – Small businesses 7 – Israel

	8 – Other 9 – None 1 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions "women." 2 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions "Hispanics" or "Latinos." 3 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions the "Middle Class." 4 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions veterans or active duty service men and women. 5 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions students. 6 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions small businesses. 7 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions Jews. 8 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions a demographic group other than those listed above. 9 – Does not include a demographic-specific message.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Issue Issue specific message 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet does not include an issue specific message. 1 – The text of the tweet includes an issue specific message.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Swingissue Which issue 1 – Jobs/Unemployment 2 – Debt/Deficit 3 – Energy 4 – Women's rights/abortion 5 – Gay rights 6 – Education 7 – Taxes 8 – Healthcare 9 – Entitlement Reform / Medicare / Social Security 10 – Foreign Policy 11 – Technology 12 – Manufacturig 13 – Auto Industry 14 – Real Estate 17 – More than one 18 – Other 19 – None 1 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions "jobs" or "unemployment" 2 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions the "debt," "deficit" or "government spending." 3 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions "energy" or forms of energy production such as coal, solar, wind or gas. 4 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions women's rights issues like abortion, the "right to choose," or contraception.

	5 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to gay rights. 6 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to education. 7 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to taxation. 8 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to health care. 9 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to entitlement reform like Medicare or Social Security. 10 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to foreign policy. 11 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to technology. 12– The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to manufacturing. 13 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to the auto industry. 14 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions issues pertaining to real estate. 17 – The text of the tweet specifically mentions more than one of the above issues. 18 – The text of the tweet includes an issue-specific message other than those listed above. 19 – The text of the tweet does not include an issue-specific message.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Fundraising Fundraising message 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet does not include a fundraising message. 1 – The text of the tweet includes a fundraising message.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	Volunteer Volunteer message 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the message does not include a call readers to volunteer for the campaign. 1 – The text of the message includes a call for readers to volunteer.
Name: **Label:** **Values:** **Definition:**	-bo Candidate signature 0 – No 1 – Yes 0 – The text of the tweet does not include a candidate signature. 1 – The text of the tweet includes a candidate signature
Name: **Label:**	candidate Candidate

Values:	1 – Barack Obama 2 – Mitt Romney
Definition:	1 – The tweet was published by Barack Obama. 2 – The tweet was published by Mitt Romney.

BIBLIOGARPHY

Alter, Jonathan and Howard Fineman. "The Search for the Perfect Sound-Bite." Newsweek 18 January 1988.

Andrews, Wilson, Dan Keating and Karen Yourish. Mad Money: TV ads in the 2012 presidential campaign. 14 November 2012. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/track-presidential-campaign-ads-2012/>.

—. Mad Money: TV ads in the 2012 presidential campaign. 14 November 2012. 18 March 2013 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/track-presidential-campaign-ads-2012/>.

Associated Press. Rep. Weiner: I did not send Twitter crotch pic. 29 May 2011. 18 March 2013 <http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-250_162-20067242.ht>.

Berry, Katie. "Presidential Campaign Politics, Public Opinoin and Twitter: How Tweet It Is." Professional Paper. The University of Minnesota, 2012.

Burcher, Nick. Paid, Owned, Earned: Maximizing Marketing Returns in a Socially Connected World. Philadelphia: Kogan Page Limited, 2012.

Burton, Michael John and Daniel M. Shea. Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010.

Carr, David. "As TV Dwindles, It Still Leads." The New York Times. New York, 24 May 2009.

Cillizza, Chris. What Big Bird tells us about the 2012 campaign. 10 October 2012. 18 March 2013 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2012/10/10/what-big-bird-tells-us-about-the-2012-campaign/>.

CNN Political Unit. Obama, Romney cancel campaign events ahead of Hurricane Sandy. 27 October 2012. 27 March 2013 <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2012/10/27/obama-cancels-some-campaign-events-ahead-of-hurricane-sandy/>.

Corcoran, Sean. Defining Earned, Owned and Paid Media. 16 December 2009. 9 March 2013 <http://blogs.forrester.com/interactive_marketing/2009/12/defining-earned-owned-and-paid-media.html>.

Diamond, Edwin and Stephen Bates. The Spot: The Rise of Political Advertising on Television. Third Edition. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1984.

Facebook. Promoted Posts. 18 March 2013 <https://www.facebook.com/help/promote>.

Federal Election Commission. Special Notices on Political Ads and Solicitations. October 2006. 24 March 2013 <http://www.fec.gov/pages/brochures/notices.shtml#when>.

Fiegerman, Seth. Report: Twitter Now Chargers $200,000 For Promoted Trends. 11 February 2013. 28 March 2013 <http://mashable.com/2013/02/11/report-twitter-now-charges-200000-for-promoted-trends/>.

Fitzpatrick, Alex. Obama and Romney's Promoted Twitter Trends Are Backfiring. 6 September 2012. 28 March 2013 <http://mashable.com/2012/09/06/obama-romney-promoted-trends-twitter/>.

Flowers, Julianne F., Audrey A. Haynes and Michael H. Crespin. "The Media, the Campaign, and the Message." American Journal of Political Science 2003: 259-273.

Foulger, Matt. Social Media's Role in the 2012 US Election: Obama Breaks Twitter Records. 7 November 2012. 11 April 2013 <http://blog.hootsuite.com/election-tracker-results/>.

Fowler, Erika Franklin and Travis N. Ridout. "Local Television and Newspaper Coverage of Political Advertising." Political Communication 26.2 (2009): 119-136.

Gower, Karla K. Public Relations and the Press: The Troubled Embrace. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

Graf, Joseph. "New Media - The Cutting Edge of Campaign Communications." Semiatin, R. J. Campaigns on the Cutting Edge. CQ Press, 2012. 48-68.

Gulati, Girish J. and Christine B. Williams. "Clsoing Gaps, Moving Hurdles: Candidate Web Site Communication in the 2006 Campaigns for Congress." Politicking ONline: The Transformation of Election Campaign Communications. Ed. Costas Panagopoulos. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009. 48-76.

Helm, Sabrina. "Viral Marketing - Establishing Customer Relationships by 'Word-of'Mouse'." Electronic Markets 10 (2000): 158-161.

Hughes, Andrew. "Defining Negative Political Advertising: Definition, Features and Tactics." ANZMAC 2003 Conference Proceedings. Adelaide, Australia, 2003. 163-171.

Issenberg, Sasha. The Victory Lab. New York: Crown Publishers, 2012.

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. "The Evolution of Political Advertising in America." New Perspectives on Political Advertising. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.

Johnson, Dennis W. Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century: A Whole New Ballgame? New York: Routledge, 2011.

Kay, Tim. "Making the Case for TV Buys in the Internet Age." Campaigns & Elections 30.7 (2009).

Kenski, Kate, Bruce W. Hardy and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. The Obama Victory: How Media, Money and Message Shaped the 2008 Election. New York: Oxford University Press, n.d.

Kreiss, Daniel. "Yes We Can (Profile You): A Brief Primer on Campaigns and Political Data." Stanford Law Review Online 2 February 2012: 70-74.

Lassen, David S. and Adam R. Brown. "Twitter: The Electoral Connection?" Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago, n.d. 1-28.

Lee, Dave. Barack Obama victory tweet most retweeted ever. 7 November 2012. 3 April 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-20237531>.

Leighley, Jan E. Mass Media and Politics: A Social Science Perspective. Stamford: Wadsworth Publishing, 2004.

Lemann, Nicholas. "The Controller." The New Yorker. 12 May 2003.

Lynch, Dotty. "How the Media Covered the 2008 Election: The Role of Earned Media." Thurber, James A. and Candice J, Nelson. Campaigns and Elections American Style. Boulder: Westview Press, 2010. 157-192.

Mathis, Mark. Feeding the Media Beast: An Easy Recipe for Great Publicity. West Lafayette: Purdue University, 2002.

McCoy, Terrence. "The Creepiness Factor: How Obama and Romney Are Getting to Know You." The Atlantic. 10 April 2012.

Miller, Arthur H. and Bruce E. Gronbeck. Presidential Campaigns and American Self Images. Boulder: Westview, 1994.

Miller, Zeke. "Lena Dunham Talks About Her First Time." BuzzFeed. New York, 25 October 2012.

—. "Republicans Go To Obama School." Buzzfeed Politics. 2 December 2012.

New York Times Editorial Board. "Romney Versus the Automakers." The New York Times. New York, 31 October 2012.

Newman, Bruce I. The Marketing of the President: Political Marketing as Campaign Strategy. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1994.

Panagopoulos, Costas and Daniel Bergan. "Clicking for Cash: Campaigns, Donors, and the Emergence of Online Fund-Raising." Politicking Online: The Transformation of Election Campaign Communications. Ed. Costas Panagopoulos. New Brunswick: Rutgers University PRess, 2009. 127-163.

Pauwels, Koen, et al. The Hierarchy of Effects (HOE) Meets Paid, Earned, and Owned (POE): How Do Internet Media Work with the Marketing Mix to Drive Sales for Consumer Packaged Goods? 2012.

Pelosi, Christine. Campaign Boot Camp: Basic Training for Future Leaders. Sausalito: PoliPointPress, LLC, 2007.

Ridout, Travis N. and Glen R. Smith. "Free Advertising: How the Media Amplify Campaign Messages." Political Research Quarterly 61.4 (2008): 598-608.

Ridout, Travis N. and Michael M. Franz. The Persuasive Power of Campaign Advertising. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011.

Sampler, Laura. Obama Spent More On ONline Ads Than It Cost To Build The Lincoln Memorial. 5 November 2012. 18 March 2013 <http://www.businessinsider.com/infographic-obama-romney-final-ad-spend-2012-11>.

Scherer, Michael. "Exclusive: Obama's 2012 Digital Fundraising Outperformed 2008." 15 November 2012. Time Swampland. TIME. 10 May 2013 <http://swampland.time.com/2012/11/15/exclusive-obamas-2012-digital-fundraising-outperformed-2008/http://swampland.time.com/2012/11/15/exclusive-obamas-2012-digital-fundraising-outperformed-2008/>.

Small, Tamara A. "The Facebook Effect? Online campaign in the 2008 Canadian and US Elections." November 2008. IRPP.org. Institute for Research on Public Policy. 10 March 2013 <http://irpp.org/po/archive/nov08/small.pdf>.

Stegar, Wayne P., Sean O. Kelly and J. Mark Wrighton. Campaigns and Political Marketing. London: The Haworth Press, 2006.

Trent, Judith S., Robert V. Friedenberg and Robert E. Denton. Political Campaign Communication: Principles and Practices. 7th Edition. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011.

Twitter for Business. Mitt Romney: How can a presidential candidate shape the national conversation in eal time to influence voters? 16 April 2013 <https://business.twitter.com/success-stories/mitt-romney>.

Twitter.com. Twitter.com/about. 28 March 2013 <http://Twitter.com/about>.

—. What Are Promoted Accounts? 18 March 2013 <https://support.twitter.com/articles/282154-what-are-promoted-accounts>.

University of Texas at Austin. "Free Media versus Earned Media." Texas Politics. Austin.

Weinger, Mackenzie. "John Fleming links to Onion story on Facebook." POLITCO. Arlington, 6 February 2012.

West, Darrell. Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns. Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2008.

Westling, Mike. "Expanding the Public Sphere: The Impact of Facebook on Political Communication." University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2007.

Williams, Christine B. and Girish J. Gulati. "Communicating with Constituents in 140 Characters or Less: Twitter and the Diffusion of Technology Innovation in the United States Congress." Chicago: Midwest Political Science Assocation, 2010. 1-20.

—. "Social Networks in Political Campaigns: Facebook and Congressional Elections 2006, 2007." Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Toronto: American Political Science Association, 2009. 1-25.

YouTube. Pre-Roll Ads. 8 March 2013 <http://www.youtube.com/yt/advertise/en-GB/in-stream.html>.

—. Statistics. 18 3 2013 <http://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>.

YouTube.com. Video statistics. 18 March 2013

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZxs09eV-Vc>.