

Political Advertising in 2000

A Dataset Compiled by the Wisconsin Advertising Project

Final Release, December 2002

Wisconsin Advertising Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison,
Department of Political Science, 110 North Hall, 1050 Bascom Mall,
Madison WI 53706, wiscads@polisci.wisc.edu

BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION

Publications based on this data collection should acknowledge this source by means of bibliographic citation. The bibliographic citation for this data collection is:

Goldstein, Kenneth, Michael Franz, and Travis Ridout. 2002. "Political Advertising in 2000." Combined File [dataset]. Final release. Madison, WI: The Department of Political Science at The University of Wisconsin-Madison and the The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University.

Users of these data should also include the following acknowledgement:

The data were obtained from a joint project of the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law and Professor Kenneth Goldstein of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and includes media tracking data from the Campaign Media Analysis Group in Washington, D.C. The Brennan Center-Wisconsin project was sponsored by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Brennan Center, Professor Goldstein, or The Pew Charitable Trusts.

DATA COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The data were purchased from Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG), a company based in Alexandria, Virginia. CMAG uses information gathered by Competitive Media Reporting (CMR) and specifically, CMR's "Ad Detector" product. CMR is one of the country's leading providers of marketing communication and advertising expenditure information to advertising agencies, advertisers, broadcasters and publishers. CMR's "Ad Detector" technology was originally developed for large corporations to track competitors' advertisements and to confirm that their own advertisements were being aired. In 2000, the system monitored the satellite transmissions of the national networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox) as well as 25 national cable networks (such as CNN, ESPN, and TBS). In addition, the system monitored advertising in the country's top 75 markets. (Although there are over 200 media markets in the United States, over 80 percent of the population lives in the top 75 markets.) The system's software recognizes the electronic seams between programming and advertising. When the system does not recognize the unique digital code of a particular commercial spot, the storyboard (the full audio and every four seconds of video) is captured and downloaded to the firm's headquarters.

After reviewing the storyboards, analysts at CMR then place the advertisements into particular categories -- by product for commercial clients, by candidate or sponsor for political clients -- and tag them with unique digital fingerprints. Thereafter, the system automatically recognizes and logs that particular commercial wherever and whenever it airs. All political spots are flagged and immediately transferred to CMAG - which markets the data to political clients (candidates, parties, and interest groups).

The compilation of political advertising data in the 2000 elections took place in two distinct stages: the pre-election period (referring to coding and merging done up through December 2000) and the post-election period (referring to data cleaning, missing data issues, and additional coding and merging beginning in January 2001).

Two University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate students, along with Professor Ken Goldstein, helped manage the receipt and compilation of two types of information during the summer and fall of 2000: storyboard (content) and ad frequency data. The frequency data were in files containing information on the timing, date, market location, station, show, and estimated cost of each political spot airing. They did not contain information on the content of the advertisements. CMAG sent by e-mail new frequency data every two weeks during the summer, and weekly during the fall of 2000. On about the same schedule, CMAG regularly mailed one-page storyboards, which are captured visual clips of the ad taken every 3-4 seconds along with the

accompanying transcript. CMAG would mail a storyboard for each unique creative.

Both sets of data were combined into a larger database. First, the frequency data were placed into a large spreadsheet. Second, the graduate students coded each storyboard using an online coding sheet, accessed through the CMAG website. Approximately 35 questions were asked. (The coding questions were first developed by in spring of 1999 by a committee consisting of Josh Rosenkranz of the Brennan Center at New York University, Jon Krasno of the Brennan Center at New York University, Tom Mann of the Brookings Institute, David Magleby of Brigham Young University, and Darrel West of Brown University. The original coding protocol was developed for 1998. Changes were made to reflect new issues.) Coding at the website was automatically translated into a separate database, which would periodically be downloaded from CMAG and linked to the database containing the frequency data.

As the volume of storyboards increased in September and October, a team of six undergraduates began to assist with the coding. Each undergraduate was given a set of storyboards, and the graduate students logged them on to the CMAG coding website. The undergraduates were given basic instruction on how to operate the coding website, but were instructed to complete the coding as if they were answering questions on a survey instrument. In other words, no additional instructions were given on particular questions or on the goals of the project as a whole.

In early January of 2001, frequency information and data from the coded storyboards (content information) were merged. Additional quality control was the primary concern of the post-election period.

An initial comparison of frequency data with coded storyboards produced three forms of "missing information:" 1) ad storyboards without accompanying frequency data; 2) frequency data without accompanying ad storyboards; and 3) storyboards that remained uncoded.

The project requested from CMAG frequency data for the storyboards that lacked it and obtained such information for almost all storyboards. The missing frequency data generally came from down-ballot races. The project was also able to obtain storyboards for all but eight ads listed in the frequency data. The graduate students coded storyboards that had slipped through the cracks, either because of an occasional glitch in the CMAG computer system that would not update coding when it was entered or because of an undergraduate coder who lost some storyboards. Some ads concerning low-level races (such as a state senate race) were never coded, though frequency data were included in the database. Missing data codes were put in the data and noted in the codebook.

The project then dealt with "cookie cutter" ads, ads run by

interest groups in several congressional districts that are identical except for the name of the candidate. Because the CMAG tracking system cannot identify these slightly different ads as unique, all cookie cutter airings are initially assigned to the same candidate. This yields a situation in which, for example, CMAG reports that an ad running against Rep. Anne Northup of Kentucky aired in Kentucky as well as Minnesota. In truth, however, the ad running in Minnesota used not Northup's name but that of a different candidate. Thus, the project had to assign the ads running in Minnesota to a Minnesota race, instead of the Kentucky race. This was done by comparing maps of media markets and congressional districts. If an ad ran in the Minneapolis-St. Paul media market, the project identified all congressional districts which the media market covered and then using information on competitive races and conversations with Washington based consultants and party officials, the project determined the actual targeted district.

In addition, the project corrected an additional problem associated with cookie cutter advertising. After assigning a cookie cutter ad to a new district, associated contextual information (such as the incumbency status of the favored candidate) had to be changed.

ESTIMATING AD COST

CMAG estimates the cost of an ad by using market information on the average cost of an ad during the time during which that ad aired. This estimate is likely an underestimate of the true expenditure, especially in the case of interest group and party advertising.

DATA RELIABILITY

For further information about the reliability of the data collection and its coding, please see the following manuscript: Ridout, Travis N., Michael Franz, Kenneth Goldstein and Paul Freedman. 2002. "Measuring Exposure to Campaign Advertising." It is available at www.polisi.wisc.edu/~tvadvertising/reliability.pdf.

VARIABLE NAMES

Custtitle: Unique name given to each ad by CMAG

Len: Length of ad in seconds

Daypart:

Early morning: 6-10 a.m.
Daytime: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Early Fringe: 4 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Early News: News in Early Fringe
Prime Access: 7:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Prime Time: 8 p.m. - 11 p.m.
Late news: 10 or 11 p.m. news
Late fringe: 11 p.m. - 1 a.m.
Weekend Day: 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Marketlo: Name of media market in which ad was aired

Stncalls: Call letters of television station on which ad was aired

Affil: Network affiliation of television station on which ad was aired

Sptime: Time of day at which ad was aired

Cost: Estimated cost of ad

Showname: Name of show during which ad was aired

Spotdate: Date on which ad was aired

Sponsor:

Presidential

- 1 Bush
- 2 Gore
- 3 RNC-pres
- 4 DNC-pres
- 5 IG-Bush
- 6 IG-Gore
- 7 Bush/RNC
- 8 Gore/DNC
- 9 Buchanan
- 10 Browne (Libertarian)
- 11 Nader
- 12 Other candidate
- 13 GOP-unclear
- 14 Dem-unclear

Presidential Primary

- 15 GOP - primary
- 16 Dem - primary
- 17 IG-GOP primary
- 18 IG-Dem primary

Senate

21 GOP-candidate
22 Dem-candidate
23 RNC
24 DNC
25 IG-GOP
26 IG-Dem
27 Independent/3rd party candidate
28 GOP-unclear
29 Dem-unclear
Senate Primary
30 GOP primary
31 Dem primary
32 IG-GOP primary
33 IG-Dem primary

House
41 GOP-candidate
42 Dem-candidate
43 RNC
44 DNC
45 IG-GOP
46 IG-Dem
47 Independent/3rd party candidate
48 GOP-unclear
49 Dem-unclear
House Primary
50 GOP primary
51 Dem primary
52 IG-GOP primary
53 IG-Dem primary

Governors
61 GOP-candidate
62 Dem-candidate
63 RNC
64 DNC
65 IG-GOP
66 IG-Dem
67 Independent/3rd party candidate
68 GOP-unclear
69 Dem-unclear
Gubernatorial Primary
70 GOP primary
71 Dem primary
72 IG-GOP primary
73 IG-Dem primary

Other
80 Issue Advocacy
81 Regarding a proposition/other matter
82 Other primary candidacy
84 Vote Republican
85 Vote Democratic
99 Other type of candidacy

Adcode: Unique numerical identifier given each ad

Statcode:

("AL" =1)
("AK" = 2)
("AZ" =4)
("AR" =5)
("CA" =6)
("CO"=8)
("CT" =9)
("DE" =10)
("DC" =11)
("FL" =12)
("GA" =13)
("HI"=15)
("ID" = 16)
("IL" =17)
("IN" =18)
("IA"=19)
("KS" =20)
("KY" =21)
("LA"=22)
("ME" =23)
("MD" =24)
("MA" = 25)
("MI" = 26)
("MN" =27)
("MS"=28)
("MO" = 29)
("NE" = 31)
("NV" =32)
("NH" = 33)
("NJ" = 34)
("NM" = 35)
("NY" =36)
("NC" = 37)
("ND"=38)
("OH" =39)
("OK" =40)
("OR"=41)
("PA" =42)
("RI" =44)
("SC" =45)
("SD"=46)
("TN"=47)
("TX" =48)
("UT" =49)
("VT"=50)
("VA" =51)
("WA" =53)
("WV" =54)
("WI" =55)
("US" =99)

Statdist: Unique numerical identifier of each congressional district. (Equals statcode*100)+q3

q3. Race Number
1-55 'House District'
60 'Senate'
70 'Governor'

80 'Issue Advocacy'
95 'Presidential'
99 'Other'

q4. Is the ad aired for a general election or a primary election?

1 'Primary'
2 'General'

q5. What is the party of the favored candidate?

1 'Democrat'
2 'Republican'
3 'Other'

q6. What is the seat's incumbent status?

1 'Open Seat'
2 'Republican Seat'
3 'Democratic Seat'
4 'Other (Independent Seat)'

q7. Does the ad direct the viewer to take any action (as opposed to merely providing information)?

0 'No'
1 'Yes'

q8. (If yes to #7) What is that action?

0 'Not applicable'
1 'Other'
2 'To vote for someone'
3 'To support someone'
4 'To elect or re-elect someone'
5 'To write, call, or tell someone to do something'
6 'To reject someone'
7 'To urge action or attention to a particular matter'
8 'To defeat someone'
9 'To send a message or call someone to express yourself'
10 'To vote against someone'
11 'Other magic word'

q9. (If an ad asks people to contact a public official) Does it provide a specific bill number to discuss or urge action on?

0 'No'
1 'Yes'
2 'Unclear/Unsure'

q10. (If an ad asks people to contact a public official) Does it provide a phone number or address to help them do so?

1 'Toll number listed'
2 'No'
3 'Toll-free telephone number listed'
4 'Address listed'

q11. In your opinion, is the purpose of the ad to provide information about or urge action on a bill or issue, or is it to generate support or opposition for a particular candidate?

- 1 'Generate support or opposition for candidate'
- 2 'Provide information or urge action'
- 3 'Unsure/unclear'

q12. Is the favored candidate

- 0 'Not applicable'
- 1 'Mentioned'
- 2 'Pictured in the ad'
- 3 'Not identified at all'
- 4 'Both mentioned and pictured in the ad'

q13. Is the favored candidate's opponent.

- 0 'Not applicable'
- 1 'Not identified at all'
- 2 'Both mentioned and pictured in the ad'
- 3 'Pictured in the ad'
- 4 'Mentioned by name in the text of an ad'

q14. In your judgment, is the primary purpose of the ad to promote a specific candidate ("In his distinguished career, Senator Jones has brought millions of dollars home. We need Senator Jones"), to attack a candidate ("In his long years in Washington, Senator Jones has raised your taxes over and over. We can't afford 6 more years of Jones.") or to contrast the candidates ("While Senator Jones has been raising your taxes, Representative Smith has been cutting them.")?

- 0 'Not applicable'
- 1 'Attack'
- 2 'Contrast'
- 3 'Promote'
- 4 'Unsure or Unclear'

q15. Does the favored candidate appear on screen narrating his or her ad?

- 0 'No'
- 1 'Yes'
- 9 'Not applicable'

q16. Is the office at stake mentioned in the ad?

- 0 'Not applicable'
- 1 'Yes referred to in text of the ad'
- 2 'No'
- 3 'Yes written in one of the visual frames of the ad'
- 4 'Yes referred to in both the text and visuals of the ad'

q17. Is an opponent's commercial mentioned or shown on screen?

- 0 'Not applicable'
- 1 'Yes opponents commercial is shown on screen'
- 2 'Yes opponents commercial is referred to in text and screen'
- 3 'No'
- 4 'Yes opponents commercial is referred to in text'

q18. Does the ad use any of the following adjective to characterize the favored candidate?

- 0 'Not applicable'

- 1 'Common sense leadership'
- 2 'Independent'
- 3 'Innovative'
- 4 'Self made'
- 5 'Caring or Compassionate'
- 6 'Bold'
- 7 'Principled'
- 8 'Tough or a fighter'
- 9 'Proven Tested Experienced'
- 10 'Values (shares them, has American ones)'
- 11 'No adjectives or descriptions of candidates'
- 12 'Protector'
- 30 'Other'
- 13 'Moderate middle of the road mainstream'
- 14 'Conservative'
- 15 'Fiscally conservative'
- 16 'Hard working'
- 17 'Friend of Clinton'
- 18 'Committed'
- 19 'Visionary'
- 20 'Reformer'
- 21 'Competent and Knows how to get things done'
- 22 'Honest'
- 23 'Family man'

q19. Second mention (same as #18)

q20. Does the ad use any of the following adjectives to characterize the opposing candidate? (first mention)

- 0 'Not applicable'
- 1 'Dishonest corrupt'
- 2 'Dangerous'
- 3 'Friend of Pat Robertson religious right'
- 4 'Reckless'
- 5 'Too risky'
- 6 'Turncoat'
- 7 'Incompetent'
- 8 'Taxing (or some version of liking taxes)'
- 9 'Hypocrite'
- 10 'Extremist or radical'
- 11 'Career Politician'
- 12 'Heartless (may be used in reference to Social Security)'
- 13 'Friend of Newt Gingrich'
- 14 'Negative'
- 15 'Liberal'
- 16 'Reactionary or right-wing'
- 17 'Friend of special interests'
- 18 'No adjectives or description'
- 19 'Friend of Clinton'
- 30 'Other'

q21. Second mention (same as #20)

q22. Does the ad mention the party label of the favored candidate or the opponent?

- 0 'Not applicable'
- 1 'No'
- 2 'Yes opposing candidates party'

3 'Yes both candidates party affiliations are mentioned'
4 'Yes favored candidates party'

q23. Does the ad use technology to distort (i.e. morph) the opposing candidate's face?

0 'No'
1 'Yes'
9 'Not applicable'

q24. Is the ad funny or is it intended to be humorous?

0 'No'
1 'Yes'

q25. Does the ad refer to newspaper stories or editorials?

1 'Yes in both the text and visuals'
2 'No'
3 'Yes in the visuals of the ad'
4 'Yes in the text part of the text of the ad'

q26. Does the ad cite supporting sources (including in footnotes) to bolster various claims?

1 'Yes in the visuals of the ad'
2 'No'
3 'Yes in the text part of the text of the ad'

q27. In your judgment, is the primary focus of this ad on the personal characteristics of either candidate or on policy matters?

1 'Policy matters'
2 'Personal characteristics'
3 'Both'
4 'Neither'

q28. Does the ad feature a celebrity or a politician endorsing the candidate?

1 'Celebrity'
2 'Politician'
3 'Neither'

q29. Is the ad in Spanish?

0 'No'
1 'Yes'

q30. Is the ad directly targeted to appeal to a racial minority?

0 'No'
1 'Yes'

q31. Are the people in the ad racially diverse?

0 'No'
1 'Yes'

q32-35: campaign themes.

1 'Background'
10 'Taxes'
11 'Deficit/ surplus/ budget/ debt'
12 'Government Spending'
13 'Minimum wage'

14 'Farming (e.g. friend of)'
15 'Business (e.g. friend of)'
16 'Employment/ jobs'
17 'Poverty'
18 'Trade/NAFTA'
19 'Other economic reference'
2 'Political record'
20 'Abortion'
21 'Homosexuality'
22 'Moral values'
23 'Tobacco'
24 'Affirmative action'
25 'Gambling'
26 'Assisted Suicide'
27 'Gun control'
28 'Other reference to social issues'
3 'Attendance record'
30 'Crime'
31 'Drugs'
32 'Death Penalty'
33 'Other reference to law and order'
4 'Ideology'
40 'Education'
41 'Lottery for education'
42 'Child care'
43 'Other child-related issues'
5 'Personal values'
50 'Defense'
51 'Missile defense/Star wars'
52 'Veterans'
53 'Foreign policy'
54 'Bosnia'
55 'China'
59 'Other defense/foreign policy issues'
6 'Honesty/Integrity'
60 'Clinton'
61 'Ken Starr'
62 'Whitewater'
63 'Impeachment'
64 'Sexual harassment/Paula Jones'
7 'Special Interests'
70 'Environment'
71 'Immigration'
72 'Health care'
73 'Social security'
74 'Medicare'
75 'Welfare'
76 'Civil rights/race relations'
77 'Campaign finance reform'
78 'Government ethics'
95 'Other'
99 'None'