

# HOW LARGE



**POLITICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA**  
Politics have changed.

#### WELCOME TO THE SOCIAL MEDIA REVOLUTION

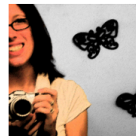
In the past five years, the growth of social media has played a leading role in connecting the world, enhancing citizen engagement with government, and fundamentally changing and creating new forms and industries for activism, business, and news. On this Web site I've presented case studies in three categories: social media and politics, social media's impact on causes and activism, and the effects of social media on traditional media.

Browse around, I hope you enjoy learning more about this social media revolution. And keep in mind, this is a revolution that is still very much underway.

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**Politics and Social Media**  
**Activism Through Social Media**  
**Social Media Takes On the News**

#### INTERVIEWS



**LISA ROWAN**  
Interview with Lisa Rowan,  
Media Researcher at Vocu.

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#### CASE STUDIES



##### REPRESSING A DEMOCRATIZING FORCE—SOCIAL MEDIA IN UNFRIENDLY TERRITORY

Social media and "Web 2.0" are playing a significant role in the fight for information freedoms abroad. In this case study, I examine current ideas about social media as a democratizing force, as well as current political events in Iran and China.



##### THE VIRTUAL BATTLE FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

Just as social media revolutionized the way campaigns are run—leading Barack Obama to unprecedented fundraising success and the presidency—social media is also playing a key role in the way citizens interact with their government. With virtual town halls, the viral success of Sarah Palin, and the rise of #trot, this case study looks at social media and its impact on policy debate.



##### A NEW KIND OF PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Ever since the 2008 U.S. presidential election, the words "politics" and "YouTube" in the same sentence typically indicate someone is talking about the election of Barack Obama. This case study takes a deep look at the 2008 election and the social media that drove the debate.

#### ABOUT THIS PROJECT



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<http://link.reuters.com/5aq92k> /via @ [Reuters](#)  
3 hrs ago

New media ads = wild wild west says chernukri  
# [twitcho](#) 4 hrs ago

# [twitcho](#) beginning to wrap up Q&As  
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# SLIDERS

## A New Kind of Presidential Campaign

Posted by [alexpriest](#) on Thursday, April 1, 2010 · [Leave a Comment](#)

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The 2008 campaign and election of Barack Obama introduced a new technological era for politics. From driving the message to fundraising record amounts of money, and now to governing the United States of America, the Obama campaign and Obama White House are using social media in incredibly powerful ways.

This case study is broken into three sections. Feel free to skip around, read it straight through, or just skim and check out the photos, videos, and other social media that are built into the case study. If you'd like to print this case study, just click the "Print This Post" button to the top right. To read it section by section, use the menu below. Finally, to return to the introduction, click [here](#).



Image via Flickr courtesy of [stinvogels](#).

- [Social Media on the Campaign Trail](#)
- [Facebook or Checkbook? The Unprecedented Fundraising of Barack Obama](#)
- [The Win and Beyond—The Social Media President](#)

### Social Media on the Campaign Trail

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT...  
**OBAMA**



[eBay](#) items Obama briefed on Greece and Wall Street turbulence (AP) <http://bit.ly/cDDPAG>  
about 1 minute ago



[oblivion.cl](#) (se notaba) que nunca han dedicado tiempo a investigar... metieron a Obama y gente de otros países que no tenían nada que ver.. Ignorancia..  
about 1 minute ago



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Ever since the 2008 U.S. presidential election, the words "politics" and "YouTube" in the same sentence typically indicate someone is talking about the election of Barack Obama. After [Howard Dean's](#) initial foray into grassroots organizing via the Internet in 2004, Obama took that strategy and "perfected it," according to Joe Trippi, Dean's former campaign manager.[\[1\]](#) Obama took all of Dean's lessons and turned them into a strategy of mobilizing and fundraising that simply stunned everyone in the political arena.[\[2\]](#) Obama used social media in almost every part of his campaign strategy. From communications to advertising, fundraising, and more, social media and the Web enabled Obama to fully realize Dean's vision of a "[50-state strategy](#)," with immense success.[\[3\]](#) And Obama was far ahead of the competition.

As of April 2008, Obama commanded 65% of Web site visitor market share among the candidates. His campaign had already created a presence on social sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Eons, Glee, MiGente, MyBatanga, AsianAve, Faithbase, BlackPlanet, Eventful, and Digg. He even used text messaging to supporters to announce his pick for running mate, Senator Joe Biden.[\[4\]](#) If supporters wanted to receive text messages from the campaign, they simply had to text 62262—spelling out

"OBAMA." The Hillary Clinton and John McCain campaigns simply paled in comparison. Clinton held onto 19% of campaign Web site traffic but only maintained a presence on YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Flickr, and Eons. McCain held a measly 9% of traffic, with a presence only on YouTube, Facebook, and Flickr, at that point.[\[5\]](#) Neither had significant outreach via text messaging.

In an article in *B to B*, Paul Gillin outlined two "truths of the new media world" that Obama undoubtedly took to heart during the campaign. First, "you are the media." Gillin argues that social media allowed the campaign to dominate the media, inundating the public with tweets, status updates, text messages, emails, YouTube videos, and more not only at events but in between events as well.[\[6\]](#) Secondly, Gillin says a message has to "go where the audience is," something that the Obama campaign also excelled at. According to the Arthur W. Page Society, teenagers spend 60% less time watching TV than their parents did and as much as 600% more time online.

The Obama campaign knew this and used online media—as well as more unconventional routes like video game advertising[\[7\]](#)—to mobilize young voters. Lee Rainie, director for the [Pew Internet and American Life Project](#), hit the nail on the head in a 2008 *New York Times* article, saying, "Young people are particularly galvanized in this campaign... They read a news story and then blog about it, or they see a YouTube video and then link to it, or they go to a campaign Web site, download some phone numbers, and make calls on behalf of a candidate."[\[8\]](#)

According to a 2008 *Washington Times* article by Kara Rowland, "New media—videos, text messaging, social networking and blogging—is revolutionizing the way candidates run campaigns, and helped presumptive Democratic nominee Barack Obama redefine the role of a supporter from someone who votes, and perhaps donates, to a virtual campaign employee."[\[9\]](#) By utilizing social media to engage with voters, both young and old, the campaign enabled political activists in the party to pitch in remotely, appealing to individuals as being a part of a large and monumental movement.[\[10\]](#) And it is hard to argue that it wasn't pretty epic—the possibility of electing the first African American to the presidency was a historic achievement, particularly for a country with such a dark history in terms of race and equality.

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