E-Voter Institute Study Shows the Emergence of E-Politics

French Caldwell

An E-Voter Institute survey indicates the Internet will play an increasingly important role in political campaigning. For example, results show that 80 percent of political leaders recommend collecting e-mail addresses.
NEWS ANALYSIS

Event

On 5 December 2001, the E-Voter Institute released the results of a study of online campaigning (see Figure 1). The E-Voter Institute commissioned survey firm, Dynamic Logic, to poll political consultants and campaign advisors on the use of the Internet in political campaign organization and communications. The survey found:

- Eighty percent of leaders have recommended collecting e-mail addresses.
- Seventy-one percent have recommended using e-mail to broadcast information and receive feedback.
- Most leaders report lower uses of online advertising (33 percent) and online chats with candidates (30 percent).

Figure 1. Uses of the Internet in Political Campaigns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>For Client</th>
<th>Recommended for Client</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collect E-Mail</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Web Site</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribute E-Mail</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Response</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Fundraising</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Surveys</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Campaign Mgmt. Software</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy/Place Ads Online</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold Online Chats</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: E-Voter Institute and Dynamic Logic

Analysis

Online advertising and fund-raising represent two areas of opportunity. Sixty-nine percent of leaders respond that using the Internet to build awareness is effective, but only 32 percent indicate they have recommended placing online advertising. Sixty-seven percent believe online fund-raising is effective, but only 48 percent report recommending online fund-raising. Budget resources for these opportunities will likely increase because leaders expect online campaign spending to increase from an average of 9 percent of the campaign budget in 2001 to 14 percent in 2004 and 27 percent in 2008.
E-mail played a major role in the ability of Sen. John McCain, a Republican from Arizona, to raise funds rapidly following his win in the New Hampshire in the 2000 presidential primary. E-mail was also responsible for his campaign’s rapid completion of petitions to qualify for the Virginia primary.

Following the disputed Florida presidential election results, the Bush and Gore campaigns used e-mail to rapidly organize demonstrations of supporters. Although the demonstrations likely had little effect on the Supreme Court’s decision, the Bush campaign effectively communicated the legitimacy of its claims — thereby providing a basis for the Democrats to accept Bush’s presidency.

Although the likelihood of a candidate winning a major election solely through Internet campaigning remains very low, the E-Voter study marks a significant milestone for the role of the Internet in political campaigning and the emergence of e-politics.

**Analytical Source:** French Caldwell, Knowledge Management