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Chris Molina
Chapman University, molin129@mail.chapman.edu

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Technology and Political Participation
Chris Molina
Department of Political Science, Chapman University; Orange, California

Introduction to Research
This study explores how technology has affected political participation and whether it has encouraged or discouraged people from participating in various political ways.
In the 2010 Elections, 26% of people used their cell phones to learn about the election.
Registered voters of both parties are likely to utilize their cell phones to keep up with election news as 25% of Republicans and 29% of Democrats report doing so during the last presidential election.
21% of people follow a political figure on Social Media.
Those who follow a political figure on social media are 2 times more likely to make a contribution to a political campaign.
41% say the major reason they follow a political figure on social media is to find out about news before other people.
35% say they feel more politically connected to the candidates.
When it comes to party affiliation, Republicans appear to be more preoccupied with finding out news first.

The 2008 Election
Theory: Taking advantage of technology in regards to social media, blogs, and online newspapers. A political candidate could reach a wider and younger range of citizens.
Result: In the 2008 elections Obama utilized online media in order to encourage political participation. He was successful and had the largest voter turnout since 1960 and the 2nd largest youthful turnout in history.
Obama won 70% of the young people vote during the 2008 presidential election.
The 2008 election has even been called the "Facebook Election", as both candidates for the first time attempted to reach out to their current and new followers online.
One of the key components of Obama’s election was his key strategist Chris Hughes who was one of Facebook’s cofounders and masterminded Obama’s online presence.

Hypotheses:
H 1: The more news a person reviews on the internet; the more likely they are to vote.
H 2: People who get their news from television are more likely to participate in a political protest then those who get it from the internet.
H 3: Those who read about presidential campaigns on the internet are more likely to vote then those who read them in the newspaper.

Findings
H 1: Internet News
The results show that the more news a person reviews online, the more likely they are to vote in an election. 70.5% of those who viewed news on the internet at least 1 or 2 days a week voted while 85% of those who viewed news on the internet 6 or 7 days a week voted.

H 2: Political Protest Participation
Those who said they pay attention to Internet News “A Great Deal.” are less likely to participate in a political protest as opposed to those who said they paid attention to TV News “A Great Deal.”

H 3: Internet v. Newspaper
There is no direct correlation between those who get their information about a presidential campaign on the internet v. in the newspaper and their likelihood to participate in the election.

Conclusions
•The internet has proven to be one of the most most efficient and effective ways to increase political participation.
•While technology has increased political participation it has not surpassed print media in getting people to the polls.
•Obama was the first to full utilize social media and was one of few presidents to get the youth to rally behind him as a result. This was one of the key components that got him elected.
•Technology has done more then just get people to the polls. It has encouraged people to be political activists and participate in protests.

References