Nielsens Pre-Convention Scorecard

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2008Â

Details on Candidatesâ€™ Online presence, Advertising campaigns and TV Ratings for Past Conventions

In advance of the national conventions, The Nielsen Company today released an overview of the presidential campaign so far this summer, providing a closer look at the candidatesâ€™ online presence and buzz, their advertising campaigns, as well as TV viewership for past political conventions.Â

Among the key findings

Online Audience and Videos Viewed:Â In July 2008 the number of video streams on JohnMcCain.com more than doubled, possibly due to press coverage around Senator John McCainâ€™s ad that compared Senator Barack Obama to Paris Hilton. Despite being behind in total video streams in July, BarackObama.com's unique audience was twice as large as JohnMcCain.com's in both June and July 2008.Â

Top Blogs

The Huffington Post blog includes the most mentions of both Barack Obama and John McCain (June thru Aug 17), while Senator Obama maintains the lead in overall buzz volume on blogs and message boards.

Advertising Online

In July, the â€œObama for Americaâ€• image-based online advertising campaign was five times bigger than the previous month 417 million impressions in July 2008 vs. 80 million online impressions in June 2008.Â

Top States for TV Advertising

During June and July 2008, both Obama and McCain targeted their local TV spots at key battleground states including Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.Â

TV Viewership of Political Conventions

Historically, more homes tune in to Democratic National Conventions and there have only been three election years in which more homes tuned in to the Republican National Convention â€“ 1972 (presumptive nominee Richard Nixon), 1976 (presumptive nominee Gerald Ford) and 2004 (presumptive nominee George W. Bush).
Online Audience and Videos Viewed

In July 2008 video streams more than doubled on JohnMcCain.com possibly, due to press coverage around McCainâ€™s ad which compared Obama to Paris Hilton.The two presidential candidate Web sites are seeing increases in unique audience as the summer progresses, and as the conventions approach. Despite being behind in total video streams in July, BarackObama.com had a unique audience twice that of JohnMcCain.com in June and July 2008.

Top Blogs
Among the nearly 80 million blogs tracked by Nielsen Onlineâ€™s BuzzMetrics service, the following are the blogs that mention Senators John McCain and Barack Obama between June 1 and August 17, 2008, ranked by volume of messages mentioning the candidate.Â

Total Buzz Volume: Blogs + Boards
As the race to the White House continues, Senator Barack Obama maintains a healthy lead in buzz volume on blogs and message boards combined (0.77%) compared with Senator John McCain (0.35%), with more than double the amount of mentions between June 1 and August 17, 2008.Â Â
During July, the â€œObama for Americaâ€• image-based online advertising campaign was five times bigger than the previous month â€“ with 417 million impressions in July 2008 vs. 80 million online impressions in June 2008. John McCainâ€™s campaig

doubled its sponsored search link advertising from June to July 2008.

Advertising: Spot TV, National Cable, and Spot Radio

Barack Obama and John McCain ran a combined total of 127,513 local TV spots and 668 national cable TV advertisements between June 4, 2008, when campaigning for the general election began, and August 1, 2008.Â The candidates also placed 440 spot radio ads between June 4 and July 13.

McCain ran significantly fewer local TV spots (57,132) than Obama (70,381), but McCain placed more than twice as many national cable ads (526) as Obama (142).Â McCain also placed more spot radio ads (256) than Obama (184).

Editorâ€™s Note:Â Neither candidate placed advertisements on National Broadcast Networks or Syndication during June and July 08.

Local TV Advertising: Top States

During the early stages of the general election campaign, both Obama and McCain targeted their local TV spots at key battleground states like Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.Â Those three states were among the top five in terms of local spot TV units for both candidates.Â

But while Florida topped the list of states where Obama placed the most local TV spots (7,387), McCain bypassed the state entirely, placing no local TV ads in Florida between June 4 and August 1.Â

Meanwhile, McCain made Iowa one of his top five priorities for spot TV advertising (4,838; rank: #5), while Obama placed far fewer ads in the state (3,055; rank: #11).

Overall, between June 4 and August 1, McCain placed slightly more local spot TV ads within the top five states he chose to target (36,611), than Obama did in the five states he targeted for advertising during the same time period (32,253).

TV Viewership of Political Conventions

There have only been three election years in which more homes tuned in to the Republican National Convention than to the Democratic National Convention â€“ 1972 (presumptive nominee Richard Nixon), 1976 (presumptive nominee Gerald Ford) and 2004 (presumptive nominee George W. Bush).

2004 marked the first time in the past six election years that more households watched coverage of the Republican National Convention than its Democratic counterpart.Â The 2004 Republican National Convention also drew more viewers with an average of 22.6 million total viewers compared to the Democratic National Conventionâ€™s 20.4 million viewers.Â

The most-watched Democratic National Convention occurred in 1980 when 20.7 million homes tuned in to see Jimmy Carter receive the partyâ€™s nomination.Â 21.9 million homes watched in 1976 when Gerald Ford was named the Republican Partyâ€™s presidential nominee, the highest viewership of any Republican National Convention.