

# YouTube campaign videos more positive than television ads

March 26 2012

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(PhysOrg.com) -- YouTube campaign videos are more positive than ads aired on television, a new University of Michigan study shows.

YouTube videos are more positive because they are narrowly targeted to the highly informed, high motivated, usually supportive people who view a candidate's online [video](#), said Rob Salmond, the study's author and assistant professor of [political science](#).

"Informing and inspiring supporters is a task well suited to YouTube videos," Salmond said about the study.

Attacking an opponent, he said, is more effectively done on TV because weak supporters of a candidate's opponent – the usual target for negative advertising – are more likely to watch the candidate's TV spot than to watch the candidate's YouTube video.

The study involved analysis of more than 3,100 YouTube videos uploaded during the election campaigns by 72 parties in 12 countries.

Campaigners for high office tend to be more negative on TV than on YouTube, both in the United States and in other democracies. In the 2008 presidential campaign, the Obama campaign's YouTube videos that also likely appeared on TV were mostly attack ads against John McCain (56 percent), whereas the YouTube-only ads were mostly positive ads about Obama (73 percent). The McCain campaign was more negative in tone overall, and this tendency was substantially starker in the YouTube-

and-TV videos (68 percent negative) than in the YouTube-only videos (52 percent negative).

Even among the negative ads, there is a difference in tone on YouTube. Among the YouTube only videos he examined, 78 percent attacked an opponent purely on the basis of their positions on issues. The remaining 22 percent introduced a significant element of character attack in addition to any policy-based criticism. On TV, however, the proportion of attack ads featuring character-based attacks jumped from 22 percent to over 38 percent.

Salmond said the audience for YouTube ads is younger, richer, more educated, more politically interested and more partisan than the population at large. In other countries, these differences are likely even more stark, because the U.S. has a much higher reported use of the Internet for political purposes than do most other democracies, he said.

YouTube also makes it easier to distribute longer, more detailed content that was previously possible, because long-form political infomercials on [television](#) are almost prohibitively expensive.

"YouTube provides a substantially more cost effective means of providing detailed information to those who seek it than does TV," he wrote.

More than half of the TV attack advertisements Salmond examined contained strong fear appeals, compared to less than a quarter of the YouTube-only negative ads. And while 41 percent of the YouTube-only attack videos contained no fear appeal at all, only 16 percent of the negative TV [ads](#) did the same.

Provided by University of Michigan

Citation: YouTube campaign videos more positive than television ads (2012, March 26) retrieved 7 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2012-03-youtube-campaign-videos-positive-television.html>

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