BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

DIALOGIC COMMUNICATION AND THE GRAND OLD PARTY: A CONTENT

ANALYSIS OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY WEB SITES

A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF

JOURNALISM IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM

BY

SARAH TAGTMEYER

DR. DUSTIN SUPA- ADVISOR

MUNCIE, IN

NOVEMBER 2008

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

With each new national election comes an increased focus on the individual. The Principles of the Republican National Committee start with the following: "I believe the strength of our nation lies with the individual and that each person's dignity, freedom, ability and responsibility must be honored" (Republican National Committee, 2008). A key concept within that principle is honoring the voice of the individual. Through dialogic communication, one's voice can not only be heard, but also thoroughly counted and responded to. The government is supposed to not only serve, but also be the voice of the people; hence the increased importance of the voice of each person. This research examines one component of the Republican Party's communication plan, online communication, and sees whether or not the properties of dialogic communication for online environments are present.

Computer Mediated Communication, CMC, is terminology for human communicatory exchanges across the medium of a computer. More specifically, according to Barnes, "CMC is used to refer to a wide range of technologies that facilitate both human communication and the interactive sharing of information through computer networks, including e-mail, discussion groups, newsgroups, chat, instant messages, and Web pages" (2006, 4).

CMC is closely related to dialogic communication in that dialogic communication involves a two-way exchange of language and ideas (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Dialogic communication can be executed via CMC; which is why an understanding of both CMC and dialogic communication is necessary to the research conducted within this paper. The research within this paper focuses on the presence of dialogic communication online via means of CMC.

This research involves an in-depth look into how the Republican Party utilizes dialogic communication through the World Wide Web. Not only was the Republican National Committee's, RNC, Web site evaluated, but also the individual Republican Party Web sites for each of the states was analyzed. The presence or absence of the five dialogic principles of online communication developed by Kent and Taylor (1998), help reveal whether or not dialogic communication is a likely product of communication via the Republican Party Web sites. These five principles are as follows: dialogic loop, usefulness of information, generation of return visits, ease of the interface, and the conservation of visitors (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

The methodology utilized throughout this study is that of an in-depth content analysis. This research involves both a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the Republican National Committee and individual state Republican Party Web sites mentioned above. The content analysis of these Web sites provides insight on the presence or absence of online dialogic communicatory principles. A content analysis was

conducted for each state Republican Party Web site according to the checklist that was created in regards to the online dialogic communication principles developed by Kent and Taylor (1998).

This research not only helps decipher the presence or absence of true dialogic communication with the Republican Party and its public via CMC; but, it also offers insight into ways through which such communication can be better implemented and the associated benefits that would stem from such a development. This research has the potential to contribute to a change in the way that major political bodies communicate with their public.

This paper is divided into the following sections: an explanation of the significance of the study, a review of past research and information associated with CMC, an overview of the methodology to be used for this study, the results of the study, and a discussion of what this all means for public relations practitioners and academics, including possibilities for future research.

The importance of this study is to see how the various state Republican Party Web sites utilize dialogic communication. The Republican Party is often referred to as the Grand Old Party, GOP. The Republican National Committee, RNC, runs the GOP. Analysis into each state's Republican Party Web site will help evaluate the overall use of CMC by the RNC. A final analysis of the RNC's Web site will also be provided so as to create a more well rounded evaluation.

With the recent outcome of the 2008 elections, the leaders within the RNC have made it known that the Party will be reevaluating many things such as their core beliefs,

operations, and communication methods. The research within this paper can be used to help the Republican Party evaluate their Internet communication methods; members of the party can utilize this research to see if their statewide Web sites are hindering their chances as a Party at victory. Various media outlets proclaimed that the RNC was out of touch with young voters. Young voters are more familiar with the likes of CMC than members of the older constituencies. It could be rationalized, therefore, that the RNC could reach out to the younger population with greater effectiveness if their CMC methods are improved upon. The research within this paper will offer a sample of what components of CMC the RNC has utilized in their online communication efforts.

The Republican Party is one of the two most powerful political parties within the United States. Any research this paper provides on behalf of this political party could not only benefit the Republican Party, but also the Democratic Party. If both of these political parties were to utilize CMC, the voice of the people would be more regularly heard. If people of the United States feel that their voices are truly recognized by either political party, a possible side effect could be increased voter turnout and a more valued approach to dealing with our political system within the United States.

The research provided in this paper could also prove beneficial to other democratic countries outside of the United States. The United States is seen as an example of the Democratic process. If the two most powerful political parties within the United States fully adopted CMC, it would be a likely assumption that political parties within other democratic bodies would do the same.

The Republican Party is a suitable case for study given their recent upset with the 2008 election and the supposed related cause of being "out of touch" with the younger generation; a gap that could be bridged by CMC.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The literature review of this paper will begin with a look at the public relations professional with regards to CMC and dialogue online. This review will progress to an explanation of the four communication models of public relations. The history of dialogue and its association with the field of public relations and dialogic communication will then follow. From there, insight will be given to research of online dialogic communication and previous studies in regards to interactivity, new social media, and media replacement. All together, this literature will provide a glance into the history of dialogue, the evolution into online dialogic theory, and possible influences associated with online communication.

Researching the role of the public relations practitioner

In regards to the growing popularity of the Internet and CMC, public relations professionals needed to research how they could become involved in communication with their public by way of such means (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Much of the research regarding public relations professionals involves the professional's role of information dissemination, not of dialogue; however, some researchers have studied how organizations are utilizing public relations to communicate with their publics (Heath 1998, Esrock & Leichty 1999). Capps (1993) argued that while new technology can

sometimes been seen as threatening to public relations professionals, that it must be used to "keep in touch and not to distance ourselves from clients, peers, and the media" (24).

Thompson's (1999) research focused on the importance of public relations professionals constructing and maintaining of relationships with their public. Some researchers, such as Seybold (1986), however, argued that public relations professionals need not be involved in the development or continuance of company Web sites. Seybold (1986) argued that practitioners would turn material into "boring corporate brochures." An increasing majority of researchers, however, such as Marlo and Sileo (1996) believe that there are plenty of opportunities for public relations professionals in the online environment. As Cooley stated in 1999, "the PR professional of tomorrow must understand the value of a corporate web site and be able to utilize it to connect to the public" (41).

Four models of communication in public relations

Dialogue became broadened as a concept in 1984 after Grunig introduced four models of communication to be utilized in public relations. Prior to the revelations by Grunig, the emphasis in public relations focused on managing one's public. Grunig's research caused a shift in focus for public relations to maintaining relationships with one's public (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Three of the four models of communication for public relations deal with one-way communication, and are as follows: press agentry,

public information, and one-way symmetrical. The fourth model involves two-way communication, and is known as two-way symmetrical (Grunig, 1992). In recent years, the focus of research and public relations practice has switched from that of two-way symmetrical communication to that of two-way relational communication (Ledingham & Bruning, 1997).

Dialogue

The concept of dialogic communication has its roots in dialogue and two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig, 1984). Over the years, there has been much research on dialogue, especially in the fields of philosophy and relational communication (Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001). The concept of dialogue is important to public relations because it can reveal best practice methods for building and maintaining relationships with one's public.

The modern father of dialogue is considered to be Martin Buber (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Buber's work stressed the importance of viewing others as equals rather than objects. In regards to communication with others, Buber took a new stance by having the perspective of "I Thou" rather than "I It" (Buber, 1958; Czubaroff, 2000; Johannesen, 1971; Kent & Taylor, 2002; White, 2008). In other words, Buber saw dialogue as a way of communicating that should be focused on the other, not on oneself or an object. Carl Rogers, a psychologist, also had the "other" centered viewpoint as well (Rogers, 1978).

In the field of relational communication, Johanessen took the concept of dialogue even further by developing the following five characteristics of dialogue: genuine,

accurate empathetic understanding, unconditional positive regard, presence, spirit of mutual equality, and supportive psychological climate (1971). The concept of equality with which one is communicating can be seen in the work of Buber, Rogers, and Johanessen.

Dialogue has been a term within public relations for more than three decades (Taylor, Kent, & White 2001). In 1989, the concept of dialogue became significant to the field of public relations courtesy of the work of Pearson and his study of public relations, ethics, and dialogue. Pearson (1989) was quoted as saying that, "in public relations, the degree of symmetry of interaction between an organization and its publics is an important question; the importance of this question is related to its relevance for public relations ethics" (81).

Dialogic communication both on and offline

According to Kent and Taylor, dialogic relationships refer to the interactivity that occurs between an organization and its public during communication (Kent &Taylor, 1998). Kent and Taylor developed the following principles of dialogic communication: mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk, and commitment. These dialogic principles can be used to build organization-public relationships (Kent & Taylor, 1998; Taylor, Kent, & White, 2003; Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001) and demonstrate that dialogic communication involves a give and take (Buber 1970, Johannesen, 1971, 1990; Kent, 1998; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Stewart, 1978; Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001). The five tenets of dialogic communication are useful for trying to identify occurrences of dialogic communication;

however, more specific principles need to be applied to communication that occurs online, or via CMC.

Kent and Taylor (1998) had also taken the study of dialogic communication one step further and developed five online principles for dialogic communication. Kent and Taylor felt that dialogic principles specific to online communications were necessary so as to best guide public relations practitioners in dialogic relationship building online. The five principles of dialogic communication are as follows: dialogic loop, usefulness of information, generation of return visits, ease of the interface, and the conservation of visitors (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

The first online principle of dialogic communication is that of the dialogic loop. The dialogic loop refers to a Web site having embedded feedback options for visitors (Kent & Taylor, 1998). The benefit of this is that any questions or concerns of the visitors can be addressed to the corporation and can be either answered or acknowledged. Having an email listed on a Web site is not enough for dialogic communication; one must actually have someone willing and able to respond to the email, otherwise dialogic communication is not occurring (Kent & Taylor, 1998). In a related study about Web logs, or blogs, Cass et. al. (2005) stated, "Blogs which foster participation from consumers, and take on board their comments, not only build good relations but achieve more sales." While the research within this paper is not pertaining to sales, the idea of feedback so as to produce good relations and returns with one's publics is of relevance to this study.

The next principle is that of useful information. Information that visitors to a Web site generally value should be the main focus. Content should not be substituted on the Web site for unnecessary graphics. Information on the Web site should also be easy to find (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Pavlov and Dozier (1996) agreed with the idea that online information should be useful and simple in saying that "the design of online communication should follow many of the same rules of message design in any other environment, including creativity, quality and consistency with overall organizational image."

After the principle of useful information comes the generation of return visits principle. It is important for organizations to have visitors return to their Web site so as to continue fostering relationships with those visitors. The Web site should contain some elements that make return visits attractive to the visitors such as updated information, information chats, and forums. People need reasons to return to Web sites; the Web is highly competitive in regards to capturing and maintaining attention (Kent & Taylor, 1998). "As has been demonstrated in previous studies (Cass, Munroe, & Turcotte, 2005; Kelleher & Miller, 2006; Lee et al., 2006), the capacity to facilitate conversation with audiences and for these to make their own comments has a considerable and a positive impact on users' perception of the organization" (Huertas & Xifra, 2008, 1). It would follow, then, that the more people feel involved with an organization, the more likely they will be to return to the Web site.

Ease of the interface is also another principle of online dialogic communication. The Web site should be relatively easy to maneuver around. People are not going to want to go to Web sites that they find confusing. According to Zimmerman and Muraski, usability can be defined as "how well the intended users can interact with a technology to carry out the assigned activity" (1995, 173). Zimmerman (1995) also composed a list of thirty-three guidelines that are to be used when constructing Web pages; following these guidelines would lead to the creation of an easy to use interface. A full listing of these guidelines can be found in Appendix 1. These guidelines suggest simple jargon, which for example, could be applied to the table of contents, should be well organized and contain text or content relevant to the organization. The focus of the Web site should not be all "bells and whistles" (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

Lastly, conservation of visitors is an important online dialogic principle. In order to maintain relationships with one's visitors, an organization needs to try to keep those visitors not only interested in their Web site, but also actively viewing their site for as long as possible (Kent & Taylor, 1998). For example, organizations must be weary of external links that lead one away from the main pages of the organization; one may never return.

The principles of online dialogic communication will be the main focus of this study.

Interactivity

Moving toward the concept of dialogue online, Cooley (1999) studied the interactivity of different types of corporate Web sites based on industry. A company's Web site was considered to be one hundred percent interactive if an online forum was provided on the Web site. Other significant components of interactivity were as follows: providing general contact information, and the presence of surveys about Web site effectiveness (Cooley, 1999).

The Internet and early communication

The Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link', also referred to as the WELL, was the first online community in the sense of how such communities are viewed today. Howard Reingold coined the term "virtual community" in regards to this collection of relationships online. It was the creation of the WELL in 1985 that paved the way for the online communities of the 21st century (The WELL, 2008). According to Rheingold (1985), "virtual communities are social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (The Virtual Community, 1).

It may seem futile to refer to the essential prototype of online communities now, considering how far online communication has come since then; however, one must know exactly how far we have come as a society in order to truly appreciate and

understand the correspondence that occurs by virtual means today. Had the WELL not been created, or rather not displayed a successful desire for humans to communicate over the Internet, it cannot be stated with certainty what type of online communication the population would be involved in today. The creation of the WELL showed people's desire for communication and feedback by virtual means; this leads us to dialogic communication online.

The concept of dialogue has grown from two-way symmetrical to two-way relational; dialogic communication developed with the latter. Kent and Taylor took the theory of dialogic communication to a new level by providing guiding principles for both regular and online dialogic communication; this is essential for developing lasting equal relationships with one's public. The five principles for online dialogic communication can be used to build upon organizational-public relationships as well.

Some current research, however, has suggested that dialogic communication may not be a necessary component for online communication, especially if the online user is extremely goal oriented (Schaefer & Dillman, 1998). This argument is rooted in the belief that online visitors that are determined to achieve certain things while visiting a Web site, may not be interested, or find it necessary, to be able to communicate with those associated with that site. While dialogic communication may not be a necessary component for all online environments, many scholars, such as Cooley, believe that corporations can benefit from their implementation of the dialogic principles of online communication. As Cooley (1999) stated, "Building relationships through an interactive

Web site will ultimately serve to improve the corporate image and align corporate policy with public opinion."

Dialogue and the online public sphere

In dealing with online communication and building relationships, much research has been focused on the development of a public sphere online. Peter Dahlgren (2005) concentrated on online public spheres with specific focus on political communication within, or through, such public spheres. According to Dahlgren, "a functioning public sphere is understood as a constellation of communicative spaces in society that permit the circulation of information, ideas, debates—ideally in an unfettered manner—and also the formation of political will" (2005, 148). Under these terms, the WELL would be considered an active public sphere.

While some, such as Dahlgren, agree that the research involving the Internet and the establishment of public spheres should be of great importance for political research in the foreseeable future, others doubt the effect that online communication and public spheres will have on society and politics. Some, such as Anderson and Cornfeld (2003), agree that communication technologies are affecting the everyday lives of the population, but are somewhat uncertain as to the degree of effects that such technology could have on democracy and politics (Anderson & Cornfeld, 2003; Jenkins & Thomburn, 2003; Dehlgren, 2005, 150). It is those that are not sure about the likelihood of online communication actively affecting the democratic process that need to be exposed to, or conduct, research involving dialogic communication and concepts of a political nature.

Others agree that there is a political presence in public spheres, but believe that this presence is only an extension of those who are already involved in politics outside of online interaction (Margolis & Resnick, 2000, 14). In other words, researchers of this school of thought acknowledge that political communication does occur online, but they do not believe that any new constituents are being motivated to act or speak out politically than those that already do so in the non-virtual world. Along with this, Cooper (2005) stated the following: "At one level, the Internet is merely a more efficient way of conducting political activities, a mirror image of physical space that reinforces political functions like fund raising, outreach, and coordination in largely one-way applications." The research within this paper, however, will help explore the possibility of dialogic, two-way, communication in the online political world; as opposed to the suspected one-way communication extension of the standard political campaign format.

New social media and online communication

Political communication researchers, especially those of the new generation, are shifting their focus to not only online public spheres and politics, but also to the use of new social media and the political world. Some examples of new social media include online networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, through which people not only communicate online, but are also able to provide detailed profiles about themselves.

In regards to the past few elections, the use of social media, such as Facebook, by political candidates has steadily increased; the presidential 2008 election was no exception. In 2004, it was found that the Democratic candidates for office utilized new

social media for online communication means more so than there Republican

counterparts did (Williams et.al). The research within this paper will help decipher if the

Republican Party has immersed itself more into the world of dialogic communication

online and new social media; if it is found to have not done so, then this research could

possibly serve as inspiration for further emersion and improvement.

In a study by Sweetser and Lariscy (2008) surrounding the 2006 United States

Senate and House races, young voters who believed to have communicated with the

candidates via the online social networking site called Facebook were looked into. Even

though the concept of Facebook itself is dialogic in nature, the candidates involved in the

elections very rarely, if ever, personally responded to the messages they received from

their Facebook profiles. It can be stated then that the communication that occurred via

Facebook involving candidates and their public should not be considered dialogic, but

rather, one-way in nature. Even though this study did not result in an example of truly

dialogic communication, it serves as a good reminder of the importance of research

regarding online dialogic communication and politics.

Online communication and media replacement

Before the concern with social networking sites and political communication

came about, there was, and continues to be, a stream of research about media replacement

as a result of online political information. In 2003, the Pew Research Center revealed data

that the audience for online news information, having consumed such information at least

three days a week, had increased from two percent in 1995 to twenty-five percent in 2003

(Pew Research). While some may say that this is an example of the start of media replacement, others, such as Tewksbury (2006), argue "some people may very well abandon one medium without taking up another" (314). In other words, in line with Tewksbury, even though there has been an increase in online news consumption, this does not mean that the people involved in such consumption are replacing their television broadcasts with online information gathering.

Davis, Elin, and Reeher stated, "Although the Internet population swelled to more than half the country during the 2000 election, true believers in the Internet's power to create an informed electorate were disappointed to find that the most frequented sites featured the day's weather and that one of the most popular topics was Pam Anderson" (2002, 29).

Research Questions

The research associated with this study will look further into the concept of CMC by examining the existence of the principles of online dialogic communication and certain aspects of social media.

This study on the presence of dialogic communication, with regards to the individual State Republican Party Web sites, seeks to answer the following questions via content analysis:

Research Question 1: What components of online dialogic communication are found within each individual State Party Web site?

Research Question 1A: How are the online dialogic principles employed to create two-way relational communications?

Research Question 1B: Do different State Party Web sites offer more dialogic communication opportunities than others?

Research Question 2:

Does the geographical location of the State Party have anything to do with the presence of the online dialogic principles?

Research question 2A: Does culture seem to play a role in the presence or absence of the principles of dialogic communication on the Party Web sites?

Research Question 3:

What components of online dialogic communication are found within the Republican National Committee, RNC, Web site?

Research question 3A: Is there any notable difference between the presences of tested dialogic principles found on the RNC Web site versus the individual State Party Web sites?

Research Question 4: Do the State Party or RNC Web sites possess any components of new social media?

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The main page for the RNC is located at http://www.RNC.org. This Web site was analyzed in respect to the dialogic principles for online communication that were proposed by Kent and Taylor (1998). Additional Web sites for analysis were also found at the "Choose your state" page on the RNC main's Web site, which is located at: http://www.gop.com/Connect/States.aspx. Each of the fifty states' individual Republican Party Web sites and the RNC Web site were of interest to the researchers for purpose of this study.

Research Design

The research design for this study is based on a previous study conducted by Supa and Zoch (2006) involving the use of online media rooms as a way to create dialogue with journalists. For an example of the research categorical design, see Appendix 2.

The methodology that will be utilized throughout this study is that of a content analysis. The research involved in this project will be of two parts. The first section will involve both a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the each of the fifty Republican State Party Web sites mentioned above. The content analysis of the State Party Web sites will provide insight on the presence or absence of online dialogic communicatory principles and social media. The second part will entail a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the RNC main Web site so as to also analyze the presence of dialogic principles and social media within the Web site.

Data collection method

Both quantitative and qualitative content analyses were utilized for both parts of the research included in this study. A content analysis was conducted for each State Party Web site according to the checklist surrounding the online dialogic communication principles developed by Kent and Taylor (1998). The checklist served as a coding sheet for the two coders that were used. Coder 1 was assigned to look at all fifty of the State Party Web sites. Coder 2 was randomly assigned ten of the same State Party Web sites to analyze.

Separating the fifty states into three separate categories completed the process of random assignment. Based on those categories, a card was then made for each state and placed into one of the three bags depending on its category. The randomization categories were as follows: Bag one A-M, bag two N-S, and bag three T-W. For bags one and two, four drawings were made from each bag. Also, for bag three, two drawings were made. The purpose of this process was to assign Coder 2 with random states for analysis that were spread across the alphabet. After this randomization process, the chosen states for Coder 2 were as follows: Alabama, Alaska, Indiana, Maryland, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, and West Virginia. Both coders analyzed the RNC Web site.

Both latent and manifest content was being analyzed with regards to this research. Latent content can be thought of as information that is under the surface, whereas manifest content is presented as is (Lombard, 2008). An example of manifest content,

with regards to this research, was the presence of a volunteer link on the studied Web site; the link was either there, or it was not. On the other hand, an example of latent content involved looking at the Web site for self-explanatory image maps. This was considered latent content because the subjectivity of the coder came into play with regards to coding this; in other words, the coder had to use his or her best judgment to decide whether or not the image maps were self-explanatory.

The reason that two coders were used was to establish inter-coder reliability: inter-coder reliability referring to two coders reaching the same conclusion after analyzing the same research component (Lombard, 2008). The importance of inter-coder reliability can be explained by thinking about latent and manifest content. It was imperative that the coders received the same results when they were completing their analysis. Due to latent content involving coder subjectivity, a "check" was necessary to make sure that the data that was coded as accurate as it could be.

The population for this study involved fifty-one Web sites; the fifty State Party Web sites and the official RNC Web site. Because of the small amount of Web sites, and the fact that only two coders were used, Holsti's reliability coefficient was used and computed to be .99. Also, given the same factors, no test of intra-coder reliability was completed.

Categories

Each Web page under analysis was classified into categories based on the presence or absence of the dialogic principles for online communication developed by

Kent and Taylor (1998). It follows, therefore, that the categories of analysis were providing a dialogic loop, ease of interface, conservation of visitors, generation of return visits, and the usefulness of presented information.

Four out of the five principles of online dialogic communication were analyzed on individual coding sheets. Those principles are as follows: dialogic loop, ease of interface, conservation of visitors, and generation of return visits. The last of the online dialogic principles, usefulness of information, was not analyzed on a separate coding sheet, but rather, it was included in the conservation of visitors checklist under the title, "important information present." For a fifth coding sheet, the use of social media was analyzed. Though social media was not a principle of online dialogic communication developed by Kent and Taylor, its addition was considered to be helpful to this research. As noted within the literature review, new social media has become a focus of research lately with regards to communication studies; it therefore felt like a good addition could be made to this pool of knowledge based on this research.

Examples of a coding sheet that was used within this research can be found in Appendix 4. The coding sheets were set up with properties associated with the principles of online dialogic communication; many of which were a continuation from the work of Supa and Zoch (2006). The properties were listed across the top of the provided table, and the names of the Web sites in study were listed downward.

Every time an aspect of the Web site in question fell into one of these categories, it was quantified into that category either by a recording "yes, no," or a numerical value. Analysis was also done in regards to the presence of some components of social media.

Coding Procedures

The two coders were provided the same computer for purpose of their analysis and used it with the same Internet connection speed, in the same location, and on the same day. The reason for these procedures was to try to eliminate potential bias that would alter the results of the research.

The two coders were both provided with an instruction sheet on how to answer based on their findings. An example of the instructional sheet given to the coders for this study can be found in Appendix 3. Space was given at the bottom of each checklist to include information that the coder found relevant to the study; which was not included in the coding checklist. In the end, these additional notes were discussed between coders for significance in future studies.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Two coders were used to analyze both the individual Republican Party Web sites and the RNC Web site. All together, fifty-one Web sites were researched. Coder one dealt with all fifty-one Web sites, while Coder two researched eleven of the fifty-one Web sites.

It is important to note that any links from a State Party Web site that went to a feature on the RNC Web site, were not counted. The reason for this was that this portion of the study was concerned with what the State Party Web sites offered in terms of dialogic communication themselves; not with the help of the RNC Web site.

Enough evidence was received from the content analysis for each of the four original research questions for this study to be answered. For the purpose of this section of the paper, each of the original research questions will be repeated and then elaborated upon based on the research that was conducted.

Question 1: What components of online dialogic communication are found within each individual State Party Web site?

As the research supported, each of the State Party Web sites offered differing amounts of the principles of online dialogic communication. The principle of the conservation of visitors resulted in the most uniform positive results for the State Party Web sites. In regards to this principle, one hundred percent of the State Party Web sites

satisfied the following categories: having links hidden by graphics, important information

present, posting of date or time, and a short uploading time for the Web site.

Fig. 4.1. *Conservation of visitors—State Party Data*

Links Hidden By Link Buttons	Important Information Present	Posting Of Date/Time	Short Uploading Time
100%	100%	100%	100%

The other category for this principle, the amount of advertisements, had the

highest percentage being thirty-two percent (16) of State Party Web sites having zero

advertisements. The second highest percentage was that of thirty percent (15) of the State

Party Web sites having only one advertisement.

Fig. 4.2**.** *Amount of Advertisements—State Party Data*

Amount of Advertisements	Number Of States	Percentage Of States
0	16	32%
1	15	30%
2	5	10%
3	3	6%
4	7	14%
5	1	2%
6	2	4%
7	1	2%

Research Question 1A: How are the online dialogic principles employed to create

two-way relational communications?

This paper has provided many answers to this question, but each dialogic

principle offers its own opportunities for establishing two-way relational

communications. Eighty-six percent (43) of the State Party Web sites offered the option

of contacting the State Party and seventy-four percent (37) provided the option of directly

contacting the State Party. These results help display an effort on the part of the State

Parties to establish two-way relational communication.

Fig. 4.3. Dialogic Loop---State Party Data

Can Send Messages To Party	Able To Request Information Regularly	Presence Of Surveys Or Opinions	Option To Register To Receive News	Average Numbers Of Ways Available To Contact	Direct Contact Option	Welcome Message	Candidate Or Elected Officials Listed/Contact
86% Yes	48% Yes	18%Yes	48%Yes	8	90%Yes	24%Yes	96%Yes
14% No	52% No	82%No	52% No		10%No	76%No	4%No

If the State Party Web sites were not created with the idea of fostering two-way

relational communication, different ways to contact the Parties themselves would not

likely be given. Rather, it is in the ability of the visitor to directly contact the State Party

for purposes of communication that the desire for the establishment of two-way

communication is revealed. The fact that the average number of ways to contact a State

Party through the information provided on the Web site was eight helps show that desire.

The principle of ease of interface had very different results than that of the

dialogic loop. Both the categories of major links being clearly identified and minimal

graphic reliance had one hundred percent (50) presence on the State Party Web sites. The

presence of a help button category, however, was rather weak with only six percent (3) of

the State Party Web sites containing this feature.

Fig. 4.4. *Ease of Interface—State Party Data*

Major Links Clearly Identified	Search Engine Box	Self-Explanatory Image Maps	Minimal Graphic Reliance	Presence Of Help Button
100% Yes	52% Yes	38% Yes	100% Yes	6% Yes
0% No	48% No	62% No	0% No	94% No

Research Question 1B: Do different State Party's Web sites offer more dialogic

communication opportunities than others?

The research that was compiled within this study compared the presence of the

properties of online dialogic communication across the fifty State Party Web sites; the

results did differ. Based on the principle and associated categories that were being

analyzed at the time, different states produced different results. For example, Kansas was

particularly weak when dealing with the principle of generation of return visits with a

percent presence of fifty. On the other hand, Ohio was relatively strong for the principle

of generation of return visits with a percent presence of seventy-five, but slightly weaker

than Kansas with regards to conservation of visitors principle. Both the categories of

dialogic loop and ease of interface had the same percentage of presence for the State

Party Web sites of Kansas and Ohio, one hundred percent (50).

Fig. 4.5. *Kansas and Ohio Presence of Dialogic Principles—State Party Data*

State Party Name	Dialogic Loop	Generation Of Return Visits	Ease Of Interface	Conservation of Visitors
Kansas	83%	50%	67%	100%
Ohio	83%	75%	67%	80%

Each State Party Web site had its own strengths and weaknesses in regards to the principles of online dialogic communication.

Research Question 2: Does the geographical location of the State Party have anything to do with the presence of the online dialogic principles?

Given the different strengths and weaknesses for each of the State party Web sites in dealing with the principles of online dialogic communication, it cannot be stated that State parties within one particular region of the United States portrayed a greater degree of these principles. There were no clear regional differences between the presences of online dialogic principles.

Research question 2A: Does culture seem to play a role in the presence of absence of the principles of dialogic communication on the Party Web sites?

This study did not reveal that culture had an effect on whether or not a State Party's Web site displayed the principles of online dialogic communication. However, Hawaii, which is often times known as a more laid back culture, did offer a less organized Web site than the other states. What was interesting was that two states that were considered to be major players in the 2008 elections, Florida and Alaska, were two of the few states that did not offer the ability to contact the State Party via the Web site.

Research Question 3: What components of online dialogic communication are found within the Republican National Committee, RNC, Web site?

This study also looked into the RNC Web site for the principles of online dialogic communication so as to see if this Web site was more progressive than those of the State Parties. The results of the research showed that different aspects of every one of the

principles were present within the RNC Web site. These results help prove that the Republican Party is making an effort to establish a type of two-way relational communication with their publics.

The strongest representation of the principles was found with regards to the dialogic loop. With regards to this principle, every category for the RNC Web site resulted in a positive response except for the welcoming message.

Fig. 4.6. *Dialogic Loop—RNC Data*

Can Send Messages To Party	Able To Request Information Regularly	Presence Of Surveys Or Opinions	Option To Register To Receive News	Numbers Of Ways Available To Contact	Direct Contact Option	Welcome Message	Candidate Or Elected Officials Listed/Contact
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	35	Yes	No	Yes

The weakest representation of a principle for the RNC website was that of the generation of return visits. While six out of the nine categories for this principle were positive for this Web site, three were not. As one can see below, the categories of event listings, forums/chats, and FAQs/Q and A have resulted in no presence.

Fig. 4.7. *Generation Of Return Visits—RNC Data*

Event Listings	Links To Other Party Web sites	Bookmark Encouragement	Forums	Regularly Updated, Downloadable Info	Information Delivered Via Mail Or Web	Updated News Or Information Within Last 15 Days	FAQs And Q+A	Volunteer
No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Research question 3A: Is there any notable difference between the presences of tested dialogic principles found on the RNC Web site versus the individual State Party Web sites?

Both the State Party and RNC Web sites offered evidence of all of the principles of online dialogic communication; which helps provide support for the idea that the Republican Party is making an effort to establish open communication with their public. The RNC Web site did seem more sophisticated and organized than many of the State Party Web sites; which more readily leads the way to the possibility of establishing communication. The RNC Web site portrayed around the same amount of all of the principles of online dialogic communication except that of the dialogic loop; of which it exceeded the State Party Web sites.

With regards to the principle of dialogic loop, the only two categories that the State Party websites were relatively close to the RNC Website in the amount present were those of a direct contact option and having a candidate or elected officials contact available.

Fig. 4.8. *Dialogic Loop—State Party and RNC Data Comparison*

Web site	Can Send Messages To Party	Able To Request Information Regularly	Presence Of Surveys Or Opinions	Option To Register To Receive News	Numbers Of Ways Available To Contact	Direct Contact Option	Welcome Message	Candidate Or Elected Officials Listed/Contact
RNC	100%Yes	100%Yes	100%Yes	100%Yes	35	100%Yes	100%No	100%Yes
State Party	86% Yes	48% Yes	18%Yes	48%Yes	8 (Ave)	90%Yes	24%Yes	96%Yes

Research Question 4: Do the State Party or RNC Web sites possess any components of new social media?

The components of new social media were found within both the State Party and RNC Web sites to a certain degree. While many State Party Web sites were starting to offer blogging technology, only two percent (1) offered the option to upload material to the Web site. Massachusetts was the only State Party website to offer the option to upload material to the website; an option that is considered to be a key component of social media. The strongest category for the presence of social media on the State Party Web sites was the ability to connect to other forms of social media, which included seventy percent (35) of the Web sites having this option.

Fig. 4.9. *Presence of Social Media Components—State Party Data*

Blog	Create Profile Option	Able To Upload Photos Or Video	Podcasts	Alerts	Connect To Other Social Media	Coalitions
42%Yes	20%Yes	2%Yes	12%Yes	64%Yes	70%Yes	30%Yes
58%No	80%No	98%No	88%No	36%No	30%No	70%No

However, the fact that the State Party Web sites are starting to offer blogging capabilities, as well as connection opportunities, to social media sites helps give reason to the argument that the Republican Party is trying to adapt to the new world of social media and CMC. An even stronger component for this argument involved the social media area of the RNC Web site, MYGOP. In fact, the results of social media for the RNC website were all positive except for the podcast category.

Fig. 4.10 *Social Media—RNC Data*

Coder Name	Blog	Create Profile Option	Able To Upload Photos Or Video	Podcasts	Alerts	Connect To Other Social Media	Coalitions
1	Yes	Yes-My GOP	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

The Republican Party Web sites, both State Parties and RNC, have a good start on creating an atmosphere that is suitable to dialogic communication; however, there are areas, such as social media and the principle of generating return visits, which need some work. With some additional effort, the Republican Party Web sites could potentially foster an environment that welcomes dialogic communication.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Dialogic loop

With regards to the individual State Party Web sites, the presence of the principle

of a dialogic loop for online communication was not particularly strong. The categories

that were decided to be representations of a presence of dialogic properties were as

follows: the ability to send messages to the State Party, the ability to request information

regularly, the presence of surveys or opinions, the option to register to receive news, the

number of ways available to contact, a direct contact option, and the presence of a

welcome message. While a few of these categories proved strong, such as the ability to

send messages to the State Party and the number of ways available to contact the State

Party, the overall results did not show a significant presence of a dialogic loop with

regards to the State Party Web sites.

All but seven of the State party Web sites offered an option of sending a message

to the State Party, which resulted in an eighty-six percent presence across the State Party

Web sites for this category. The seven State Parties that did not offer this option at the

time of observation were as follows: Alaska, Florida, Mississippi, Missouri, New

Hampshire, Utah, and Vermont. A State Party Web site was coded as offering a way to

send a message to the Party if any email was present for the Party, be it general or not, or

if a comment form was provided within the Web site. A possible explanation for two of

these State Parties would involve the enormous amount of media attention surrounding

those states. Alaska was receiving lots of attention because of Vice President Candidate,

Governor Sarah Palin, being from there. Likewise, Florida was receiving a lot of attention due to the previous controversy in the 2004 election that surrounded that state. It is possible that these two State Party Web sites did not want to make their sites open to dialogic communication for these very reasons.

The category of being able to send a message should not be confused with another category that was also tested for under the principle of dialogic loop; which was the presence of a direct contact option. This category differed in that a general email was not acceptable; but rather, a direct contact email had to be given in order for the Web site to be coded as having this option. An example of a general email would be concerns@indgop.org, whereas for the purpose of this study, an example of a direct email would be Bob@indgop.org.

In regards to the direct contact category, seventy-four percent of the State Party Web sites had this option available; which is lower than the category of general contact. All of the State Parties that were previously categorized as being in absence of having a general contact option were also included in this category as lacking the studied feature of direct contact. The rest of the State Parties that neglected a direct contact option were Hawaii, Michigan, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Minnesota, and Wyoming. A possible reason as to why a direct contact option was not provided for these State Parties could be oversight; the Web sites of these State Parties were not very advanced. It is possible that the creators of the content on these State Party Web sites were not as educated on current matters of internet communication as the other State Party Web site creators were.

Two categories that were tested for under the principle of dialogic loop resulted in the same success rate of forty-six percent. These categories were as follows: the ability to request information regularly and the option to register to receive news.

When the coding sheets were originally created, it was thought that there might be some differences between these two categories. The possibility of a difference was seen between signing up for a regular time frame for updates such as monthly or weekly, which would be placed under the category of receiving information regularly, versus signing up to stay informed about random matters, which would have fallen under the other category. The reason that the success rate for both of these categories was the same, however, was due to the fact that a distinction could not be made in regards to how often, or regularly, one was going to receive updates once they registered for the service. As a result of this, the categories were quantified as the same.

The presence of a welcome message can be seen as important to establishing a dialogic loop of communication because the visitor may get the feeling, from the presence of such a message, that those involved with the organization that is associated with the Web site are open to communication with them. For this research, a Web site was not quantified as having a welcome message if nothing more was said than one sentence of welcome. The reason for this was that, for the purpose of establishing a dialogic loop, the researcher felt that more had to be said by the organization in order to give the impression of a vested interest in its public. The success rate for a welcome message, with regards to State Party Web sites, was only twenty-eight percent.

Another poor category for the State Party Web sites was the presence of surveys or opinions. For the purpose of this research, petitions were included in this category because they too make one's voice heard. The presence rate for this category was only eighteen percent. A probable explanation for this low presence rate is that the State Party Web sites are just slowly beginning to include more interactive components to their Web sites. The State Party Web sites that did include this category could be the prototypes for other State Parties.

A successful category was that of being able to contact a candidate or elected official. At the time of research, only two states did not offer this option: Alaska and New Jersey. As a result, the rate of presence for this category was ninety-six percent.

Lastly, one category with rather high presence numbers was that of the number of ways one was able to contact the State Party. Because this portion of the research was only dealing with the State Party, only contacts associated with the State Party were counted; elected officials, national contacts, and county contacts were not included. A contact was considered any of the following: presence of an email, fax number, phone number, or address. After the amount of contacts possible for a State Party was counted, it was then entered in the coding sheet.

Across all of the State Parties, four hundred and six Party contacts were offered; which resulted in an average of eight contacts per State Party. The State Party with the greatest contact options was Washington. This information also coincided with the category of having information delivered via regular postal mail or email, which can be

found under the next principle of generating return visits; all forty-six percent were found to offer at least email updates.

Generation of return visits

With regards to State Parties and elections, generating return visits should be of concern. The reason for this is that the State Parties are challenged with getting a continuous stream of information out about candidates and events; they need the visitor to return to the Web site so as to continue to be informed, persuaded, or coaxed into getting further involved. Considering that only fifty-four percent of State Party Web sites offered a direct volunteer option for the Party, one can see how this study resulted in a relatively poor showing for the principle of generating return visits. A Web site was quantified as having a volunteer option only if the provided link stayed within the State Party Web site and did not go to the RNC Web site. This was because this study was concerned with each individual Web site's ability to establish dialogic communication.

The categories for analysis based on the principle of generating return visits were as follows: links to other related Web sites, bookmark encouragement, presence of forums or chats, having regularly updated information to download, the option of information to be delivered via the postal mail or email, news updated within the last fifteen days, a question and answer section, and an events listing.

One category of analysis under this principle, the presence of forums or chat rooms, resulted in a zero percent presence across all of the State Party Web sites. It should be noted, however, that Web logs, or blogs, were not included in this category.

Again, it is possible that the State Party Web sites are just now getting into incorporating more of the dialogic principles of online communication into their structure, and that they have not yet added this feature. Another possible explanation is that the State Party Web sites do not want to offer the possibility for negative comments to be made on their Web sites; a feature that would likely be possible if forums or chats were made present on their Web sites. If this last reason were the case, however, this would be directly against the principles of online dialogic communication; which together are used to create two-way relational communication.

Another two categories with poor results were that of bookmark encouragement and having a Frequently Asked Questions, FAQs, or Question and Answer, Q and A, section. Not one of the State Party Web sites actually had a message presented that encouraged a visitor to either bookmark the Web page, or to continue to check back with the Web site.

Only four out of the fifty State Party Web sites that were researched offered a FAQ or Q and A section, which resulted in only an eight percent total. The four State Parties that included this option were Alaska, Florida, Illinois, and Ohio. What is interesting about this is that Alaska and Florida were two of the State Parties that did not offer either a general or direct contact option.

Once again, Alaska and Florida likely did not offer a direct contact, or a general contact, option give the publicity surrounding both of these states. It is possible that both the State Parties of Alaska and Florida did not want to have dialogic communication

available as a feature on their website due to this publicity; again, this would be against the principles of online dialogic communication.

A State Party Web site was only counted as offering a FAQ or Q and A section if the link was labeled as so. The reason for this was that this study was to look for the principles of dialogic communication online through the eyes of a regular visitor. It has been assumed, for the purpose of this study that the average visitor would not invest in a detailed search of the Web site to find useful information; they would need it at face value, such as a labeled link option.

Given the heated election of 2008, it was expected that the State Party Web sites would include the availability of regularly updated information for downloading, as well as updated news information. A Web site was considered to have "updated" news if the news on the Web site had been posted within the past fifteen days. If you consider the fast pace of an election cycle, fifteen days involves the passing of many stories. With that in mind, the success rate for this category was only seventy-four percent; which considering the relatively low percents for the other categories seems good. Likewise, fifty-six percent of the State Party Web sites offered information that was available for downloading; but again, considering the fast pace of election news cycles, this number seems somewhat low.

Some of the State Party Web sites may not have contained updated news because the creators of the Web site were relying on provided links to the RNC Web site to serve as informants.

Linking to other related Web sites is a good consideration for establishing dialogic communication online because it can further a visitor's vested interest in the topic; however, it is important that not too many links are present to distract from the main Web site of concern. With regards to the State Party Web sites, fifty-six percent offered links to other Web sites related to either the Republican Party or County Parties.

The most successful category for the principle of generating return visits was that of having events listed. It was assumed that if a Web site offered event listings that visitors would return to find out more about certain events or the possibility of future events. This study resulted in every State Party but three offering a listing of their events. The three States Parties that did not offer this feature were Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas.

Ease of Interface

A confusing Web site is often a deterrent to a visitor. If an organization wants its visitors to stay on the Web site for a period of time, and possibly establish dialogic communication with them, then the interface of that Web site must be simplistic, organized, and effective in style. With regards to the State Party Web sites, the principle of the ease of interface produced rather positive results. The categories that were included within this principle of analysis were as follows: the presence of site maps or links to site maps, links clearly identified, the presence of a search engine, easy to understand image maps, minimal reliance on graphics, and the presence of a help link.

For two categories within this principle there was a one hundred percent presence: links clearly identified and a minimal reliance on graphics. All State Party Web sites were able to provide easy to understand links. Also, all State Party Web sites were able to create Web sites that did not rely on graphics to the point that the Web site was overloaded with them; which could have lead to confusion for the visitor.

Each State Party Web site was arranged slightly different. Every State Party Web site offered links to other information within their own State Party Web site. Forty-two percent of these Web sites provided such links across the top of the Web site, only one Web site had the links placed in the middle of the site, and six Web sites offered the links on the left side of the Web page. Also, twelve State Party Web sites offered a combination of both top and side placement for inner Web site links.

A category that did not produce very positive results was that of having self-explanatory image maps. Thirty-one of the fifty State Party Web sites did not offer this feature. The research associated with this category was likely somewhat flawed because State Party Web sites were quantified as not having clearly explainable image maps even if the Web site lacked image maps altogether.

Overall, the State Party Web sites did not do well when offering help to their visitors. Only three of the State Party Web sites offered a help link within the Web site. Also, only twenty-six of the State Party Web sites offered a search box for inner Web site searching.

Conservation of visitors

The principle of the conservation of visitors helps establish online dialogic communication if one considers that the more time a visitor spends on a Web site, the more they will develop an interest in the Web site; this also increases the possibility for the establishment of dialogic communication. Out of all of the principles of online dialogic communication, the State Party Web sites were most successful at upholding this one. The categories that were used for the analysis of this principle were as follows: amount of advertisements, links hidden by link buttons, important information present, postings of date and time for news stories, and a short uploading time or lower bandwidth option.

All of the State Party Web sites provided their links to other information on the Web site being hidden by the presence of graphic buttons. A feature such as this is often important for conserving visitors by making information surfing on the Web site easier.

Every State Party Web site offered a short uploading time. This feature is important for the conservation of visitors because if pages within a Web site take time to upload, people will be less likely to stay on the Web site. It should be noted, however, that none of the State Party Web sites offered a lower bandwidth option for visitors; a possible justification for this, however, is that all of the State Party Web sites were already produced with a fast processing speed given the small amount of bandwidth used in the creation of the Web site.

Only five of the State Party Web sites did not offer a listing of date or time with news articles on the front page of their Web site. While this feature is important because

it allows visitors to see how recently information has been updated; the fact that the

success rate for this feature was ninety-two percent is rather good. All of the State Party

Web sites that did not include date or time information on the front page did include news

on their front pages. It is possible that these State Parties felt that posting news

information on the front page was enough; but it is essential to post date and time

information so that visitors know how recent the Web site has been updated.

Lastly, the amount of advertisements present on a Web site is important to the

conservation of visitors because the more advertisements a Web site has, the more likely

a visitor is to become annoyed and leave the Web site; or click off of the Web site via one

of the advertisements. The highest amount of advertisements on a State Party Web site

was Massachusetts with seven. Fifteen State Party Web sites had no advertisements. It

should be noted that candidate advertisements were coded as advertisements for the

purpose of this research.

Social media

While the presence of social media components is not a principle of online

dialogic communication, its inclusion within this research was necessary so as to

acknowledge much of the progression that is being made with regards to public relations,

politics, and the presence of new social media. The categories that were used to help look

into whether or not the State Parties were trying to incorporate features of new social

media into their Web sites were as follows: presence of a blog, the option to create a

profile, the ability to upload photos or videos, presence of podcasts, the ability to receive alerts, linking to social media sites, and coalition information.

A blog is considered to be a form of new social media; somewhat like an online journal that people can comment and add to as well. This study was not anticipating a very high number of blogs to be found within the State Party Web sites, however, twenty-one of the State Party Web sites offered a blog option. More disappointingly, only ten of the State Party Web sites offered the ability for someone to create a profile via that State Party Web site. It should be noted that the option to do MYGOP through the RNC was not counted for within this category because such an option is handled by the RNC itself and not the individual State Party; this is a likely explanation as to why these percentages were so low.

Likewise, only six of the State Party Web sites offered podcasts for downloads. Even worse, only one of the State Party Web sites, Massachusetts, offered visitors the option to upload videos or photographs to the Web site.

It is interesting that Massachusetts was the State Party Web site that contained the most advertisements and it was the only one that offered visitors the ability to upload material to the Web site. It seems that Massachusetts is leading the way for the other State Parties to embrace social media. It could be reasoned that if the Massachusetts State Party Web site is successful in its implementation of social media to its Web site, that other State Party Web sites will soon follow. Massachusetts is a state that is known for political involvement, yet at the same time, it is not the largest state; this makes it a good candidate for experimenting with the implementation of social media.

The concept of signing up for alerts resulted in the same information as under the principle of a dialogic loop. The category of alerts was included here as well because it goes along with the concepts of social media; this also served as an additional check to make sure that previous coding for this category was correct.

The concept of offering connections to social media Web sites such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and MySpace, is important to establishing dialogic communication online because these Web sites are concerned with people being able to express themselves and communicate with others. Offering connections to social media Web sites offers people the ability to talk about the Republican Party and it shows that particular State Party's concern with being involved with new social media. Surprisingly, only fifteen of the State Party Web sites did not offer this option. These states were as follows: Alabama, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Missouri, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, and West Virginia.

There are various likely reasons as to why these fifteen State Party Web sites did not offer links. In regards to Hawaii, this factor was likely because the site is so disorganized; it did not seem like as much care had gone into this State Party Web site as had been placed in the others. As for the larger State Parties, such as New York, Texas, and Indiana, the County Parties are just as prominent within these States and are self sufficient in regards to content and contacts. It is likely that the larger State Party Web sites that neglected to provide links were depending on their self sufficient County Party Web sites to link to them; not vice versa. In truth, it would be best to provide links to County Parties on the State Party Web sites because it is the State Party Web sites

that are supposed to be the main source of Republican Party information for one's state and county; not the other way around.

In regards to coalition building, only fifteen Web sites offered information about joining a coalition. Coalition building is an important aspect of social media because coalitions are found on all of the social media Web sites. The a large portion of the Web sites that offered information on coalition building also offered links to social media Web sites. Coalitions have become prevalent on social media Web sites. It would appear, then, that there is a connection between the State Party Web sites that offered coalition information and those that offered information about connecting to social media Web sites as well.

Overall, the Republican Party Web sites are progressively adapting social media techniques and aspects, but they need to move into this area more quickly if they want to get in touch with the youth of today.

Research Results for the RNC Web site

The second part of the research for this study dealt with trying to find evidence of the same dialogic principles of online communication that were used for the first part of this research within the official Republican Party Web site found at www.RNC.org. The same categories of analysis for each principle were also used. Likewise, the same social media categories were applied to the analysis of the RNC's main Web site. It was important to research the RNC Web site separately from the State

Party Web sites so as to see if the Republican Party was moving toward a more dialogic approach in their online communication that the State Parties had yet to incorporate into their own Web sites. What was found was that the RNC Web site did uphold more of the dialogic properties of online communication as well as some aspects of social media than the State Party Web sites.

In regards to the principle of dialogic loop, the only category that the RNC Web site did not satisfy was that of having a welcome message. Rather than a welcome message, the visitor was greeted with a slideshow of news relevant to the Republican Party. However, within this Web site, thirty-five ways were made available to contact the RNC; not including State Party Web sites. Another positive result was that the RNC Web site contained all of the rest of the researched categories of online dialogic communication: a direct contact option, the presence of surveys or opinions, the ability for one to request information, information about how to contact the candidates and elected officials, and the ability to contact the Party in general.

For the principle of generating return visits, the RNC Web site faired about the same as the State Party Web sites. Like the most of the State Party Web sites, no FAQ or Q and A section was appropriately labeled as such, and no direct forum or chat room was available. However, unlike the State Party Web sites, most of which offered event listings, the RNC Web site did not offer such a feature.

The RNC Web site was particularly good at the categories of offering links to other related Web sites, encouraging bookmarks, email updates, offering volunteer opportunities, and having regularly downloadable and updated news available.

In regards to linking with related Web sites, the RNC Web site offered a feature of a map of the United States with clickable states that each provided a State Party link and a brief description page with information relevant to that particular State Party. The researchers found this to be a very interactive and easy to use link service.

Visitors were encouraged to bookmark the Web site by becoming involved in MYGOP. MYGOP is a social media program that allows participants to create their own profile and own personal Web site. Avatars, which can be cartoons or images, are associated with each person's profile, and the visitor has the option of making their profile public or private. Each personal Web site contains that visitor's interests and reasons why they are Republican. Users also have the option to upload pictures and videos to their personal Web site, as well as blog. The more a user uploads content or blogs, the more he or she gains points. Likewise, the more points one earns, the greater the status they have in the social network. Users are also able to keep track of their Republican friends as well via this feature. Before one can create their personal Web site, however, an initial approval of the starting materials and content must be completed by the RNC.

The RNC Web site seemed to provide much of the same amount of the ease of interface principle as the State Party Web sites did. Just like all the State Party Web sites, the RNC Web site provided easily labeled links and did not display a heavy reliance on graphics. All but three of the State Party Web sites did not offer a clearly labeled help link; the RNC Web site was no different. The RNC Web site did, however, offer a search

engine box and self-explanatory image maps; two features which only about half of the State Party Web sites were able to provide.

With regards to the principle of the conservation of visitors, the RNC Web site produced the same results as the State Party Web sites in dealing with the presence of the following categories: links hidden by link buttons, important information present, postings of date and time for news stories, and a short uploading time.

Looking into another category of analysis, the RNC Web site main page contained nine advertisements. While this number is higher than the greatest amount of advertisements on any State Party Web site, the advertisements on the RNC Web site were Party related and organized so that not too much clutter was produced that could possibly deter a visitor.

The last concept that the RNC Web site was researched in regards to was that of social media. The social media feature of MYGOP has already been discussed, which satisfied the research categories of the ability to blog, create one's profile, the ability to upload photos or video, and coalitions. The remaining categories of providing alerts and connecting to other social media were present on the RNC Web site as well. Email alerts could be provided to visitors of the RNC Web site if they opted for the alerts function of the Web site. The RNC Web site also offered connectivity to the following social media Web sites: Facebook, Digg, Reddit, StumpleUpon, Technorati, Flicker, Twitter, Delicious, and You Tube. The RNC Web site did offer much more for visitors in regards to social media than the State Party web sites; this is a possible hint that such features will be coming to the State Party Web sites soon as well.

Overall, the RNC Web site produced many of the same results as the State Party Web sites; however, the presentation of the associated features and content was much for sophisticated and organized than that which was found on many of the State Party Web sites. The RNC Web site excelled further than the State Party Web sites particularly in regards to the principle of a dialogic loop and the additional feature of implementing social media.

While this study offered a glimpse into the presence of the online dialogic principles of communication with regards to the Republican Party, further research could be conducted.

Implications for future research

Future research should seek to create an updated version of the principles of online communication that includes some of the new components of social media and then analyze both the Republican and Democratic Party Web sites. Research such as this could not only help look further into the presence of online dialogic communication with the Republican Party, but it could also offer a comparison of the presence of such communication with regards to the Democratic Party. Regardless, social media is becoming such a large part of society, and is having such a large effect on the world of politics and communication, that some sort of further research should be conducted with regards to social media and politics.

If this study were to be re-administered, a recommendation would be to space out the dates of analysis to the four different seasons of the year. It should follow that each

coder would be coding on the same day, with the same equipment, and the same connection speed as well.

Another recommendation for continuing this study involves conducting detailed interviews with people who help shape the content of the Republican Party Web sites. This would be an important addition to this study since it would provide the researcher with a better understanding of why certain content is, or is not, present on the Republican Party Web sites.

Implications for public relations practitioners

This research can serve as a reference point to the current level of dialogic communication online, as well as for the rate of the adaptation of social media. Public relations professionals can use this research to see how to best to integrate dialogic communication to whatever communication pieces they create for the online environment. Public relations professionals should use this research as a starting list for what principles of dialogic communication and components of social media should be present on a Web site in order to establish dialogic communication. He or she should then take this list to their Web site creator for their organization and work with them on how to best incorporate whatever of these principles and components their organization's Web site is lacking.

The days of public relations professionals leaving Web site creation to computer programmers should be over. This research shows that communication is vital to the success of an online environment. Part of a public relations professional's job is to establish effective and accurate communication with their public. Likewise, it should

follow that public relations professionals start to get involved in not only the content of their organization's Web site, but also the layout as well.

It is important that public relations professionals get involved in the layout of their organization's Web site so that the Web site is created in a way that incorporates the principles of online dialogic communication; thus leaving the capability for dialogic communication to occur. If a public relations professional does not feel comfortable with the online environment, there are plenty of books and classes that one can take to become more familiar with the very basic technology and format of Web sites. Public relations professionals should blame themselves if their organization's Web site does not offer dialogic communication; because, as long as their organization permits it, they are the ones that can become involved and make the necessary changes.

This research can also be used by public relations professionals to see how to best adapt to the new social media environment; they can be made more aware of social media components that they themselves could incorporate. Public relations professionals should strive to have their organization's Web site incorporate components of social media. This study shows the importance of the presence of such components. If an organization is hesitant to adhere to such requests from a public relations professional, he or she can present examples of other successful Web sites that have incorporated the components of social media. He or she should then follow with how much their organization would likely benefit as well from the implementation of such components.

Public relations professionals have to become more actively involved in the creation of content and the layout of their organization's Web site so as to establish dialogic communication with their public.

Conclusions

This study allowed a look into the possibility of dialogic communication online with one of the two most powerful political parties within the United States. The hope is that this research inspires others to continue looking into the connections between communications and politics. This paper can also offer some insight to the Republican Party and the various State Party Web sites into what can be done to improve and further their communication efforts with their key public.

This study has shown that, while the Republican Party is on its way to establishing dialogic communication online; it is not there yet. Much needs to be done in terms of the content of the State Party and RNC Web sites before truly dialogic communication can occur between the Republican Party and its public.

On the other hand, this study has shown that the RNC Web site has done a great job of incorporating components of social media into their site. These components should be incorporated into the individual State Party Web sites as well. A suggestion is that a uniform format, similar to that of the RNC Web site, be incorporated into all of the State Party Web sites. This would improve continuity across different Republican Party Web sites, as well as incorporate the features of dialogic communication and social media that are found on the RNC Web site to the other State Party Web Sites.

The hope is that this research inspires the Republican Party to change the way they think about communication online, and to realize where improvements can be made so as to establish the type of communication that is needed to help create a strongly motivated and dedicated public: dialogic communication.

REFERENCES

Barnes, S. B. *Computer-mediated communication: Human-to-human communication across the Internet*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, (2003).

Brunig, S, and J. Ledingham. "Building loyalty through community relations." *PR Strategist*, 1997.

Buber, M. *I and thou*. New York: Scribners, 1970.

Capps, I. "What the new technology really means for communication professionals." *Public Relations Quarterly*, 1993: 24-25.

Cass, J., C. Munroe, and S. Turcotte, *Corporate blogging: Is it worth the hype? Backbonemedia*, 2005.

Chen, Qimei, and William Wells. "Attitude toward the site." *Journal of Advertising Research*, 1999: 27-37.

Cooley, Tracy. "Interactive communication: Public relations on the web." *Public Relations Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1999): 41-42.

Czubaroff, Jeanine. "Dialogical rhetoric: An application of Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86, no. 2 (2000): 168-189.

Schaefer, D. R. "Development of standard email methodology: Results of an experiment." *Public Relations Quarterly*, 1998: 378-397.

Esrock, S. L. and G. B Leichty. "Corporate World Wide Web pages: serving the news media and other publics." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 3* (1999): 456-467.

Hallahan, Kirk. "Improving public relations web sites through usability research." 2001.

Heath, R. L. "New communication technologies: an issues management point of view." *Public Relations Review* 24 (1998): 273-288.

Huertas, Assumpcio and Jordi Xifra. "Blogging PR: An exploratory analysis of public relations weblogs." *Public Relations Review* 34 (2008): 421-492.

Johannesen, R. L. "The emerging concept of communication as dialogue." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 54, no. 4 (1971): 373-382.

Kent, Michael, and Maureen Taylor. "Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web." *Public Relations Review* 24, no. 3 (1998): 312-334.

Pavlik, J.V. and D.M. Dozier, *Managing the Information Superhighway: A Report on Issues Facing Communications Professionals*. Gainesville, FL: The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education, 1996.

Pearson, Ron. Beyond Ethical Relativism in Public Relations: Co orientation, Rules, and the Idea of Communication Symmetry. *Public Relation Annual Research* no. 1, (1989): 67-87.

Political sites gain, but major news sites still dominant: Modest increase in Internet use for campaign 2002. Winter 2002. http://people-press.org/report/169/political-sites-gain-but-major-news-sites-still-dominant (accessed October 10, 2008).

Rheingold, Howard. *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier.* [book on- line]. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000. accessed 15 September 2008; available from http://www.rheingold.com/vc/book/.

Ryan, Michael. "Practitioners and the World Wide Web: Involvement in web sites is crucial." *Public Relations Quarterly*, 1999: 29-31.

Scott, Craig and Erik Timmerman. "Communication Technology Use in the Workplace." *Communication Research*, 2005: 683.

Seybold, P. "Don't let PR control your Web site." *Computerworld*, April 8, 1986: 37.

Stewart, J. "Foundations of dialogic communication." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 1978: 183-201.

Supa, Dustin, and Lynn Zoch. *Online media rooms as a tactic for creating dialogue with journalists*. Presentation, Dresden, Germany: International Association of Online Communicators, 2006.

Taylor, Maureen, Michael Kent, and William White. "How activist organizations are using the Internet to build relationships." *Public Relations Review*, 2001: 263-284.

The importance of the four models of public relations. Fall 1999. http:// iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Fall99/Westbrook/models.htm (accessed April 20, 2008).

Waterman, R. H., and T. J. Peters. *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best run companies*. New York: Harper Collins, 1982.

White, William. "The interlocutor's dilemma: The place of strategy in dialogic theory." *Communication Theory*, 2008: 5-26

Zimmerman, D.E. and M.L. Muraski. Usability testing–an evaluation technique, in: *The Elements of Information Gathering. A Guide for Technical Communicators, Scientists and Engineers*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1995, 173.

APPENDIX 1

Guidelines for effective web site communication based on usability

From: Zimmerman, D. E. "Usability testing–an evaluation technique." In *The Elements of Information Gathering. A Guide for Technical Communicators, Scientists and Engineers*, Pheonix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1995, 173.

33 GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE WEB SITES
BASED UPON USABILITY RESEARCH

Design Considerations
1. Start simple -- Begin with a simple Web site design.
2. Strive for consistency -- Consistency helps users find information.
3. Avoid textured and colored backgrounds -- Make sure your copy is legible.
4. Use blue links -- Blue hypertext links are the convention.
5. Avoid clickable links in graphic designs -- Users often miss embedded links.
6. Use informative links. Describe pages so users can decide whether they should click on it or not.
7. Use narrow text columns. Column widths of 200 to 400 pixels make reading easier and faster.
8. Minimize page scrolling -- Use 20 to 44-line pages.
9. Provide navigational aids -- Add "Return to Home Page" and other key links.
10. Have fast download times -- Keep your download times short
11. Provide a text-only version -- Not all users, or computers, are of equal ability.
12. Include key information -- Be sure to identify your site and provide contact information.
13. Minimize typographical cues -- Avoid using too many italics or bold type.

Other General Considerations
14. Identify your audience -- Design for specific users. Take their systems into account.
15. Use the team approach -- Use ideas from several people whenever possible to design your site.
16. Know your users -- Ask, "What are my users like?"
17. Follow your organization's web policy -- Use the web in an efficient, ethical and legal manner.
18. Respect copyright guidelines -- Obtain written permission to use others' work.
19. Use relative URLs -- It will make site maintenance easier.
20. Include a meta tag -- Help web users and search engines find your site.
21. Test your site -- Make sure your site works and will download quickly.
22. Understand cognitive processes -- Communication is a cognitive activity.

Writing Considerations
23. Write in active voice -- Readers understand active voice better.
24. Delete prepositional phrases -- Fewer prepositions shorten sentences
25. Delete excess clauses -- Clauses add length but not meaning.
26. Write concisely -- Concise sentences promote understanding
27. Use strong verbs and release trapped verbs -- Write clearly and to the point.
28. Use short words -- Easy-to-understand words are better.
29. Delete unnecessary qualifiers -- Qualify only when necessary.
30. Eliminate wordiness -- Fewer words reduce confusion.
31. Use specific, concrete words -- Make your message clear
32. Avoid jargon -- Use terms your readers understand.
33. Replace cliches -- Cliches can be distracting.

Compiled from "Tips for Building Web Pages," Parts 1 and 2, and "Writing Web Copy."
Unpublished manuscripts by Professor Donald E. Zimmerman, Colorado State University. Center for Research on Writing and Technology. Used with permission.

APPENDIX 2

Research principles and categories

From: Kent, Michael, and Maureen Taylor. "Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web." *Public Relations Review* 24, no. 3 (1998): 312-334.

Listed below are the principles of online dialogic communication and the components that were examined for their presence or absence on the Republican Party Web sites:

Dialogic loops
- Can send messages to organization
- Request information regularly
- Surveys/opinions
- Register to receive news *
- Number of ways to contact *
- Direct contact *
- Welcome message *

Ease of interface
- Having site maps, or links to site maps
- Major links are clearly identified
- Search engine box, or link to one
- Self-explanatory image maps
- Minimal graphic reliance
- Number of clicks to begin planning *
- Presence of help button *

Conservation of visitors
- Minimize advertising
- Hide links behind link buttons
- Important information present
- Posting of date/time present
- Short uploading time (less than 4 seconds) or lower bandwidth option

Generation of return visits
- Links to other park Web sites
- Bookmark encouragement

- Forums/chats Calendar for planning
- Regularly updated, downloadable info
- Information delivered via mail or web
- Updated information or news within the last 30 days
- FAQs and question and answer pages

Presence of social media components #
- Blog
- Option to create profile
- Ability to upload photos or videos
- Podcasts
- Alerts
- Option to connect to other social media sites
- Coalition connections

* Indicates the use of Zoch and Supa's research
# Indicates personal additions

APPENDIX 3

Instructions for Coders

Go to the following RNC Web site: http://www.gop.com/Connect/States.aspx

From there, you will click on your assigned state, and then click on the provided link to that State Party's main Webpage.

You will be analyzing the main Web site of your assigned State Party.

All answers are to be completed as instructed and recorded on the provided sheets.

If a link takes you to another Web site (such as the RNC), this does not count as a positive answer!!

Dialogic Loop
- **Can send messages to Party (Answer: Yes or No)**
    - If you are able to email the State Party, answer yes
- **Able to request information regularly (Answer: Yes or No)**
    - If the option exists for text or email updates, answer yes
- **Presence of surveys or opinions (Answer: Yes or No)**
    - Also, if there is a petition found on that, and not a link to another, site—answer yes
- **Option to register to receive news (Answer: Yes or No)**
    - Text, email or address signup, answer yes
- **Number of ways available to contact (Numerical answer)**
    - You will count all addresses, faxes, emails, and telephone numbers for the Party itself and the Party staff (do not include county staff, public officials) and write down the number
- **Direct contact option (Answer: Yes or No)**
    - If an email address exists for the Party that directly reaches them, answer yes (a contact form would result in a no answer)
- **Welcome message (Answer: Yes or No)**
    - If an actual message exists, answer yes
    - If just one sentence is present and containing the word "welcome" answer no
- **Candidates/ elected officials (Answer: Yes or No)**

  - o If information is provided for contacting candidates or elected officials, answer yes

Generation of Return Visits

- **Events (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If events are listed, answer yes
- **Links to other party Web sites (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If any links are provided to RNC or County Parties, write yes
- **Bookmark encouragement (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If a Web site provides a login feature, write yes
  - o If a Web site offers a feature to upload pictures or video, write yes
- **Forums/Chats (Answer: Yes or No)**
- **Updated news or information within last fifteen days (Answer: Yes or No)**
- **Information delivered via mail or web (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If email signups or information list signups exist, answer yes
- **Regularly updated, downloadable information (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If the information present on the site is within 15 days old, answer yes
- **FAQs and Q+As (Answer: Yes or No)**
- **Volunteers (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o Only answer yes if there is a link to sign up as a volunteer
  - o Only answer yes if the link is labeled as FAQ or Q+A, or something very similar

Ease of Interface

- **Site maps of links to site maps (Answer: Yes or No)**
- **Major links clearly identified (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If the link describes what it takes you to, answer yes
- **Search engine box (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If present, answer yes
- **Self-explanatory image maps (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If images associated with links are self explanatory, answer yes
- **Minimal graphic reliance (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If the Web site does not appear to be overloaded with graphics, answer yes
  - o If you believe Web site is overloaded with graphics, mark down the amount and answer no
- **Presence of help button (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If link provides help on a subject, but is not necessarily labeled "help" you can still answer yes

Conservation of Visitors

- **Amount of advertisements (Numerical value)**

- o County the amount of advertisements (Including event advertisements and campaign ads) only on the home page and enter that number
- **Links hidden by link buttons (Answer: Yes or No)**
- **Important information present (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If you think some essential information is not present, answer no and describe
- **Posting of date and/or time (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If news information is presented with date and/or time information, answer yes
- **Short uploading time or lower bandwidth option (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If home page can be connected to in less than 10 seconds, answer yes
  - o If the Web site contains a lower bandwidth viewing option, answer yes

Presence of Social Media
- **Blog (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o Answer yes either for provided blog or option to blog oneself
- **Create profile option (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o Note: MYGOP does not count for this, that is an external RNC link
  - o If a login option is provided, answer yes
  - o ELeader counts as a yes
- **Able to upload photos or video (Answer: Yes or No)**
- **Podcasts (Answer: Yes or No)**
- **Alerts (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If able to sign up for, or if Web site provides, alerts—answer yes
- **Connectivity (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If advertisements or links for social media Web sites are present, answer yes
  - o Examples of social media Web sites: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace
- **Coalitions (Answer: Yes or No)**
  - o If contact information is provided for various coalitions (such as a women's group), answer yes

APPENDIX 4

An Example of the coding sheet

Ease of Interface—State Party Data—Coder1

State Party Name	Site Maps Or Links To Site Maps	Major Links Clearly Identified	Search Engine Box	Self-Explanatory Image Maps	Minimal Graphic Reliance	Presence Of Help Button
Alabama	Left	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Alaska	Top	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Arizona	Top	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Arkansas	Top	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
California	Top and Left	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Colorado	Top	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Connecticut	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Delaware	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Florida	Middle	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Georgia	Left	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hawaii	Top	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Idaho	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Illinois	Top	No	No	No	Yes	No
Indiana	Top and Left	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Iowa	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Kansas	Top and Right	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Kentucky	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Louisiana	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Maine	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Maryland	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Massachusetts	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Michigan	Top and Right	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Minnesota	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Mississippi	Top	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Missouri	Top and Right	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Montana	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Nebraska	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Nevada	Top and Left	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
N. Hampshire	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
New Jersey	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
New Mexico	Top and Both Sides	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
New York	Left Side	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
North Carolina	Top and Left	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
North Dakota	Both Sides	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Ohio	Top and Left	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Oklahoma	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Oregon	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Pennsylvania	Top	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Rhode Island	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
South Carolina	Top	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
South Dakota	Left Side	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Tennessee	Top and Right	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Texas	Top	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

Utah	Left Side	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Vermont	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Virginia	Top and Left	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Washington	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
West Virginia	Both Sides	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Wisconsin	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Wyoming	Top	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Additional Comments						