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Online Political Videos and Campaign 2012

55% of registered voters have watched political videos online this election season, and 52% have had others recommend political videos for them to watch online

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Key Findings

Some 66% of registered voters who use the internet — 55% of *all* registered voters —have gone online this election season to watch videos related to the election campaign or political issues. Specifically, they have done at least one of the following activities involving online political videos:

- 48% of internet-using registered voters watch video news reports online about the election or politics
- 40% watch previously recorded videos online of candidate speeches, press conferences, or debates
- 39% watch informational videos online that explain a political issue
- 37% watch humorous or parody videos online dealing with political issues
- 36% watch political advertisements online
- 28% watch live videos online of candidate speeches, press conferences, or debates

The process of discovering political videos online is highly social. Some 62% of internet-using registered voters have had others recommend online videos for them to watch related to the election or to politics. That amounts to 52% of *all* registered voters. Here is a rundown:

- 40% of internet-using registered voters have had other people recommend election- or politics-related online videos for them to watch by *posting on a social networking site*
- 36% have had other people recommend election- or politics-related online videos by *telling* them about them in person
- 32% have had other people recommend election- or politics-related online videos by *sending an email or text message*

In addition, some 23% of internet-using registered voters – or 19% of *all* registered voters – have themselves encouraged others to watch online videos related to political issues. However, just 1% have actually created their own videos online related to politics or the election for others to watch.

There are very few partisan differences when it comes to watching political videos, or to having them recommended by other people. Democratic and Republican voters are equally likely to have watched political videos online this election season, to have recommended online political videos to other people, and to have received such recommendations from others. However, registered voters who identify as liberal are more likely to have had political videos recommended to them on a social networking site this election season than moderate or conservative voters.

About the survey

These findings are based on a nationally representative phone survey of 1,006 adults (ages 18+) conducted October 12-14, 2012. Interviews were conducted in English on landline and cell phones. The sample contained 844 internet users, 721 of whom are registered voters, who were asked questions about their online video watching habits during the 2012 election campaign. The margin of error for the

full sample is \pm 3.7 percentage points. The margin of error for internet users who are registered to vote is \pm 4.4 percentage points.

Online Videos and Campaign 2012

The material that follows in this report illustrates how voters of various political and ideological stripes are utilizing online videos during the 2012 election campaign. Unless otherwise noted, all findings are based on registered voters who use the internet. This survey found that 78% of American adults are currently registered to vote, and that 84% of these registered voters are internet users.

The types of political videos voters are watching online

In our survey we asked about six specific types of online video content related to the 2012 election campaign and found that, among registered voters who go online:

- 48% watch video news reports about the election or politics
- 40% watch previously recorded videos of candidate speeches, press conferences, or debates
- 39% watch informational videos online that explain a political issue
- 37% watch humorous or parody videos dealing with political issues
- 36% watch political advertisements online
- 28% watch live videos of candidate speeches, press conferences, or debates

All told, two thirds (66%) of internet-using registered voters have watched one or more of the above political videos online during this year's campaign. Voters who have given "quite a lot" of thought to the election are especially likely to watch political videos online. Some 73% of these individuals have watched online political videos this election season, compared with 45% of those who say that they have been following the campaign less closely.

Beyond these differences pertaining to general interest in the campaign, voters of various political and ideological stripes tend to engage in similar levels of online political video consumption. Democrats and Republicans who go online are equally likely to watch online political videos, as are liberal and conservative internet users.

What types of political videos are voters watching?

All percentages based on registered voters who use the internet within each group

	All RV's who go online (n=721)	Republican (n=203)	Democrat (n=224)	Independent (n=261)
Video news reports about the election or politics	48%	44%	52%	47%
Previously recorded video of a candidate speech, press conference or debate	40	37	43	40
Informational videos that explain a political issue	39	38	38	41
Humorous or parody videos dealing with political issues	37	33	40	39
Political advertisements	36	38	37	34
Live video of a candidate speech, press conference or debate	28	24	30	27
Total ("yes" to any of the above activities)	66	64	69	65

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, Omnibus Survey, October 12-14, 2012. N=1,006 adults ages 18 and older, including 400 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. The survey was conducted in English. Margin of error is +/-4.4 percentage points for internet users who are registered voters (n=721).

Online political videos are also popular with internet users across a range of demographic categories, although younger users are more likely to watch them than are older users, and those with a college degree watch them at higher rates than those with lower levels of educational attainment. Some 71% of internet-using registered voters ages 18-49 have watched some type of political video this election cycle, compared with 64% of those ages 50-64 and 57% of those 65 and older. Similarly, 75% of internet-using registered voters with a college degree watch online political videos, compared with 62% of those with some college experience (but not a degree) and 60% of those who have not attended college.

How voters learn about online political videos

Some 62% of internet-using registered voters have had other people recommend online videos for them to watch related to the election or politics this campaign season. Specifically:

- 40% have had other people recommend election- or politics-related online videos for them to watch by *posting them on a social networking site*
- 36% have had other people recommend election- or politics-related online videos by *telling* them about them in person

• 32% have had other people recommend election- or politics-related online videos by *sending an email or text message*

As with watching online political videos, there are few partisan differences when it comes to having others recommend online political video content. The one exception pertains to social networking sites. Liberal internet users who are registered voters are significantly more likely than moderates or conservatives to have had others recommend online political videos for them to watch on social networking sites. This high level of social media engagement among liberal voters is intertwined with the age profile of that ideological cohort, as younger adults are more likely than older ones to have had videos recommended to them on a social networking site this election cycle. Some 52% of internet-using registered voters between the ages of 18 and 49 have experienced this, compared with 33% of those ages 50-64 and just 15% of those 65 and older.

Online video recommendations from others

% of registered voters who use the internet who have had other people recommend online videos related to politics or the election for them to watch by...

	Posting them on a social networking site	Telling you about them in person	Sending you an email or text message
Total for RV's who use the internet (n=721)	40%	36%	32%
Party ID			
Republicans (n=203)	39	36	34
Democrats (n=224)	47	41	31
Independents (n=261)	33	32	32
Party ID (w/ leaners)			
Republicans + Rep-leaning Independents (n=334)	37	35	35
Democrats + Dem-leaning Independents (n=320)	45	39	32
Ideology			
Liberal (n=137)	53**	38	33
Moderate (n=278)	38	36	32
Conservative (n=283)	35	36	33

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, Omnibus Survey, October 12-14, 2012. N=1,006 adults ages 18 and older, including 400 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. The survey was conducted in English. Margin of error is +/-4.4 percentage points for internet users who are registered voters (n=721). **Indicates that figure is significantly larger than all other rows in group.

Sizeable number of voters have encouraged others to watch political videos online, but very few have created their own

One quarter (23%) of internet-using registered voters have encouraged others to watch online videos related to the election or political issues this campaign season. Republicans and Democrats are equally likely to recommend online political videos to others, as are liberal and conservative internet users. Although recommending videos to others is somewhat commonplace, just 1% of internet-using registered voters have created their own online videos related to the campaign or to election issues—and this behavior is consistently rare across political and ideological categories.

Recommending political videos

% of registered voters who use the internet in each group who have encouraged other people to watch a video online related to the election or to political issues

Based on registered voters who use the internet	
Total (n=721)	23%
Party ID	
Republicans (n=203)	22
Democrats (n=224)	27
Independents (n=261)	20
Party ID (w/ leaners)	
Republicans + Rep-leaning Independents (n=334)	24
Democrats + Dem-leaning Independents (n=320)	24
Ideology	
Liberal (n=137)	32*
Moderate (n=279)	17
Conservative (n=283)	26*

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, Omnibus Survey, October 12-14, 2012. N=1,006 adults ages 18 and older, including 400 interviews conducted on respondent's cell phone. The survey was conducted in English. Margin of error is +/-4.4 percentage points for internet users who are registered voters (n=721). *Indicates that figure is significantly larger than non-starred rows in same group.

Methodology

October 2012 Omnibus Week 2

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates International

October 2012

The PSRAI October 2012 Omnibus Week 2 obtained telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,006 adults living in the continental United States. Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (605) and cell phone (401, including 197 without a landline phone). The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). Interviews were done in English by Princeton Data Source from October 12 to 14, 2012. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is \pm 3.7 percentage points.