

**Presidential Candidate Viability & Partisan Online Media: Spectacle and Support in the 2012
Primaries' "Pre-Distant" Phase**

ABSTRACT: This research paper shows empirically that media coverage of the 2012 Republican primary campaigns in the year leading up to the Iowa caucuses varied greatly, with some candidates' every action deemed newsworthy and others struggling to get any attention at all. Internet "narrowcasting" offers a chance for candidates and policy proposals to be presented and discussed in greater depth by those who are more interested in politics than the superficial spectacle of "horse races" and scandals. From the perspective of the agenda-setting power of the media, ideas and candidates not treated seriously or fairly in mass media may be examined more deeply, though far less neutrally, online. Taking the uniquely uncertain 2012 primaries as evidence, the power and coverage differences of new and old media types reflect the changing effectiveness of traditional and new campaigns.

Introduction and Literature Review. In U.S. presidential primaries, name recognition among the voting public is an initial hurdle for all candidates to clear. In the candidate-centered context of American political campaigns, knowing the name of one's champion sometimes precedes knowing one's interests and necessarily comes before knowing any candidate's positions on "the issues". These requirements intersect immediately with the agenda-setting power of mass media. As Farnsworth and Lichter state, "hypodermic" effects resembling mind control are not possible among increasingly critical audiences, however, scholars generally concede that mass media effectively frame issues for the public by deciding what is, and is not, "on the agenda". As Iyengar's pioneering experiments in the 1980's have shown, what the media report is generally taken by audiences to be important, worth one's time and consideration, while topics and ideas given less or no media attention are much less so, possibly even irrelevant, unknown, or unknowable¹. As the axiom goes, mass media is less effective at telling people *what* to think than what to think *about*.

¹ Iyengar's (1987) introduction and conclusion outline such powers for television news, both confirming and extending Lippmann's earlier work on newspapers and agenda setting. This study intends to transfer these concepts online and within the specific context of

This effect applies to presidential campaigns in establishing which candidates are important—or more tailored to the context, *viable* and *electable*—and thereby deserving of more attention and scrutiny, and which are simply not worth thinking about, for various reasons.² While most media sources, even those professing to report objectively and neutrally³, seek to shape evaluations of candidates, what are both more verifiable and effective, though not necessarily intentional, are the quantitative coverage differences which leave some candidates “off the agenda”. This study seeks to show empirically that the smaller amounts of coverage afforded to those candidates whose polling number place them in the “dark horse” or “also-ran” category assure that they remain so. Less flattering for the “mainstream” media is the disproportionate coverage given to candidates embroiled in scandals, combining the predatory “feeding frenzy” effects with market incentives to sensationalize, aptly described by Zaller’s “burglar alarm” model of news coverage and lamented in Patterson’s *Out of Order*, among other texts favoring a “full news” standard.⁴

Scholarly literature on the relationship of presidential primary success and mass media coverage is surprisingly thin. Much, however, has been written about who votes in presidential primaries and why—or much more likely, why not. 2008 voter turnout in presidential primaries fell just short of the record set in 1972, with just under a third of eligible citizens casting ballots.⁵ Intuitively, those in this group of voters must at least be more politically *active* than the electorate as a whole, but the debate on whether primary voters are more

U.S. presidential campaigns. Farnsworth and Lichter’s book also outlines three theories of media effects on politics, largely adopting a middle ground between “hypodermic” and “minimal effects” models, akin to agenda setting.

² Deeming a campaign or candidate “unwinnable”, however factual, is often accompanied in mass media by unverifiable claims that s/he is only running for egotistic or instrumental reasons and fabricates a convenient but unfortunate pretext for ignoring the issues such candidates seek to raise. This study argues, contrarily and with no lack of evidence, that such campaigns soldier on in the face of impossible odds precisely because they are committed in principle to champion causes which the front-runners either de-emphasize or completely neglect.

³ Many media studies highlight an important difference between being objective and neutral, and here it is also key to the distinction between partisan and non-partisan media. Being objective in reporting means primarily conveying facts, making very clear that opinions and partisan statements are those of particular individuals only, “not necessarily” those of the media outlet. Thus, a media outlet can easily, perhaps usually, give subtle preference to certain facts and opinions over others, thereby maintaining objectivity while being far from neutral. And besides all this, few and weak indeed are the pundits who do not claim their views are “factually based”.

⁴ While the debate seems far from settled, a consensus may be drawn in that the Burglar Alarm standard is closer to the status quo, according to Bennett, and also deeply flawed for attracting public attention to one scandal after another, many of which are ephemeral and all but irrelevant to larger issues. If news coverage is deeply flawed and insufficient in this model, Patterson (2003), Prior, Waldman, and many others suggest that changing patterns of media consumption away from broadcast television and newspapers may be further reducing the resources necessary for an unattainable “full news” ideal.

⁵ See Gans and generally American University’s Center for the Study of the American Electorate.

ideologically extreme appears unresolved.⁶ If voters in primaries do so in much smaller numbers than general elections, it may also be assumed that they are more interested in politics, possibly better informed but almost certainly more opinionated than the average voter. Voters more interested in politics are likely to crave more political media, more “hard” news than any network’s evening broadcast can provide, and so this study assumes that they are increasingly turning to new media for this extra stimulation, not least for the opportunity to talk back to the newscasters.

Internet archives are for the majority of Americans far more readily available than live television broadcasts, and even these as well as newspapers have their own websites which effectively equalize the accessibility of their content.⁷ Hindman’s 2009 book, however, suggests rather pessimistically that the internet—political content in particular--does not yet reach a large enough audience to influence politics significantly. In a similar vein, Tewksbury’s 2006 article finds that most people use “newer” media sources for information on the presidential primaries only when their interest in the campaign is particularly high, such as immediately before and after the Super Tuesday contests. While conducted on data from the 2000 primaries when internet usage was a fraction of what it is today, the principle of time-sensitive interest likely still holds to a considerable degree. By this time, previous primaries have at least established the leading candidates, if not an “inevitable” nominee in case of 2012, and “the agenda” for the purposes of this study has already long been set. In other words, if media effects are strongest when they convey to the voting public an image of “electoral momentum” described by Shapiro, the agenda (field of candidates) must first be narrowed before it is set (with a single, “inevitable” nominee), in what Pfau et. al. call the “distant phase” when voters are far

⁶ As greater partisanship/polarization of primary voters is one of this study’s most important assumptions, it should probably go into much greater depth in providing evidence of this. The cited articles by Abramowitz, Brady, Jones, and Norrander are only an introduction to the study of primary electorates, and I suspect there’s an article out there somewhere which provides more evidence supporting this axiom.

⁷ Whether TV or radio, the content is not broadcast live but can be accessed easily. Consumers thus can choose whether to consume their news in “print” as text on webpages, streaming as an archived radio program or telecast. Debates and ads, long given as influential in determining voter preferences, can always be reviewed online. Arguably, the digital elite described by Hindman are increasingly elites because they have computer skills and free time, while those on the other side of the “digital divide” may lack both and thereby disagree with this claim of greater accessibility. In short, however, if the future belongs to the young, they will overwhelmingly choose on-demand access to information and news rather than waiting for it to be given to them at a certain time every night.

from certain about their preferred candidates.⁸ Candidates who do not win a single contest out of the first few face great difficulties in justifying the continuation of their campaigns, mostly dropping out and becoming the smallest of historical footnotes. With three different winners in Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina, consistently strong showings by a candidate with a particularly strong online support network, these expectations took longer than usual to be met in 2012.⁹

With the world at one's fingertips, agenda-setting power of mass media could be effectively reduced to near zero if everyone suddenly became an internet news junkie, surveying every site on every issue almost every day. While this is obviously unrealistic, or at least decades away for even the most ravenous addict, the Pew Research Center has tracked a gradual increase in the portion of media consumers who get political information or news online, with the latest figures from 2010 showing 73% of adult internet users (or 54% of all U.S. adults) doing so for the 2010 elections. Of these, 32% (or 24% of all U.S. adults) got *most* of their information and news online.¹⁰ In a year with a single-party presidential primary which attracts more partisan attention, use of online sources should have continued an upward trend, and *partisan* online sources are likely to have reached more potential voters.

⁸ This study, focusing on media coverage in the year before the primaries, would likely have to be called "pre-distant" for preceding even the earliest contests (other than the dubiously relevant Iowa straw poll in the summer). In previous election cycles even looking at the "distant" phase had to be carefully justified, but this study argues that the new and increasing phenomenon of constant campaigns under unrelenting media scrutiny (arguably concomitant with rising internet usage) makes this further extension of temporal focus back in time eminently worth scholarly consideration. Pfau et. al. also find that talk radio was the most influential medium informing voters' impressions of Republican candidates, and while the partisanship of talk radio has not shifted significantly away from the right since the 1990's, one would expect partisan websites today to rival, supplement, or amplify radio and TV pundits' effect on partisan devotees.

⁹ With each victory in the 2012 primaries, Mitt Romney's campaign did its best to project an image of electoral momentum, always contested by the other candidates, especially after they won other states. Knowing the effects that momentum carries, media were particularly vulnerable to claims that they had an interest both in making the primaries appear more contested and also extending them as dramatically as possible. The difficulty of establishing objectively whether something as nebulous as momentum behind a particular candidate exists (is there a minimum number of victories, or is a streak of uninterrupted victories necessary?) provides considerable cover for the media to defend their neutrality.

¹⁰ See Smith (2011) for the Pew Internet & American Life Project on the 2010 election. Hindman's 2009 book also gets an update from the Pew Center in Olmstead et. al.'s article on internet users' demographics and how they reach news sites online. One of the latter's key findings is that most online news consumers are only casual users, visiting only a few times a month and not for very long, but a significant number are also "power users" who visit regularly, even daily or more frequently, tending to spend more than an hour on a single site. Clearly "Web 2.0" user-generated content, its greater interactivity, accessibility, and diversity, offer internet news junkies even greater resources than one who limits him/herself to cable news. Whether a supplemental or primary source, however, the proliferation of political blogs and sites suggests that even if "everyone is talking and no one is listening" (to paraphrase Hindman's reservations about the political power of online media), there are still certainly a lot of people who care about "hard news" and choose to follow it online.

In summary, this study is justified because it observes the media in one of their strongest agenda-setting stages in politics, before any actual votes for any candidate are cast. We should expect partisan media to be somewhat less concerned with the “horse race” among candidates for the pole position and somewhat more concerned with policy proposals and positions on “the issues”—precisely the kind of coverage the public claims to want and which media critics attack broadcast media for lacking. Bennett and Iyengar’s 2008 article, “A New Era of Minimal Effects?”, recently claimed that academia has let agenda-setting power become too axiomatic in scholarly literature, extending Prior’s argument that the era of mass media may be ending.¹¹ If Bennett and Iyengar are correct that we are transitioning to a “personally mediated society” in which “partisans self-select into distinct audiences”, conservative online media is an excellent place to observe this shift, and differences in presidential primary coverage foreshadow or exemplify a media landscape in which every possible point of view is supported by at least one source.

The paper is divided into sections as follows, paying close attention to empirical evidence for its key claims. First, research questions will be presented on how the agenda-setting power of mass and online media affect the process of nominating a major-party presidential candidate. It will be hypothesized that a threshold of media attention must be maintained for a candidate to be seen as serious and viable, itself virtually a requirement to be worthy of a voter’s attention in the primaries. Additionally, it will be hypothesized that different types of media, by partisanship and medium (print, radio, television, or online), pay more attention to some candidates than others. The methodology to show these effects will be described in the next section, resting mainly on a survey of 250 websites conducted in the fall of 2011. Descriptive results will be given in terms of media type and by candidate, with special attention to that of the eventual Republican nominee, Mitt Romney, and earlier contenders whose differing campaign strategies and media coverage are theoretically illuminating. The concluding section will tie the findings of this project back from the 2012 primaries to general points about elections and the media.

¹¹ On pg. 720, and particularly of note for this study, they note that conservatives are particularly cynical about the media, less apt to trust them or accept their agenda-setting power because they believe the media have their own (liberal) agenda. If true, they should be more drawn than liberals and moderates to websites offering alternative and explicitly “independent” views.

Research Questions and Hypotheses. On what basis do mass media and smaller online sources choose to cover aspiring presidential candidates a lot, a little, or not at all? Must s/he be newsworthy, deemed viable by the public or editorial board, aligned ideologically with the particular source or audience? This study seeks to show a difference in the amount of mass media coverage received by presidential primary candidates, based on the partisanship and medium (including the target audiences) of the sources. Many candidates, especially those behind in the polls, have made claims that mass media largely ignore their campaigns, with the implications that the media have a responsibility to cover each candidate approximately evenly and that failure to do so essentially condemns their campaigns to obscurity. According to expectations laid out (and lamented) in Patterson's *Out of Order*, we can expect candidates embroiled in scandals to receive more coverage in non-partisan news media, while sources concerned entirely with deeper political issues and policies will pay more attention to less "flashy" candidates with more substantive policy prescriptions. The 2012 Republican primaries, as well as third parties in the 2008 elections, offer several examples of candidates whose marginal campaigns were made or—far more often—broken by how much media coverage they received.¹²

While it is expected that primary candidates' coverage will align approximately with their polling numbers preceding the election¹³, many differences can be predicted. Besides differences in the ability to capture media attention for being an intriguing (or gaffe-prone) candidate, we can make any number of dichotomous candidate categorizations beyond the apparently most relevant liberal and conservative: establishment versus outsider, pretty face versus policy wonk, rousing speaker and debater versus coolheaded calculator, etc. are all in play in the pre-distant phase when the primary electorate is just beginning to familiarize itself with the available options. We should expect mass media or "mainstream" news outlets to pay more attention to certain candidates than bloggers or pundits, and outlets for "hard" and "soft" news

¹² Of course, differences in *how* candidates were covered, positively or negatively, is presumed to be more significant, past a certain threshold. Again, however, this study is more concerned with candidates who fail to reach this point, attempts to use other media to compensate.

¹³ As will be described further in the following section, candidates often rise and fall in polls during the pre-distant phase, so when considering the *amount* of media coverage given to their campaigns it is important to keep a broad temporal scope rather than single day, week, or month which is likely to coincide with a particular candidate's upswing or peak.

might also base their coverage on how “important” or “serious” a candidate’s policy proposals are, how telegenic and charismatic the candidate is, respectively. The next section describes the methods used to illustrate these hypothesized differences in candidates’ media coverage.

Methodology. From Nov. 23rd to Dec. 15th, 2011, about 250 websites were queried for the number of articles in which the name of a presidential primary candidate was mentioned in the preceding year.¹⁴ For each candidate, the number of articles mentioning his/her name is divided by the total number of articles/pages for a particular website mentioning any candidate’s name to yield his/her percentage of the total 2012 presidential campaign coverage for that website.¹⁵

The 250 sites can be categorized in a variety of ways, allowing conclusions to be drawn about how each differs in the amount of media coverage candidates received in the year leading up to the 2012 primaries. Rather than treating the categories as sole causal determinants in the differences in coverage, it must be kept in mind that many likely result from individual editorial decisions and also unintentional effects such as simply devoting attention approximately in proportion to candidates’ polling numbers. As the sites searched include many whose primary medium is not online (i.e. broadcast or cable television, print media, or radio), this study makes a crucial assumption that their websites’ coverage does not differ significantly.¹⁶ The main categories assessed here are divided by partisanship (liberal, conservative, or non-partisan), with the intent to show that the partisanship of the source will affect how much coverage certain candidates receive.

As recent studies by Shanto Iyengar and Natalie Stroud suggest that audiences which are themselves partisan tend not to consume media from the opposite end of the political spectrum, the primary comparison of this study is between non-partisan (including “major networks”, news agencies, and what most would consider “mainstream” media) and partisan conservative media. This is due both to practical considerations of

¹⁴ A full list of the sites queried, divided by partisanship category, can be found in APPENDIX A.

¹⁵ More detailed information about the search methodology can be found in APPENDIX B.

¹⁶ For example, in explicit terms of validity, the assumption is that hits on NPR’s website (which is not how most of NPR’s content reaches consumers but whose data is far easier to collect) for candidates do not differ significantly in proportion from how much each candidate is covered on the radio (NPR’s primary medium), in proportion to all other candidates. Mitt Romney and all other candidates should thereby not receive much greater or less coverage on NPR’s website than in the course of its radio broadcast. Online proportions approximate those of each site’s primary medium.

cutting the number of sites to be surveyed in half and to the related assumption that the portion of Republican primary voters who get their information on primary candidates from avowedly liberal sources is negligible.¹⁷ Furthermore, Iyengar finds such “selective exposure” to media to increase with partisanship, while a 2008 study by Natalie Stroud suggests that this is especially true for political topics and “persists across media types” among radio, TV, and online sources. All of these factors point to conservative online media as ripe for scrutiny in the formation of political opinions about Republican presidential primary candidates.

Who is treated by this study as a candidate is worth discussion in this section. A candidate must have been campaigning actively for the Republican Party presidential nomination at the time of the website survey to be included in the list of candidates. In approximate ascending order of national polling in December 2011, these were Gary Johnson, Jon Huntsman, Rick Santorum, Michele Bachmann, Rick Perry, Ron Paul, Mitt Romney, and Newt Gingrich. Herman Cain is included in the survey as a candidate even though his campaign was suspended on December third; similarly, Johnson dropped out to seek the Libertarian Party’s nomination on December 28th. Their names are duly stricken from the figure in APPENDIX C showing results of the first four primaries. To the surprise of the primary researcher, several candidates polling even lower than Johnson were also actively campaigning, but by the time this was realized, too many sites had already been queried to add more names (especially as searching for Gary Johnson frequently yielded not a single hit on sites where leading and even other marginal candidates’ hits were in the dozens, hundreds, or thousands).

For heuristic purposes, 2012 Republican primary candidates will be referred to as being in one of three tiers: the top tier including only a few who led in November and December polls, a second tier of candidates who never led but whose campaigns most voters had heard of (likely by virtue of having led in earlier months), and a third tier of those candidates who had yet to receive much support from eligible voters by November

¹⁷ Interestingly, many conservative primary voters likely discovered from liberal media sources how happy many liberals would be if either Newt Gingrich or, later, Rick Santorum had been the Republican Party’s nominee, on the presumption that both were too extreme to be accepted by the general electorate. That this influenced some conservatives to favor the more moderate candidate, Mitt Romney, has been largely assumed by commentators. Other than unusual examples like this, however, few conservatives are assumed to read liberal media as their main source of information on the Republican primaries. The number of liberals, most of whom *do* get their information from more liberal sources, voting in Republican primaries is also assumed to be very small.

and December. A polling threshold to cross from the third tier into the second might be set between 3-5%, below which many candidates have great difficulty even getting into debates¹⁸, and which happens to be near the margin of error for many polls.

By such standards, then, candidates may be placed rather clearly in one tier by December of the year preceding the primary elections. In the pre-distant phase of the 2012 election cycle, polling data suggests that Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich should be in the first tier as real contenders, Rick Perry and Ron Paul lead the second with Michele Bachman and Herman Cain (a former first-tier candidate before dropping out), while Rick Santorum, Jon Huntsman, and Gary Johnson are the most prominent third tier candidates. These judgments are based on November and December 2011 polls rather than the amount of coverage the candidates receive, as media attention might suggest quite different ordering. Several more are included on sites such as <http://2012.presidential-candidates.org/>, however the existence of their campaigns would likely surprise all but the most vigilant news junkies (having also gone unnoticed by this dedicated political scientist until after data gathering began).

It is assumed that a higher percentage of stories or pages mentioning a candidate's name increases his or her "name recognition" among those who consume a particular media source. It should also be noted that not every instance, in fact only a minority, is an example of an informative piece which might influence the consumer's opinion of the candidate.¹⁹ Far more often, and especially in the case of those lagging in the polls, "coverage" might be limited to passing notice of their presence at a televised debate or an attempt to get attention with a soundbyte. Returning to percentages, if fewer than one in twenty articles mentioning *any* primary candidate include the name of a third-tier candidate, the chances of someone not already following

¹⁸ On the rather arbitrary or worse criteria for inclusion in the Republican primary debates, see *Slate's* "The Gary Johnson Rule, Remixed", whose under-the-radar campaign served as the cut-off point for this study's inclusion of candidates: http://www.slate.com/blogs/weigel/2011/10/10/the_gary_johnson_rule_remixed.html

¹⁹ This essay takes pieces such as feature articles or candidate biographies which often accompany campaign stops to be among the most significant news articles which might first make voters aware of campaigns and then influence their assessments of particular candidates. Political sites which don't pretend to cover "the news" per se might also be presumed to offer stronger advocacy and, perhaps, deeper analysis of candidates and campaign issues if not under the burden of "selling copy" to the mass public (i.e. broadcasting) or maintaining journalistic neutrality.

the primaries closely stumbling onto their particular campaign (i.e. learning of its existence, let alone learning about the candidate's platform) is probably very small. Such a challenge is contrasted with top-tier candidates seen as important or at least viable; their campaigns are newsmakers, with articles and pages more likely to contain significant information intended to influence potential voters' appraisal of them. In 2012, the difference could be seen most obviously in the shift in the media's treatment of Rick Santorum as an afterthought to a serious contender. Unexpected primary wins not only made for a compelling news story; they also made what the candidate actually had to say more important for the public to know. For reference, the results of the first four 2012 primary contests in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Florida are listed in APPENDIX C, divided by candidate for percentages of the vote, delegates won, and the date their campaigns ended.

Much needs to be said here about the conservative website sample and how they make information on Republican primary candidates far more accessible than in the past. Firstly, so-called "single issue voters" can now go directly to any number of websites which not only cater to nearly every issue in isolation, including the latest news centered on it. Several, such as some of the immigration reform and anti-abortion groups' sites sampled also rate and rank each candidate on the basis of how their record or ideological standpoints would lead them to address the particular issue as president.²⁰ If the Republican Party was split into neocons, social conservatives, and economic conservatives after the presidency of George W. Bush, each certainly has its preferred pundits and media which may or may not be aggregated into a single partisan, conservative website.²¹ One of the most interesting observations to make about the burgeoning pool of conservative websites is that many draw little or no distinction between journalism and commentary, preferring instead to fashion themselves as news from a conservative perspective. This manifests itself in that many project an image as the lone voice of reason in a media landscape polluted with liberal bias and generally immoral,

²⁰ Incidentally, no Republican candidate in the 2012 field was rated as highly by the anti-immigration site www.numbersusa.com as Tom Tancredo. In fact, most were given D's and F's. This is a good example of a site which could be used to promote its preferred candidate (or goading someone into running by extolling their heroism and offering fundraising, etc.) to the exclusion of considering others.

²¹ It would be helpful if the partisan sites listed in APPENDIX A would categorize themselves, but one can be certain that they would bristle at labels, especially those given by an outsider in academia.

censored or factually dubious reporting. Establishing rapport and trust with each site's readership seems to become more necessary as the contributors' views become more extreme, and the assertion is often made that a particular site is one of very few to report and discuss what is explicitly not on the agenda of "politically correct", "mainstream media". The titillating phrasal tropes "what they don't want you to know" and "what they are too afraid to say/tell you" also make occasional appearances in banners and articles.

None of this is to be critical of these sites, as the Pew studies, Iyengar, and Stroud all have shown that many people prefer their media to be personally aligned with their own, partisan views. Rather, it needs to be emphasized that in certain contexts, such as a Republican primary, party activists and perhaps even extremists who contribute to and frequent these sites can play an outsized role in setting the agenda, at least compared to Hindman's conclusions that only a small proportion of internet users do so for political purposes. Whenever an idea which originated in the blogosphere or by popular petition makes it into the policy or candidate discussion, this is worn prominently as a badge of pride for both the author and the media outlet which brought it to public attention.²² If media trends are clearly in the direction of personalization, rising polarization is likely to follow if more extreme sources are available, as they increasingly are online. Having discussed how the data were collected, it is finally time to see what they have to say.

Results. Before describing the results of the online article searches overall, an example is in order to illustrate how the data were aggregated. Fox News, chosen as a leading source of conservative media though primarily a broadcast television network²³, yielded the following distribution of articles for each candidate and personage:

²² Certainly a pundit—or any opinionated person—can distinguish him/herself by supporting a boutique candidate closely aligned with his or her personal ideology, and if that candidate succeeds despite a lack of mass media attention, it is easy to perceive a personal stake in the campaign.

²³ This is an editorial decision to choose a well-known and influential example to begin with rather than something exclusively online for fear that it would be dismissed as insignificant or too obscure. Revisions may add an example from an online source or replace it Fox News to be true to the title without regard for questionable influence.

Johnson	Huntsman	Santorum	Bachmann	Perry	Paul	Gingrich	Romney	Cain	Total
319	49300	988	277000	31700	133000	154000	242000	31200	919507
Obama	Nader	Barr	Palin	C. Christie	Paul Ryan	J. Bieber	K.Kard		
106000	1180	353	55800	915	9170	188000	25800		

Fig. 1: Number of articles on the site www.foxnews.com mentioning a particular person in the year up to November 2011. The top row lists 2012 Republican primary candidates, while the bottom lists others of interest to make comparisons and keep the numbers in perspective. Note that the “Total” at the end of the first row is the sum of the articles on primary candidates only, used to approximate the total number of articles about the 2012 Republican primary candidates within a particular website. Undoubtedly there is some overlap within this Total, with multiple candidates often mentioned within the same article counting as more than one in the Total. Again, the detailed search protocol may be found in APPENDIX B.

Each person’s number of articles was divided by the Total (919,507) to give the percentage of articles mentioning a particular person as a portion of all articles mentioning any 2012 Republican Primary candidate in this website. Again, for Fox News, this division yielded the following proportions:

Johnson%	Hunts%	Santorum %	Bach%	Perry%	Paul%	Romney%	Gingrich%	Cain%
0.03%	5.36%	0.11%	30.12%	3.45%	14.46%	26.32%	16.75%	3.39%
Obama%	Nader%	Barr%	Palin%	Christie%	Ryan%	Entertainment%		
9.70%	0.11%	0.03%	6.07%	0.10%	1%	19.56%		

Fig. 2: Articles on www.foxnews.com mentioning a particular person, as a percentage of the Total number of articles mentioning any 2012 Republican Primary candidate. Note that percentages were calculated slightly differently for Nader and Barr, for the two entertainment figures whose numbers were combined as the “Entertainment %”.

This calculation was repeated in Excel for each site in the survey. Space constraints prevent much discussion of how this particular source differed from the mean or from particular sites, but it should be noted that Fox’s coverage was surprisingly *atypical* of conservative sites overall.²⁴ *The New York Times*, in an article on the increase in candidate television appearances accompanied by a reducing in-person campaign stops, notes that Herman Cain actually led all candidates in appearances on Fox News, followed by Newt Gingrich, though Santorum’s win in Iowa leads one to question whether a talking head can replace a handshake.²⁵

²⁴ Compared to the mean for conservative sites, it was very high on Bachmann, Huntsman, and Romney, short on Santorum, Perry, Paul, and Cain, while also covering Palin, Christie, Ryan, and Obama all considerably less. Relating these data directly to the central contention of this paper, it would be assumed that, among Fox News consumers nationwide (assuming they are consuming factual information) Michele Bachmann was probably a much better known candidate than Rick Santorum for most of the year leading up to Iowa, despite each having similar platforms and a later reversal of familiarity and perceived viability as Santorum surged from behind. Also, as a broadcast news network, Fox had nearly five times more coverage of the two entertainers than any of its fellow U.S. networks like ABC, CBS, and NBC.

²⁵ See Zeleny.

As usual, aggregation obscures many differences but is necessary to make broader comparisons. For most candidates, there was found to be little difference in the amount of media coverage their campaigns received among all 250 sites, when examined by partisanship. However, great differences were found between the coverage of Herman Cain and Ron Paul. The overall division of coverage is as follows for the 222 sites categorized as either conservative or non-partisan:

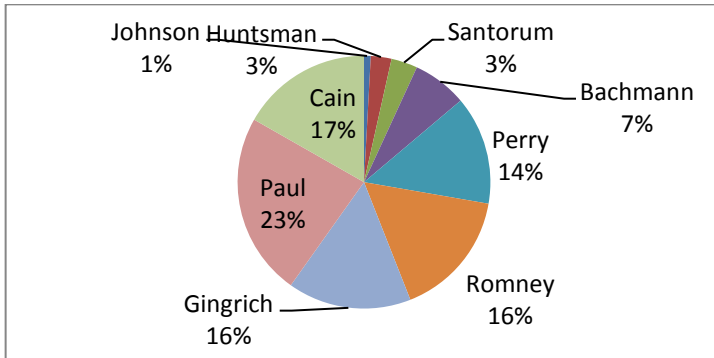


Fig. 3: Conservative Websites' Coverage of Republican Primary Candidates (N= 89). Percentages represent the portion of articles mentioning any Republican presidential primary candidate.

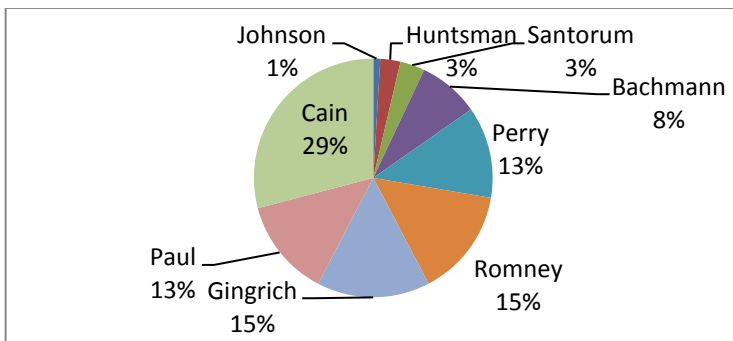


Fig. 4: Non-partisan Websites' Coverage of Republican Primary Candidates (N=133). Percentages represent the portion of articles mentioning any Republican presidential primary candidate.

More so than on partisan, conservative websites where the visitor is presumed to be very much interested in politics, an operative assumption for non-partisan sites (from Prior's work on the "inadvertent audience") is that those who visit will only hear and remember the political message which is loudest and most frequently repeated. The most obvious difference in the charts above is in who received the most coverage: Ron Paul on conservative sites and Herman Cain on the non-partisan sites. This would suggest that while politically active conservatives were most interested in discussing the candidacy of Ron Paul—one which has been, after all, controversial for the usual reason that some question the place of libertarians in the conservative movement but also newly for the popular, largely youthful support network he has grown

nationwide—Herman Cain received the most media attention directed at the general public. While percentages for front-runners Romney and Gingrich are steady, and Cain is still number two on conservative sites, the non-partisan sample consisting of the most widely consumed mass media sources renders Ron Paul no more important than Rick Perry (whose campaign was largely reduced in the media to poor debate performances and commentary on a controversial ad against gay marriage). Other candidates' percentages and rankings seem fairly stable, and the limitations of the methods don't allow for any grand conclusions to be drawn from slight quantitative differences.²⁶

Comparison of these charts to the one below, including the entire sample and highlighting one which seeks to be a neutral guide to the 2012 presidential election as a whole, also offers some insights.

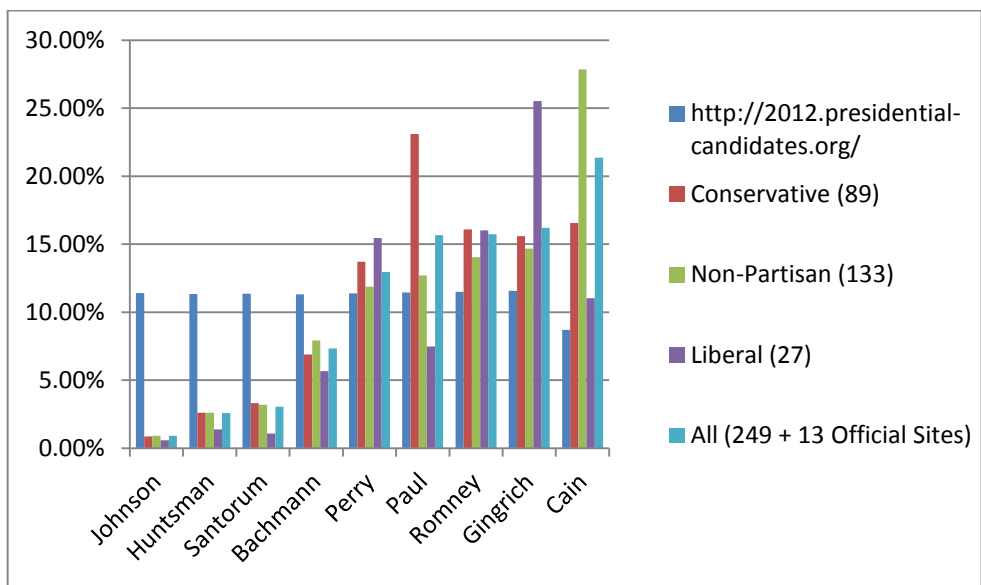


Fig. 5: Coverage of All Candidates on All Sites and by Partisanship. Percentages (y axis) represent the portion of articles mentioning any Republican presidential primary candidate. (N of category is in parentheses)

The 2012 site listed first, while not particularly informative, is at least almost perfectly equal in its distribution of campaign coverage. Leveling the playing field among the first tier and those not even included in this survey, like Buddy Roehmer and Fred Karger, may understandably not be a universally held goal. Here again neutrality requires full inclusiveness and not to privilege any candidate over another, but objectivity, if it includes being

²⁶ It may, however, be noted that, in addition to Ron Paul, each of Romney, Gingrich, and Perry received slightly more attention on conservative sites, while only Cain and Bachmann's percentages were higher on non-partisan sites. Perhaps Cain and Bachmann shared a certain flair—or novelty—as non-traditional (Republican) candidates?

realistic, would quickly make the judgment that no one registering support less than a particular poll's margin of error has any chance of winning the nomination. While this may seem obvious and justifiable, 2012 proved that even a candidate who is virtually ignored nationally, namely Rick Santorum, can rise into contention. Excluding a candidate or giving insufficient coverage of a campaign for the candidate's name to be recognized as such is neither neutral nor fair.

Thus, in a sense the media as a whole, whether partisan or not, did the public a disservice in not aspiring to the neutral, inclusive standard: it effectively and for almost the entire pre-distant phase excluded or failed to cover a campaign and a candidate who grew to have wide appeal among the primary electorate.²⁷ Was this unexpected rise accomplished with the aid of mass media or despite it? Given that the earliest reported results for the Iowa caucuses indicated a win for Romney and later a tie, Santorum was not able to capitalize fully on what was later declared a victory but nonetheless saw his national profile rise greatly in the following month.

The strategic candidate, as American election coverage has reinforced, devotes disproportionate resources to the early primary states of Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Florida.²⁸ A win or strong showing in any of these contests is all but essential for a campaign to continue, and local newspapers may at once be more focused on issues as well as eager to reward barnstorming candidates with greater coverage than polls alone would garner. Campaigns with limited resources appear especially keen to curry favor with Iowans, perhaps in hope that a respectable showing in the first caucus might propel them into the first tier. Evidence for this can be provided by noting the greater proportion of coverage among smaller town and city newspapers in these states for third-tier candidates. Among the 39 sources surveyed, both Rick Santorum and Jon Huntsman show nearly double their overall percentages in Iowa and New Hampshire, respectively, largely

²⁷ Early expectations that Santorum's success would be regionally limited to the Midwest and Great Plains states were also upended when he carried some Southern states like LA, though by a smaller margin than would have been likely if Newt Gingrich had dropped out (as urged by more conservative and Tea Party voters to whom Mitt Romney was all but unacceptable). More related to this project, one might also speculate that the dearth of social conservatives among mass media journalists led to a failure to anticipate Santorum's nationwide appeal.

²⁸ Zeleny's article in the *New York Times* calls this a "traditional" campaign in the sense that it is now outmoded and less effective than using national media to disseminate one's message.

in smaller cities where campaign stops are still relatively big news.²⁹ Other than *The Onion*, where the candidate’s “Google Problem” originated, no source outside of Iowa gave Santorum even one tenth of the overall primary coverage, but again it must be kept in mind that this media push into the lowan second tier would have evaporated if Santorum hadn’t been physically present in each of the state’s counties at one point in the campaign. Whether or not these efforts were enough to improve their perceived viability among likely voters, as may still be dubious, this does at least show that even smaller media outlets aim to influence national events and may be vital to certain campaign strategies.

Type of Sources (N)	Johnson	Huntsman	Santorum	Bachmann	Perry	Paul
Broadcast Networks (10)	0.21%	2.10%	1.90%	9.84%	10.72%	10.61%
Major News Agencies (6)	0.18%	2.51%	1.48%	8.48%	16.86%	4.67%
Big City Newspapers (29)	0.05%	1.49%	1.17%	4.25%	10.23%	4.14%
Florida Newspapers (5)	0.07%	1.43%	2.60%	2.61%	4.93%	1.87%
IA NH SC Newspapers (39)	0.86%	4.13%	5.40%	10.56%	12.44%	15.47%

Fig. 6: Are Second and Third-Tier Candidates’ Media Coverage Higher in the Small Markets of the Earliest Primaries? Note that the newspapers in the Florida sample are all from big cities.

Partisan sites are, not surprisingly, more concerned about speculative candidates, often encouraging a particular individual to join the race. Coverage of Sarah Palin, Chris Christie, Paul Ryan, and perhaps others with higher national profiles than third-tier declared candidates was found to be greater in conservative websites.

Type of Sources (N)	Johnson	Huntsman	Santorum	Bachmann	Cain	Palin	Christie	Ryan
Liberal (27)	0.58%	1.39%	1.08%	5.67%	11.02%	3.14%	0.88%	1.65%
Conservative (89)	0.85%	2.61%	3.32%	6.88%	16.55%	11.17%	3.03%	6.67%
Non-Partisan (133)	0.90%	2.61%	3.20%	7.91%	27.85%	17.03%	1.58%	1.47%

Fig. 7: Unknown In or Well-Known Out? Speculation about some non-candidates received about as much coverage as third-tier declared candidates. Note also the alignment of Bachmann, Cain, and Palin’s coverage in terms of getting the most attention in non-partisan media, possibly for their sensational personas?

Media coverage of longshot candidates is approximately in line with their low polling numbers and national profiles. How do they compare with candidates receiving similar levels of coverage in the general

²⁹ As APPENDIX C suggests, there should be less contrast of why Santorum’s Iowa strategy worked while Huntsman’s “failed” in New Hampshire than that both devoted themselves to maximizing their votes in these early contests, ultimately winning in Santorum’s case and vastly outperforming what national polls and mass media coverage would have led one to expect in both cases.

election, such as third party candidates favored by ideological purists? Below, coverage of third-tier Republican primary candidates is compared to past coverage of 2008’s third-party candidates, Ralph Nader (Independent) and Bob Barr (Libertarian), without restricting the latter two to the past year so as to include everything which was available regarding their presidential campaigns.

Type of Sources (N)	Johnson	Huntsman	Santorum	Bachmann	Nader	Barr
Liberal (27)	0.58%	1.39%	1.08%	5.67%	13.86%	4.18%
Conservative (89)	0.85%	2.61%	3.32%	6.88%	4.13%	3.06%
Non-Partisan (133)	0.90%	2.61%	3.20%	7.91%	6.40%	1.67%

Fig. 8: Major Party or Third Party? Third-tier Republican primary candidates have received about as much media coverage as Ralph Nader and Bob Barr³⁰, essentially the same as lacking the support of a major party and dooming campaigns to single-digit national polling numbers, generally low name recognition and awareness of policy proposals among the electorate.

In terms of exposure to news, perhaps the distinction between a “news junkie” and a “political news junkie” ought to be drawn. One of Marcus Prior’s major points in *Post-Broadcast Democracy* is that the vast expansion of media markets since the advent and dispersion of cable television and internet access has greatly reduced the “inadvertent audience” for news. While many received basic political information from the news because there was little or nothing else on TV at certain times, an explosion of choices has meant that those who prefer entertainment are choosing to watch something other than news in greater numbers. While “news junkies” can get more information than ever before, they are increasingly likely to rely on sources other than the major networks—not least because network news has “softened” considerably to include more entertainment and celebrities, possibly in an attempt to retain those who prefer entertainment to news. Does mass media coverage of the 2012 Republican candidates more closely resemble that of conservative websites, whose audiences are presumably most interested in the outcome of the primaries, or that of tabloids (soft news outlets) mostly interested in celebrity scandals and news that is only tangentially political?³¹ This study’s admittedly non-random sample is given below for comparison:

³⁰ See Appendix B for notes on calculating the amount of media coverage received by Nader and Barr, given here somewhat awkwardly as a percentage of the total coverage of 2012 Republican primary candidates.

³¹ Whether sex scandals are purely private or in the public interest probably needs clarification before any moral transgression not affecting policy directly is classified as political.

Type of Sources (N)	Obama	Santorum	Romney	Gingrich	Paul	Cain	Palin	Entertain
Conservative (89)	24.87%	3.32%	16.08%	15.60%	23.10%	16.55%	11.17%	1.52%
Broadcast Networks (10)	20.49%	1.90%	10.61%	15.67%	15.36%	31.23%	6.17%	4.27%
Major News Agencies (6)	29.33%	1.48%	4.67%	13.20%	9.97%	42.65%	2.10%	2.81%
Big City Newspapers (29)	26.59%	1.17%	4.14%	15.08%	18.51%	43.98%	2.41%	27.56%
Tabloids (13)	18.39%	0.86%	2.28%	4.24%	15.51%	37.15%	65.85%	2848%

Fig. 9: News or Entertainment? Prominent figures for whom large differences in coverage are evident, based on assumptions that conservative sites actively advocate for certain candidates, news sources mix “hard” and “soft” stories without strong advocacy, while tabloids are mostly interested in people’s ability to create and sustain a popular sensation and only ever so slightly concerned with coverage of politics. Someone who read only tabloids might, when asked to evaluate the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, respond, “Mitt *who?*” Presumably no politician (Mormon or otherwise) wants to find himself on the cover of the *Enquirer*, though it’s odd that Gingrich’s soap opera lifestyle didn’t garner more attention than Ron Paul.

It is no revelation to say that two people known for their sex appeal exponentially outpace the 2012 Republican field in terms of tabloid coverage, but it may be striking to note the uniformity in coverage of Herman Cain across the board, excepting conservative websites. A better example of a burglar alarm going off in mainstream media could hardly be imagined, as even the once scintillating Sarah Palin was not nearly as newsworthy. In terms of serious discussion of political issues, at least regarding the 2012 primaries, conservative sites seem to be more focused than mass media as a whole. This study then wishes to make a brief and indignant statement about the relative newsworthiness of political figures and entertainment celebrities, given in the previous figures. At the risk of throwing the significance of percentage differences in coverage between candidates into question, it must be noted that mass media knows what attracts the largest audiences, and it is not politics.³² Much more could be said about particular media outlets and their categorization, but discussion of individual candidates may be more fruitful.

Detailed Results by Candidate and Source. The most obvious examples of the effects of partisanship on media coverage of presidential candidates can be found in websites which have focused on a particular individual, almost to the exclusion of others. Many sites may do this out of fervent support or disdain for a particular candidate, or to compensate for a perceived lack of media attention from other outlets.³³ This is especially true and important for lesser-known candidates who appeal to particular interest groups but may

³² National sports stars, if separated from entertainers, would also likely give politicians a run for coverage.

³³ It is quite possible, for example, that the relatively small number of sites almost entirely devoted to discussing Ron Paul may have skewed the percentages among conservative sites as a whole.

suffer from low recognition nationally. This section contains brief considerations of each candidate in the survey. Specifically, it will highlight what types of media, including particular sites, mentioned them in unusually large or small quantities of articles.

First, the incumbent president received the *least* amount of attention of all media types on liberal websites (less than 15%, barely more than Ralph Nader); his campaign would likely hope this is because his candidacy and policies are largely taken for granted rather than lacking in support or interest. Tabloids and individual pundits don't have much to say about Obama either, but his name pops up very frequently on internet social networking sites, the official sites of Republican candidates, and blogs. Interestingly, Mitt Romney's official website is among the top ten in the survey for mentioning the President's name, suggesting that, as the front-runner, Romney was always able (or always chose) to focus more on contrasting himself with the incumbent than with his fellow Republican challengers.

Secondly, the presumptive Republican nominee, Mitt Romney, largely validates the assertion that being a national polling front-runner makes one's statements and actions more newsworthy. He was covered more than any other candidate in Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina newspapers by more than three percent over any rival. He was the most often mentioned on candidates' official websites (31% of all pages dropped his name), presumably due to everyone else needing to attack or at least address Romney's character and policy proposals. Interestingly, Romney's own website mentions his own name far more than any other site mentions its own candidate's name, five times more than Ron Paul's site contains the name "Ron Paul" (in second place among official sites). Someone interested in politics would have to try very hard not to know that Mitt Romney is running for president.

As mentioned in a previous footnote, Newt Gingrich was mentioned most often on liberal sites, in 25% of articles, not likely a good sign. If Herman Cain is excluded, he is number one in fully half of the media categories from social networking sites to large newspapers to "high traffic" sites generally. The survey was taken while Gingrich's star was re-ascending, so that likely explains much of the lead in coverage. No obvious

explanation presents itself for why his coverage portions among blog aggregators and news agencies are both below 10%. Befitting his renowned intellect and fiery demeanor, top sites mentioning Gingrich span the liberal and conservative spectrum, those of several pundits, with both very high-brow and populist audiences represented.

Ron Paul's coverage rates could be described as polarized. Conservative media sites devote more attention to him than any other candidate, and pundits are especially apt to mention his name. Well known for popularity among young voters, it is quite possible that the heavily online nature of the sample, in which he is the number one covered candidate (among blogs and those sites which don't have a print, TV, or radio counterpart), problematizes the earlier evidence that conservative media are generally most interested in his campaign. Just as his campaign has claimed, coverage of Ron Paul is very low in big cities, news agencies, and broadcast networks which presumably reach the largest audiences.³⁴ However, anti-Paul conspiracy theorists should have found solace in that his coverage in the early primary states was right in between the two poles of (perhaps artificially) high and low.

Rick Perry and Michele Bachmann, despite both leading in national polls at certain points in the pre-distant phase, show a strong media following in their home states. Prominent groups like MoveOn.org and AARP had a lot to say about them, respectively among each's top ten sites, while pundits and major news agencies alike did not shy away from (generally negative) coverage of their campaigns. A lingering question about primary performance and media coverage might be asked about why neither the native Iowan, Bachmann, or the deep-pocketed Huntsman benefitted as much as Santorum from focusing on a single, early primary.

³⁴ Perhaps broadcast networks are aware that much of Paul's support comes from young voters who don't consume broadcast media nearly at the rate of older demographics. Given Paul's status as one of the oldest candidates, much like Ralph Nader who is similarly old but radical and having many ideological points of agreement and frustration with mass media ignoring his campaigns, his lesser coverage seems odd unless put in contentious terms. Namely, it could be that the expression of radical views is discouraged or not taken seriously/fairly in "mainstream" media, regardless of how much popular support is behind the person expressing them.

As late as December, Rick Santorum's national profile was likely infamous only among opponents of his radical social conservatism, very low among virtually everyone outside of Iowa, where his visits to each of its counties were well-documented by local media. While his prominence on pro-life sites makes a lot of sense, in no surveyed case was coverage (let alone endorsement) of his candidacy overwhelming or even very strong. Had his win in Iowa been announced immediately, rather than for Romney, one can only speculate how much his national profile and chances for the nomination would have improved. While data on coverage after the Iowa results were not collected, wins in other states as the consensually most viable non-Romney candidate, one can only expect that the media led the charge and played a major role in catapulting him from the third to first tier of candidates. Also likely is that his distinction as the lowest of all on social networking sites and being largely ignored by liberal sources were greatly reversed. Much has been written to explain Santorum's dramatic and unlikely rise from the rear, but it is hoped that this study shows his higher showings in later contests rested on a foundation of local Iowa media that reached voters in places other candidates chose not to go. Another possible scenario would be that national audiences paid hardly any attention to the primaries until just before the Iowa caucuses, the two to three weeks after data for this study was collected.³⁵

Some non-candidates are illustrative for both coverage comparisons and the "burglar alarm" standard of news coverage mentioned in this paper's introduction. When Herman Cain suspended his campaign on Dec. 3rd, allegations of scandalous misconduct had inundated the press for weeks and may have been the primary factor which undermined an unexpected and ultimately brief lead in the polls. Coverage of Cain is lowest among official campaign sites, suggesting either that he was not taken seriously by his would-be rivals or (unfortunately) that the survey only reached the official sites after his suspension. Partisan media did not seem to pay him much mind on either side, though big newspapers, tabloids, and even the BBC took a lot of interest in his rise and fall, as coverage of his campaign led the same number of media categories as Gingrich, generally about four percentage points lower than Obama in each of these. The major implication for Zaller's

³⁵ Unfortunately, collecting this much data just before New Year's Day would not have been possible for a single researcher, let alone for a term paper due in early December! Redoing the survey up to the exact day before the caucuses would be possible, but also a whole lot of work along a line of inquiry which may not be fruitful.

burglar alarm model is whether Cain's allegedly multiple infidelities were the most important campaign issue during the weeks when his name was in the headlines. It likely drowned out much of the other news, unlikely to be the only piece of information that the public needed to know, frustrating the many third-tier candidates (as Cain himself had once been) who struggled to get any national attention.

The same divide between the supposedly serious and self-serving or spectacular declared candidates can be seen in a few other non-candidates. In the past year, most mass media other than tabloids seemed to lose interest in following Sarah Palin's every move, though these and blogs, social networking sites led her average coverage to be almost even with Rick Perry, who was far more balanced across media types. Paul Ryan, now vying to be Romney's running-mate, garnered a lot of presidential speculation and media attention among conservatives, bloggers, and political sites for his work on House budget proposals, adding up to almost the same amount of coverage as Michele Bachmann despite having a lot more actual power. While Chris Christie never entered the race, there was no shortage of discussion about whether he could be the ultimate not-Romney candidate among bloggers and pundits, with even official candidate websites joining in or vying for his endorsement. In short, general public interest in some potential presidential candidates who have declared themselves clearly pales in comparison to how particular and fragmented audiences might respond to the "Will s/he or won't s/he?" question. Even within a single political party, one person's headline news is another's hearsay or footnote.

Discussion, Reservations, and Further Research. Unlike previous studies, here little or no consideration has been made of whether candidates' media coverage has been positive or negative, focused on "deep", complicated issues and policy proposals, or "superficial" horse-race and scandal coverage.³⁶ It has been primarily concerned with the earliest stages of a campaign and the very first step toward becoming an informed voter, when the potential voter learns a candidate's name and for what office s/he is running. The

³⁶ Certainly it would be worthwhile to go deeper into the articles counted to find qualitative distinctions in the coverage (such as positive or negative), but also to separate articles which are significant (providing information about the candidate/campaign, not just mentioning someone's name) from those which are simply a name-drop. Luckily, this time Gary Johnson was the only one with a common enough name to produce many false positives, and his coverage was usually so scant as to be able to discern from a single page of search results that links indeed led to something about the former NM governor and not just someone with the same name.

assumption that this is accomplished first by media is less problematic than the assumption that news media in particular are likely to be most voters' introduction.

At some point in this paper, the reader is likely to interject that many or most voters first learn of a candidate through a political ad sponsored or at least approved by the candidate. For those who are less newsworthy by any measure or reason, this is likely to be true, but the burden of introducing oneself is largely lifted if one's campaign itself is deemed important for the news to cover with actual journalists. If a candidate is unable to afford ads, similar effects to being left out of the news media are also likely, a vicious cycle which further reduces visibility and newsworthiness.³⁷ This paper has openly stated a normative preference that the media as a whole, if not every single source, strive for the full news standard. Not the smallest reason for this is the belief that voters should be able to learn about the next leader of the free world in a different way than they learn about soap. Presidential candidates and campaigns—all of them—*should be in the news*, and if pretenses of neutrality are to be maintained, they should be in it approximately equally.

It is dubious that, in an election cycle involving both Democrat and Republican primaries, many media outlets double their resources and articles covering presidential campaigns. Presumably little space would be cut back from entertainment coverage to make room for both parties' contests, and instead the underwhelming attention paid to this year's Republican field might be cut in half, at the likely expense of anyone polling in the lower half of either party. With only Republican primaries for 2012, lesser-known candidates may have had a better chance than usual to become recognized nationally before voting began.

³⁷ It is similarly difficult to parse out whether more radical or reactionary candidates are less popular because they get less media attention (are simply unknown) or whether they are less popular for being too extreme (outside of majority opinion). Most candidates probably hold at least some extreme views but are prudent enough to keep them to themselves if they want to win. As these points relate to newsworthiness and media coverage, it would be quite newsworthy if a first-tier candidate made an extreme statement or policy proposal because this might alienate him/her among the majority of the electorate, thereby jeopardizing his/her status at the front of the field. More radical candidates presumably do these things all the time, yet fail to get media attention unless going beyond the pale. Yet these different relationships between extremeness and newsworthiness don't explain differences in coverage; certainly it is in the interest of for-profit media to report extreme as well as moderate ideas because the former tend to be more interesting to read, listen to, or watch! Furthermore, there are plenty of moderates who also fail to get the media's (or the public's) attention because they are simply too cautious, or even outright boring.

Certainly, more work could be done statistically to test the significance of these differences, and if the endeavor is deemed worthwhile overall this would be a logical next step to pursue, along with examples of what the articles were saying about each candidate. As this cycle saw several unlikely figures rise to the top of the field and get far more media scrutiny than anyone expected, the advice that *any* media attention is good for someone trying get their name noticed may be questionable in the extreme way it affected Herman Cain's campaign. And similarly, for those with questionable qualifications, especially intellect and the ability to speak in public, there are likely to be cases where the less is known about a particular candidate, the more successful their campaign will be (though to the detriment of society and political discourse). If there is need to present a more compelling story about candidates who outperformed electoral expectations with the help of online or more traditional media, certainly more could be said about the campaigns of Ron Paul and Rick Santorum, but the data presented here unfortunately have relatively little to say about the actual nominee, Mitt Romney. Slow and steady coverage may have been beneficial to the Romney campaign, but a very early declaration and the resources to ensure that people cared enough to follow his statements and movements were at least as important.³⁸

Conclusions. This study has provided strong evidence for the interconnectedness of primary and third-party candidates' inability to get out of the "third tier" of unviability/unelectability/non-recognition and their anemic mass media coverage. A candidate who is not covered regularly and in depth by major media outlets will be perceived as a minor "also-ran", if s/he is perceived at all. Evidence also has been presented to suggest that partisan media, read mainly by party activists who are most likely to vote in presidential primaries, does attempt to raise the public profile of favored campaigns, especially where its treatment by non-partisan or "mainstream" coverage is seen to be unfairly lacking or insufficient.

Non-partisan media, including what have historically been the most influential and widely consumed mainstays of the broadcast era, appear to be more concerned with covering what they deem to be

³⁸ Being a photogenic plutocrat, a moderately conservative ex-governor of a liberal state probably haven't hurt either.

newsworthy, able to capture and sustain the attention of the general public. Gaffe-prone candidates, those embroiled in scandal or able to combine candidacy and celebrity have a clear advantage over less sensational, non-telegenic “policy wonks”. Luckily or not, in the age of “narrowcasting” to specific audiences, partisan sources are growing at once in number and in terms of audience size, influence, and financial viability. Most every “single-issue voter” can already find a media source providing the latest news on that issue, as well as a trusted, perhaps even authoritative lens through which to interpret events of national importance, such as presidential campaigns.

This study has offered evidence that even in an election year with an incumbent president running for reelection, as yet always uncontested by his own party and thereby a single-party primary contest, media coverage of candidates, especially at the national level, effectively excludes candidates with low national profiles rather than informing voters about all of their options. “Crowding-out” effects are likely stronger, though more difficult to study, in dual-primary election years. As reflected in the data on internet media coverage of the 2012 Republican primaries, highlighted in this paper, internet users’ interest in a fringe candidate did not translate into great electoral success (Paul), a mass media feeding frenzy for a scandal-prone outsider candidate did not much penetrate partisan sites (Cain), and a candidate who was virtually unknown nationally (Santorum) came to challenge the eventual nominee (Romney), whose presence in the media had been almost a constant for the year leading up to the primaries.

The era when election studies could focus only on the general election in November and the major networks and newspapers for what led to voters’ candidate preferences is over. The advent of narrowcasting makes the study of mass media influence on elections more complicated, but it also ensures that virtually every citizen with a well defined political interest will be able to find a media source to match it with information and commentary marketed directly to him. Increasingly, that source can be found only online. Collectively, and including even the wackiest of pundits, the growing mass of media outlets may yet attain an

inclusively neutral, full news standard, and when it does, the voters who care to be informed will be more so than ever.

APPENDIX A: ALL SOURCES SEARCHED, BY PARTISANSHIP CATEGORIZATION

Partisan Left-Wing/Liberal Non-Partisan Partisan Right-Wing/Conservative

http://gawker.com/	http://2012.presidential-candidates.org/	http://cofcc.org/
http://www.npr.org/	http://abcnews.go.com/	http://conservativehq.com/
www.aclu.org	http://greenvilleonline.com/	http://dailycaller.com/
www.alternet.org	http://heraldtribune.com/	http://drudgereport.com/
www.commondreams.org	http://jacksonville.com/	http://frontpagemag.com/
www.crooksandliars.com	http://nationaljournal.com/	http://hotair.com/
www.dailykos.com	http://thedailybeast.com/	http://jewishworldreview.com/
www.democraticunderground.com	http://thehill.com/	http://mensnewsdaily.com/
www.huffingtonpost.com	http://www.adweek.com/	http://michellemalkin.com/
www.indymedia.org	http://www.aikenstandard.com/	http://nationalinterest.org/
www.michaelmoore.com	http://www.ajc.com/	http://newsbusters.org/
www.motherjones.com	http://www.amestrib.com/	http://newswithviews.com/
www.moveon.org	http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/	http://onenewsnow.com/
www.msnbc.com	http://www.citizen.com/	http://pjmedia.com/
www.newyorker.com	http://www.clintonherald.com/	http://realclearpolitics.com/
www.nydailynews.com	http://www.columbiacitypaper.com/	http://reason.com/
www.nytimes.com	http://www.concordmonitor.com/	http://ricochet.com/
www.randirhodes.com	http://www.conwaydailysun.com/	http://rightwingnews.com/
www.rawstory.com	http://www.c-span.org/	http://spectator.org/
www.salon.com	http://www.dailydem.com/	http://townhall.com/
www.slate.com	http://www.desmoinesregister.com/	http://volokh.com/
www.theatlantic.com	http://www.goupstate.com/	http://wizbangblog.com/
www.thenation.com	http://www.heraldonline.com/	http://www.aei.org/
www.thomhartmann.com	http://www.indystar.com/	http://www.bernardgoldberg.com/
www.tnr.com	http://www.islandpacket.com/	http://www.boortz.com/
www.villagevoice.com	http://www.issues2000.org/default.htm	http://www.breitbart.com/
www.wegoted.com	http://www.kansascity.com/	http://www.cato.org/
	http://www.latimes.com/	http://www.commentarymagazine.com/
CANDIDATE SITES (PARTISAN BY INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATE)	http://www.miamiherald.com/	http://www.conservapedia.com
	http://www.nashuatelegraph.com/	http://www.csmonitor.com/
www.barackobama.com	http://www.orlandosentinel.com/	http://www.debbieschlussel.com/
www.buddyroemer.com	http://www.palmbeachpost.com/	http://www.dickmorris.com
www.fredkarger.com	http://www.postandcourier.com/	http://www.hannity.com/
www.garyjohnson2012.com	http://www.post-gazette.com/	http://www.infowars.com/
www.hermancahin.com	http://www.press-citizen.com/	http://www.jihadwatch.org/
www.jon2012.com	http://www.qctimes.com/	http://www.lifenews.com/
www.michelebachmann.com	http://www.rollcall.com/	http://www.lifesitenews.com/
www.mittromney.com	http://www.seacoastonline.com/	http://www.loudobbs.com/
www.newt.org	http://www.siouxcityjournal.com/	http://www.lucianne.com/
www.rickperry.org	http://www.stltoday.com/	http://www.marklevinshow.com
www.ricksantorum.com	http://www.sun-sentinel.com/	http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/
www.ronpaul2012.com	http://www.thedartmouth.com/	http://www.powerlineblog.com/
www.timpawlenty.com	http://www.theitem.com/	http://www.redstate.com/
	http://www.thesmokinggun.com/	http://www.theblaze.com/
	http://www.thestate.com/	http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/
	http://www.thesunnews.com/	http://www.vdare.com
	http://www.thetandd.com/	pjmedia.com/instapundit/
	http://www.thonline.com/	www.amconmag.com
	http://www.timesrepublican.com/	www.american.com
	http://www.unionleader.com/	www.americanfreepress.net
	http://www.vanityfair.com/	www.amren.com
	http://www.vnews.com/	www.anncoultter.com
	http://www.wfcourier.com/	www.billoreilly.com
	https://plus.google.com	www.businessweek.com
	politico.com	www.citizensunited.org
	usnews.com	www.cnsnews.com
	www.aarp.org	www.conservativedailynews.com
	www.about.com	www.etherzone.com
	www.answers.com	www.firstthings.com
	www.ap.org	www.forbes.com
	www.ask.com	www.foxnews.com

www.associatedcontent.com	www.freerepublic.com
www.azcentral.com	www.glennbeck.com
www.blogger.com	www.gop.com
www.blogspot.com	www.gopusa.com
www.bloomberg.com	www.heritage.org
www.boston.com	www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review
www.carrollspaper.com	www.humanevents.com
www.cbsnews.com	www.isi.org
www.chicagotribune.com	www.jbs.org
www.chron.com	www.lewrockwell.com
www.cleveland.com	www.libertyunbound.com
www.cnn.com	www.lp.org
www.craigslist.org	www.mrc.org
www.dallasnews.com	www.nationalreview.com
www.denverpost.com	www.newcriterion.com
www.digg.com	www.newsmax.com
www.economist.com	www.numbersusa.com
www.ew.com	www.nypost.com
www.facebook.com	www.rushlimbaugh.com
www.fark.com	www.the-american-interest.com
www.ft.com	www.thenewatlantis.com
www.globegazette.com/	www.washingtontimes.com
www.google.com	www.weaintgottimetobled.com
www.hbo.com	www.weeklystandard.com
www.helium.com	www.weeklyworldnews.com
www.jsonline.com	www.wnd.com
www.ksl.com	www.worldmag.com
www.laoniadailysun.com/	www.wsj.com
www.lemarssentinel.com/	
www.linkedin.com	
www.mcclatchydc.com	
www.mentalfloss.com	
www.messengernews.net/	
www.metafilter.com	
www.myspace.com	
www.nasdaq.com	
www.nationalenquirer.com	
www.netlog.com	
www.newsblaze.com	
www.newsday.com	
www.newser.com	
www.newsvine.com	
www.newtondailynews.com/	
www.ocreger.com	
www.pbs.org	
www.people.com	
www.photobucket.com	
www.prweb.com	
www.public.shns.com	
www.reddit.com	
www.reuters.com	
www.scribd.com	
www.tampabay.com	
www.thegazette.com	
www.thehawkeye.com	
www.theonion.com	
www.time.com	
www.topix.com	
www.tumblr.com	
www.twitter.com	
www.usatoday.com	
www.usmagazine.com	
www.variety.com	
www.washingtonexaminer.com	
www.washingtonpost.com	
www.wikia.com	
www.wikipedia.org	
www.wired.com	
www.wordpress.com	
www.yahoo.com	
www.yelp.com	
www.youtube.com	

Sampling was admittedly not very scientific; rather, an attempt was made to gather data from a large number of sites fitting each categorization. While the liberal sample was deliberately truncated for the purposes of this study, it is far from our intention to imply that conservative websites greatly outnumber liberal ones. Lists of sources sampled heavily include Wikipedia’s “list of newspapers in U.S. by circulation”, Hindman’s list of most popular news and political sites from 2007, and a compilation from Alexa.org of the most popular right-wing news sites from 2009. Some websites were excluded for having insufficient coverage of any candidate, notably some popular tabloids, “soft news” outlets, and organizations with political agendas but few or no positions on presidential candidates posted online, such as the NRA. While sites for groups such as white supremacists might have been included in the conservative sample, similar to sites calling for communist or other revolution from the left, these had very little to say about the 2008 Republican Party nominees and were excluded. Suggestions for sites mistakenly left out are quite welcome!

APPENDIX B: WEB SEARCH METHODOLOGY

All searches were conducted in Google’s Advanced Search page. Candidates’ first and last names were placed in the “Exact Phrase” text box, searched within each domain listed in APPENDIX A for pages posted only within the past year (approximately late Nov. 2010-Dec. 2011), approximating the earliest stages of the 2012 Republican Party presidential primary campaign. For Ralph Nader and Bob Barr, the time restriction was removed to capture results covering their 2008 presidential campaigns, so the proportion of their coverage actually focused on their 2008 campaigns is likely smaller than the full percentages given. To make fruitful comparisons, the total number of articles had to be expanded to compare how much coverage of political figures is given, compared to entertainers. In addition to non-candidates Palin, Christie, and Paul, as well as Nader and Barr, all articles mentioning Barack Obama were added to the “total” articles by which articles mentioning two celebrities were divided. Even after expanding the total greatly, some sources, especially tabloids and other highly trafficked and popular sites, yielded exponentially high percentages (up to 2847% when treated as a media category) of articles about either of the entertainers selected, Justin Bieber and Kim Kardashian.

APPENDIX C: 2012 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY RESULTS BY CANDIDATE IN THE FIRST FOUR CONTESTS

	Huntsman	Santorum	Bachmann	Perry	Paul	Gingrich	Romney
IA	1	24.6	5	10.3	21.4	13.3	24.5
NH	16.9	9.4		0.7	22.9	9.4	39.3
SC		17			13	40.4	27.9
FL		13.3			7	31.9	46.4
Ended Campaign	01/16/12	04/10/12	01/04/12	01/19/12	n/a	05/02/12	n/a
Total Delegates	2	255	0	0	158	138	1512

Sources: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/primary-tracker/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republican_Party_presidential_primaries,_2012

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Type of Sources (N)	Johnson	Huntsman	Santorum	Bachmann	Perry	Paul	Romney
Liberal (27)	0.58%	1.39%	1.08%	5.67%	15.44%	7.47%	16.01%
Conservative (89)	0.85%	2.61%	3.32%	6.88%	13.71%	23.10%	16.08%
Non-Partisan (133)	0.90%	2.61%	3.20%	7.91%	11.87%	12.70%	14.03%
Broadcast Networks (10)	0.21%	2.10%	1.90%	9.84%	10.72%	10.61%	15.67%
Online Only (100)	1.25%	2.37%	3.36%	6.69%	12.50%	19.39%	14.24%
Social Networking (5)	3.21%	1.30%	1.25%	6.39%	12.57%	21.99%	10.77%
Tabloids (13)	0.33%	2.91%	0.86%	5.64%	13.88%	2.28%	4.24%
Also in Print (104)	0.44%	2.86%	3.12%	7.14%	12.49%	10.25%	16.81%
Major News Agencies (6)	0.18%	2.51%	1.48%	8.48%	16.86%	4.67%	13.20%
IA NH SC Newspapers (39)	0.86%	4.13%	5.40%	10.56%	12.44%	15.47%	18.23%
Florida Newspapers (5)	0.07%	1.43%	2.60%	2.61%	4.93%	1.87%	9.51%
Big City Newspapers (29)	0.05%	1.49%	1.17%	4.25%	10.23%	4.14%	15.08%
Political Sites (63)	1.41%	2.79%	2.86%	6.69%	16.69%	15.60%	15.32%
Entertainment <1% (156)	0.83%	2.50%	3.10%	6.58%	13.14%	16.76%	16.07%
Blog Aggregators (10)	1.54%	2.53%	2.68%	8.17%	15.61%	19.52%	15.02%
One Pundit (22)	0.50%	1.38%	2.39%	7.14%	18.67%	21.54%	10.72%
"High" Traffic (85)	0.60%	1.95%	1.98%	6.72%	12.71%	11.01%	14.25%
Official Sites, no Obama (12)	1.90%	4.62%	4.06%	7.77%	13.93%	11.53%	31.11%
Highest % for Individual	Lowest % for Individual						
Highest of All (R) Candidates	Lowest of All (R) Candidates						
Highest of All Individuals	Lowest of All Individuals						
http://2012-presidential-candidates.org/	11.41%	11.34%	11.36%	11.31%	11.39%	11.44%	11.49%
All (249 + 13 Official Sites)	0.90%	2.58%	3.06%	7.32%	12.96%	15.65%	15.72%
Top 10 Sites for Candidate	www.reddit.com (14%)	www.newsday.com (23%)	www.theonion.com (40%)	http://www.wctcourier.com/ (65%)	www.glennbeck.com (96%)	http://cofcc.org/ (99%)	http://rightwingnews.com/ (98%)
	http://2012-presidential-candidates.org/	http://pjmedia.com/	www.citizensunited.org	www.aarp.org	www.usmagazine.com	http://mensnewsdaily.com/	http://jewishworldreview.com/
	http://volokh.com/	http://www.redstate.com/	www.thenewatlantis.com	www.nasdaq.com	www.mcclatchydc.com	http://www.aikenstandard.com/	www.rickperry.org
	www.crooksandliars.com	http://www.seacoastonline.com/	http://onenewsnow.com/	www.foxnews.com	www.mittromney.com	www.lewrockwell.com	www.thegazette.com
	www.conservativedailynews.com	www.buddyroemer.com	http://www.columbiacitypaper.com/	www.reuters.com	http://www.vanityfair.com/	http://www.press-citizen.com/	www.ksl.com
	www.wikipedia.org	http://thehill.com/	http://www.amestrib.com/	www.nationalreview.com	www.chron.com	http://www.infowars.com/	www.moveon.org
	www.fredkarger.com	www.nydailynews.com	http://www.lifeneews.com/	www.photobucket.com	http://www.marklevinshow.com	www.forbes.com	www.thenewatlantis.com
	www.myspace.com	http://www.vnews.com/	http://2012-presidential-candidates.org/	http://michellemalkin.com/	www.rawstory.com	www.libertyunbound.com	www.jon2012.com
	www.buddyroemer.com	www.theatlantic.com	http://heraldtribune.com/	www.nationalenquirer.com	www.moveon.org	http://www.issues2000.org/default.htm	www.timpawenty.com
	http://thehill.com/ (7%)	http://2012-presidential-candidates.org/ (11%)	http://www.conservapedia.com (11%)	http://abcnews.go.com/ (21%)	http://pjmedia.com/ (39%)	www.youtube.com (77%)	www.gop.com (49%)
	albuquerquejournal.com (100%)						
Type of Sources (N)	Johnson	Huntsman	Santorum	Bachmann	Perry	Paul	Romney

Gingrich	Cain	Palin	Christie	Ryan	Obama	Nader	Barr	Entertain	Type of Sources (N)
25.51%	11.02%	3.14%	0.88%	1.65%	14.61%	13.86%	4.18%	4.57%	Liberal (27)
15.60%	16.55%	11.17%	3.03%	6.67%	24.87%	4.13%	3.06%	1.52%	Conservative (89)
14.67%	27.85%	17.03%	1.58%	1.47%	26.14%	6.40%	1.67%	429.41%	Non-Partisan (133)
15.36%	31.23%	6.17%	1.11%	1.18%	20.49%	7.41%	2.91%	4.27%	Broadcast Networks (10)
15.86%	16.92%	18.88%	2.14%	3.58%	26.89%	10.30%	2.83%	189.75%	Online Only (100)
22.16%	14.25%	100.25%	1.71%	3.55%	53.80%	11.92%	2.70%	2023.49%	Social Networking (5)
15.51%	37.15%	65.85%	0.40%	0.54%	18.39%	8.65%	2.01%	2847.92%	Tabloids (13)
16.55%	27.79%	10.98%	1.57%	2.58%	23.36%	3.27%	0.76%	363.49%	Also in Print (104)
9.97%	42.65%	2.10%	0.29%	0.29%	29.33%	8.94%	1.88%	2.81%	Major News Agencies (6)
15.27%	17.64%	4.45%	2.48%	1.34%	21.15%	2.29%	0.54%	2.95%	IA NH SC Newspapers (39)
14.96%	62.03%	1.37%	0.73%	0.59%	21.45%	3.69%	1.05%	24.41%	Florida Newspapers (5)
18.51%	43.98%	2.41%	1.23%	1.19%	26.59%	1.31%	0.43%	27.56%	Big City Newspapers (29)
18.42%	13.17%	6.47%	2.43%	6.13%	20.31%	9.23%	4.95%	1.11%	Political Sites (63)
17.22%	19.96%	6.59%	1.67%	3.98%	20.82%	5.25%	2.80%	0.19%	Entertainment <1% (156)
9.36%	25.58%	34.63%	4.72%	6.58%	34.41%	7.85%	2.51%	264.19%	Blog Aggregators (10)
17.76%	16.87%	9.11%	4.01%	2.65%	18.11%	4.91%	1.39%	1.07%	One Pundit (22)
17.21%	27.34%	14.15%	1.49%	1.88%	25.74%	7.37%	2.11%	215.64%	"High" Traffic (85)
16.97%	8.10%	3.34%	4.55%	4.16%	38.01%	n/a	n/a	n/a	Official Sites, no Obama (12)
									Lowest % for Individual
									Highest % for Individual
									Lowest of All (R) Candidates
									Highest of All (R) Candidates
									Lowest of All Individuals
									Highest of All Individuals
11.57%	8.69%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.35%	n/a	n/a	n/a	http://2012.presidential-candidates.org/
16.21%	21.35%	12.97%	2.14%	3.38%	25.06%	6.40%	2.44%	228.79%	All (249 + 13 Official Sites)
www.newyorker.com (98%)	www.topix.com (99%)	www.usmagazine.com (>100%)	http://www.thetandd.com/ (45%)	www.weeklystandard.com (>100%)	www.mittromney.com (>100%)	www.indymedia.org (82%)	www.lp.org (95%)	www.usmagazine.com (>100%)	Top 10 Sites for Candidate
www.american.com	www.jsonline.com	www.facebook.com	http://michellemalkin.com/	www.gop.com	www.timpawlenty.com	www.democraticunderground.com	www.aclu.org	www.myspace.com	
http://www.postandcourier.com/	www.ew.com	www.photobucket.com	www.timpawlenty.com	www.thenewatlantis.com	www.answers.com	www.helium.com	http://votek.com/	www.people.com	
www.linkedin.com	www.bloomberg.com	www.blogger.com	www.mittromney.com	http://www.aei.org/	http://www.debbieschlusel.com/	www.mentalfloss.com	http://www.c-span.org/	www.blogger.com	
www.weeklystandard.com	http://www.ajc.com/	www.weeklyworldnews.com	www.firstthings.com	http://dailycaller.com/	www.about.com	http://www.c-span.org/	www.photobucket.com	www.photobucket.com	
http://www.thesmokinggun.com/	www.people.com	www.nationalenquirer.com	www.the-american-interest.com	www.mittromney.com	www.gop.com	www.public.shns.com	www.helium.com	www.youtube.com	
www.state.com	http://www.miamiherald.com/	http://wizbangblog.com/	www.announcer.com	www.thenation.com	www.businessweek.com	www.myspace.com	www.indymedia.org	www.craigsl.org	
www.newsblaze.com	http://www.indystar.com/	www.globegazette.com/	pjmedia.com/instapundit/	http://www.cato.org/	http://www.sttoday.com/	www.thomhartmann.com	www.etherzone.com	www.netlog.com	
www.wegated.com	http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/	www.wikia.com	http://www.jihadwatch.org/	http://www.qctimes.com/	www.wikia.com	www.metfilter.com	www.metfilter.com	www.tumblr.com	
www.thenation.com (56%)	http://frontpagemag.com/ (83%)	pjmedia.com/instapundit/ (49%)	www.businessweek.com (10%)	http://ricochet.com/ (16%)	www.csnnews.com (87%)	www.thenation.com (49%)	http://www.vdare.com (13%)	www.answers.com (>100%)	
Gingrich	Cain	Palin	Christie	Ryan	Obama	Nader	Barr	Entertain	Type of Sources (N)

(SUMMARY OF RESULTS, PUT PG. 1 & 2 TOGETHER)

Source	Self	Johnson%	Hunts%	Santorum%	Bach%	Perry%	Paul%	Romney%	Gingrich%	Cain%	Palin%	Christie%	Ryan%	Obama%
www.michelebachmann.com	164.20%	0.39%	2.33%	3.11%	0.00%	11.28%	19.46%	15.56%	37.35%	10.51%	1.17%	0.39%	0.78%	15.95%
www.newt.org	348.15%	1.06%	9.52%	6.35%	13.76%	21.16%	6.88%	22.75%	0.00%	18.52%	0.00%	0.53%	4.76%	44.97%
www.jon2012.com	127.73%	1.40%	0.00%	0.56%	2.80%	7.56%	1.96%	53.78%	26.33%	5.60%	1.40%	0.00%	1.12%	14.57%
www.garyjohnson2012.com	84.74%	0.00%	2.72%	4.90%	3.27%	4.36%	70.30%	6.27%	3.00%	5.18%	1.63%	0.54%	0.00%	3.27%
www.ronpaul2012.com	2130.62%	0.64%	2.57%	7.92%	11.56%	13.28%	0.00%	25.91%	25.48%	12.63%	1.71%	0.43%	1.07%	9.85%
www.rickperry.org	739.44%	0.00%	1.41%	0.00%	1.41%	0.00%	2.82%	85.92%	4.23%	4.23%	1.41%	1.41%	1.41%	35.21%
www.mittromney.com	10841.12%	0.00%	2.80%	0.93%	3.74%	47.66%	1.87%	0.00%	38.32%	4.67%	0.00%	23.36%	23.36%	175.70%
www.ricksantorum.com	113.48%	2.25%	7.49%	0.00%	15.73%	18.35%	9.74%	18.73%	14.61%	13.11%	9.74%	0.75%	1.50%	19.48%
www.fredkarger.com	105.78%	7.51%	7.51%	8.09%	8.09%	9.83%	4.62%	41.04%	8.09%	5.20%	4.05%	0.58%	0.00%	4.62%
www.buddyroemer.com	257.43%	6.93%	13.86%	4.95%	4.95%	17.82%	4.95%	23.76%	11.88%	10.89%	2.97%	0.00%	0.00%	13.86%
REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES TOTALS/AVERAGES	1491.27%	2.02%	5.02%	3.68%	6.53%	15.13%	12.26%	29.37%	16.93%	9.05%	2.41%	2.80%	3.40%	33.75%

(OFFICIAL CANDIDATE SITES FOR REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES, N=10)

Source	Johnson%	Hunts%	Santorum%	Bach%	Perry%	Paul%	Romney%	Gingrich%	Cain%	Palin%	Christie%	Ryan%	Obama%	Nader%	Barr%	Ent.%
www.americanfreepress.net	0.00%	0.15%	1.93%	1.93%	5.35%	66.27%	5.79%	16.79%	1.78%	0.89%	0.00%	0.15%	22.62%	1.33%	0.67%	0.00%
www.humanevents.com	0.01%	1.57%	2.98%	5.90%	9.06%	6.79%	13.95%	55.49%	4.26%	0.22%	0.06%	0.17%	29.53%	0.14%	0.10%	0.01%
www.amconmag.com	0.13%	1.27%	1.14%	4.56%	8.62%	67.43%	7.98%	4.44%	4.44%	10.01%	0.63%	6.08%	8.84%	3.36%	6.37%	0.09%
www.american.com	0.00%	0.33%	0.13%	0.19%	0.86%	0.31%	0.98%	96.60%	0.60%	0.23%	0.21%	0.86%	1.09%	0.28%	0.01%	0.03%
www.the-american-interest.com	0.00%	1.05%	2.11%	13.68%	31.58%	23.16%	21.05%	1.05%	6.32%	38.95%	13.68%	13.68%	42.91%	0.71%	0.35%	1.06%
www.amren.com	0.99%	0.66%	1.32%	7.92%	21.45%	26.73%	7.92%	10.89%	22.11%	12.54%	2.64%	0.33%	32.57%	5.08%	1.05%	0.70%
www.billoreilly.com	0.35%	2.39%	8.62%	15.37%	18.59%	5.14%	19.72%	13.54%	16.28%	8.84%	5.18%	1.09%	11.95%	0.95%	0.07%	0.69%
http://spectator.org/	0.15%	0.40%	0.40%	0.77%	13.16%	52.76%	1.20%	16.09%	15.07%	0.96%	0.33%	0.82%	29.12%	0.31%	0.86%	0.04%
www.citizensunited.org	0.00%	0.92%	37.61%	8.26%	1.83%	2.75%	0.92%	41.28%	6.42%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.39%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
www.cnsnews.com	0.04%	5.87%	7.69%	15.51%	16.92%	9.64%	19.07%	11.30%	13.97%	5.67%	3.64%	5.06%	86.72%	0.94%	0.73%	0.14%
http://conservativehq.com/	5.40%	5.53%	8.23%	9.18%	11.88%	19.03%	15.11%	11.88%	13.77%	2.83%	1.89%	2.02%	5.23%	0.35%	2.56%	0.58%
www.etherzone.com	0.00%	7.46%	4.48%	7.46%	13.43%	35.82%	14.93%	2.99%	13.43%	4.48%	0.00%	1.49%	16.95%	5.93%	16.95%	0.00%
www.freerepublic.com	0.06%	1.92%	2.52%	5.50%	18.44%	10.37%	16.82%	10.89%	33.48%	33.80%	2.18%	2.57%	15.59%	1.08%	0.40%	0.06%
http://frontpagemag.com/	0.07%	0.06%	0.14%	0.38%	7.62%	1.89%	0.56%	0.59%	88.68%	1.37%	0.23%	0.48%	71.26%	0.93%	0.11%	0.04%
www.gopusa.com	0.64%	4.13%	5.47%	12.28%	20.80%	12.40%	17.94%	9.92%	16.41%	7.38%	3.12%	4.33%	34.21%	0.54%	0.11%	0.11%
www.heritage.org	0.00%	0.33%	1.00%	2.66%	28.63%	7.05%	27.69%	3.55%	29.08%	3.61%	1.33%	12.76%	80.90%	0.43%	0.04%	0.02%
www.isi.org	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	0.00%	42.86%	28.57%	0.00%	14.29%	14.29%	0.00%	14.29%	25.00%	18.75%	0.00%	6.25%
www.mrc.org	0.17%	4.44%	3.75%	16.99%	18.47%	4.62%	16.72%	11.50%	23.34%	19.95%	6.27%	7.75%	19.97%	12.52%	4.20%	0.41%
http://mensnewsdaily.com/	0.13%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	98.82%	0.26%	0.26%	0.52%	0.13%	0.79%	0.52%	1.78%	8.23%	3.89%	0.00%
http://nationalinterest.org/	0.76%	6.67%	4.57%	12.38%	10.29%	15.05%	21.14%	16.38%	12.76%	9.90%	1.71%	1.71%	33.88%	0.66%	0.00%	0.77%
www.newsmax.com	0.05%	0.32%	0.27%	7.51%	8.38%	17.03%	32.12%	26.42%	7.91%	13.74%	0.44%	0.26%	29.91%	0.03%	0.02%	0.03%
www.jbs.org	0.32%	0.64%	2.23%	6.05%	24.52%	27.71%	8.60%	18.47%	11.46%	0.64%	0.64%	0.00%	8.40%	0.81%	4.61%	0.00%
www.libertyunbound.com	2.51%	0.42%	1.67%	3.77%	1.67%	86.61%	1.67%	1.26%	0.42%	5.44%	0.84%	0.84%	5.11%	0.00%	1.46%	0.00%
www.lp.org	5.26%	1.75%	1.75%	0.00%	12.28%	49.12%	10.53%	8.77%	10.53%	3.51%	0.00%	15.79%	0.92%	0.79%	95.46%	0.04%
www.thenewatlantis.com	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	55.56%	11.11%	0.00%	22.22%	0.00%	44.44%	28.00%	4.00%	8.00%	0.00%
www.newcriterion.com	0.00%	6.06%	3.03%	6.06%	27.27%	9.09%	12.12%	15.15%	21.21%	15.15%	6.06%	12.12%	25.40%	4.76%	0.00%	0.00%
www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review	0.00%	7.46%	2.99%	4.48%	22.39%	7.46%	22.39%	11.94%	20.90%	1.49%	1.49%	2.99%	51.70%	20.38%	1.13%	0.00%
http://reason.com/	0.25%	0.06%	0.06%	0.06%	11.23%	29.16%	29.01%	29.97%	0.20%	0.14%	0.05%	0.09%	3.66%	0.38%	0.35%	0.03%
http://rightwingnews.com/	0.04%	0.12%	0.15%	0.36%	0.43%	0.39%	97.69%	0.35%	0.46%	1.53%	0.19%	0.23%	1.95%	0.17%	0.06%	0.11%
www.rushlimbaugh.com	0.45%	2.53%	1.34%	10.66%	14.46%	3.58%	26.45%	6.63%	33.90%	11.62%	4.62%	7.45%	30.57%	2.02%	0.20%	0.36%
http://townhall.com/	0.00%	0.03%	0.09%	7.04%	1.13%	23.33%	22.76%	22.76%	22.86%	22.95%	5.14%	0.02%	15.38%	0.42%	0.06%	0.00%
www.worldmag.com	0.15%	2.13%	6.62%	7.38%	10.95%	26.08%	27.83%	6.84%	12.02%	6.16%	1.14%	3.42%	19.31%	2.22%	1.43%	0.53%
www.wnd.com	0.17%	0.58%	0.79%	2.47%	4.97%	2.65%	2.23%	1.84%	84.30%	1.73%	0.45%	0.61%	54.01%	3.72%	2.47%	0.63%
www.weeklystandard.com	0.02%	0.33%	0.25%	0.50%	21.64%	0.96%	1.39%	73.92%	1.00%	0.29%	0.45%	112.14%	7.39%	1.27%	0.15%	0.01%
www.nationalreview.com	0.14%	0.48%	0.49%	27.46%	14.87%	11.64%	15.81%	15.73%	13.37%	10.31%	0.45%	10.38%	19.10%	1.04%	0.57%	0.05%
www.firstthings.com	0.38%	1.13%	6.60%	10.57%	18.87%	20.00%	17.17%	8.68%	16.60%	31.89%	14.15%	13.21%	15.96%	17.04%	1.63%	4.49%
www.gop.com	0.00%	4.65%	0.00%	6.98%	34.88%	0.00%	48.84%	2.33%	2.33%	0.00%	9.30%	69.77%	88.32%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

www.lewrockwell.com	0.34%	0.15%	0.20%	0.25%	0.98%	96.52%	0.48%	0.36%	0.73%	0.30%	0.11%	0.12%	0.93%	0.87%	1.05%	0.01%
http://cofcc.org/	0.00%	0.01%	0.02%	0.01%	0.26%	99.01%	0.04%	0.21%	0.44%	0.11%	0.00%	0.01%	0.53%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
http://www.infowars.com/	0.08%	0.25%	0.26%	0.61%	1.90%	92.76%	1.28%	2.01%	0.85%	0.74%	0.02%	0.10%	4.37%	0.80%	1.34%	0.07%
http://dailycaller.com/	0.24%	0.39%	0.47%	0.81%	0.97%	32.70%	12.85%	19.27%	32.31%	13.82%	0.33%	25.60%	19.91%	0.08%	0.39%	0.13%
http://www.loudobbs.com/	0.00%	0.00%	2.22%	6.67%	13.33%	15.56%	8.89%	17.78%	35.56%	0.00%	4.44%	4.44%	10.71%	1.79%	0.00%	0.00%
http://www.lucianne.com/	0.01%	0.56%	0.43%	9.49%	11.01%	9.17%	21.86%	24.97%	22.50%	0.71%	0.06%	0.07%	16.67%	0.07%	0.00%	0.16%
http://pjmedia.com/	0.09%	20.56%	0.15%	0.44%	38.61%	0.75%	26.66%	1.15%	11.59%	13.27%	0.35%	0.46%	17.79%	0.73%	0.22%	0.54%
http://newswithviews.com/	0.96%	1.60%	1.28%	5.75%	12.14%	45.69%	8.95%	12.14%	11.50%	12.46%	3.19%	1.92%	30.15%	6.12%	8.81%	0.15%
http://realclearpolitics.com/	0.05%	5.38%	0.39%	8.28%	16.22%	6.77%	19.54%	15.46%	27.90%	4.62%	0.32%	5.00%	21.14%	0.63%	0.45%	0.01%
www.washingtontimes.com	0.01%	0.03%	0.02%	13.22%	0.63%	14.67%	22.17%	21.58%	27.67%	0.03%	0.01%	7.17%	23.62%	0.89%	0.12%	0.02%
http://newsbusters.org/	0.03%	0.31%	0.25%	10.57%	1.13%	43.76%	1.13%	31.81%	11.01%	21.59%	0.34%	0.54%	21.10%	3.59%	1.30%	0.04%
http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/	0.04%	0.10%	0.16%	0.46%	0.90%	52.47%	0.51%	0.45%	44.91%	2.22%	1.42%	0.54%	25.51%	0.17%	0.07%	0.03%
http://www.breitbart.com/	0.21%	3.94%	3.62%	7.77%	13.39%	11.55%	17.74%	22.31%	19.48%	12.65%	3.04%	0.31%	79.80%	4.25%	4.03%	1.36%
http://www.theblaze.com/	0.02%	2.33%	0.06%	19.36%	3.56%	20.85%	5.77%	12.86%	35.19%	8.28%	1.90%	3.85%	16.72%	0.01%	0.00%	0.01%
www.forbes.com	0.16%	0.38%	0.16%	0.93%	1.85%	92.07%	1.63%	0.97%	1.85%	1.14%	0.70%	1.22%	29.64%	0.31%	0.01%	20.41%
http://drudgereport.com/	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
http://www.jihadwatch.org/	0.00%	0.39%	5.02%	8.11%	16.60%	28.96%	10.04%	12.36%	18.53%	31.66%	10.81%	0.77%	35.49%	32.55%	0.84%	0.00%
http://jewishworldreview.com/	0.04%	0.41%	0.29%	0.77%	1.55%	0.72%	93.18%	1.31%	1.73%	0.80%	0.42%	0.57%	3.50%	5.07%	0.94%	0.09%
http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/	3.01%	6.49%	6.22%	12.43%	15.72%	12.84%	16.02%	12.38%	14.90%	20.73%	4.13%	4.82%	64.40%	2.22%	1.51%	0.10%
http://www.conservapedia.com	0.00%	0.00%	11.11%	15.56%	10.00%	22.22%	18.89%	15.56%	6.67%	45.56%	5.56%	1.11%	35.71%	13.64%	6.17%	0.97%
http://www.aei.org/	0.97%	7.74%	4.84%	11.41%	15.28%	6.19%	23.40%	19.92%	10.25%	4.84%	4.45%	30.95%	26.29%	21.20%	2.62%	0.21%
http://volokh.com/	10.47%	5.61%	3.03%	7.74%	10.62%	19.12%	15.02%	17.75%	10.62%	22.15%	4.25%	6.98%	3.48%	46.95%	35.09%	0.35%
http://michellemalkin.com/	0.46%	4.60%	2.63%	23.83%	11.16%	8.54%	8.27%	31.98%	8.54%	18.38%	29.48%	4.33%	19.21%	3.16%	3.64%	0.26%
http://www.debbieschlussel.com/	0.47%	0.47%	3.27%	8.41%	12.62%	32.24%	10.28%	14.02%	18.22%	34.11%	4.67%	1.40%	96.77%	0.59%	0.41%	0.16%
http://www.dickmorris.com	0.45%	1.80%	3.83%	12.84%	10.59%	11.71%	18.24%	14.64%	25.90%	7.21%	3.83%	6.98%	9.81%	1.52%	0.00%	0.34%
http://www.vdare.com	0.76%	4.23%	3.63%	7.40%	26.59%	13.29%	11.63%	21.60%	10.88%	4.38%	0.91%	2.11%	16.69%	14.72%	12.60%	0.00%
http://www.lifenews.com/	3.83%	6.71%	11.93%	10.80%	16.81%	9.67%	16.11%	11.85%	12.28%	9.32%	3.92%	1.74%	26.89%	1.83%	0.16%	0.38%
http://onenewsnow.com/	0.11%	1.84%	16.26%	4.05%	24.79%	7.83%	11.66%	16.04%	17.43%	1.40%	1.07%	0.55%	23.04%	0.11%	0.11%	0.11%
http://www.lifesitenews.com/	0.71%	1.27%	10.59%	11.30%	11.72%	37.15%	11.16%	6.92%	9.18%	9.60%	2.54%	0.14%	16.53%	0.21%	0.10%	0.84%
http://wizbangblog.com/	1.62%	1.83%	2.43%	12.37%	16.23%	18.86%	14.81%	10.95%	20.89%	75.46%	9.74%	9.94%	32.98%	8.64%	4.43%	0.28%
http://ricochet.com/	1.87%	4.75%	3.44%	6.61%	17.22%	15.59%	21.48%	14.34%	14.70%	14.37%	6.58%	16.21%	13.88%	0.42%	1.66%	0.56%
http://www.commentarymagazine.com/	0.58%	6.83%	6.07%	12.28%	18.22%	7.91%	22.87%	12.51%	12.73%	8.22%	6.30%	8.31%	14.97%	18.09%	4.35%	0.02%
http://www.cato.org/	6.03%	4.31%	0.65%	1.94%	12.72%	32.97%	11.21%	26.08%	4.09%	3.02%	1.94%	16.38%	19.05%	18.41%	11.21%	0.00%
http://www.boortz.com/	0.77%	2.41%	2.80%	5.21%	14.00%	9.56%	15.54%	17.37%	32.34%	2.22%	1.35%	2.51%	26.77%	2.42%	4.24%	0.18%
http://www.csmonitor.com/	0.01%	0.04%	0.04%	0.11%	2.57%	40.63%	2.76%	46.81%	7.03%	0.13%	0.02%	0.07%	2.63%	0.16%	0.01%	0.02%
http://www.redstate.com/	0.08%	19.49%	0.13%	0.15%	8.92%	22.48%	22.40%	22.08%	4.27%	3.62%	0.10%	6.48%	5.68%	0.51%	0.10%	0.10%
http://hotair.com/	0.04%	7.42%	0.10%	0.20%	25.58%	10.28%	25.75%	25.28%	5.35%	4.96%	0.11%	0.21%	17.76%	0.65%	0.24%	0.01%
http://www.marklevinshow.com	0.00%	0.20%	2.22%	3.64%	41.62%	2.02%	1.41%	33.74%	15.15%	3.43%	2.02%	1.82%	0.56%	0.19%	0.00%	0.00%
http://www.hannity.com/	1.29%	1.93%	6.44%	16.74%	15.88%	8.37%	16.09%	19.96%	13.30%	13.09%	5.36%	6.65%	18.78%	0.14%	0.00%	11.82%
http://www.bernardgoldberg.com/	0.00%	0.52%	0.78%	2.24%	5.44%	14.67%	6.82%	6.90%	62.64%	10.96%	1.73%	1.47%	14.42%	1.52%	0.38%	0.44%
www.glennbeck.com	0.03%	0.06%	0.21%	0.48%	96.47%	0.96%	0.43%	0.48%	0.87%	0.63%	0.16%	0.19%	0.98%	0.04%	0.10%	0.02%
www.numbersusa.com	3.70%	4.63%	5.56%	8.33%	28.70%	10.19%	10.19%	22.22%	6.48%	2.78%	0.93%	0.00%	48.44%	0.44%	1.33%	0.00%
http://www.powerlineblog.com/	0.26%	1.76%	1.67%	7.04%	6.42%	4.22%	35.27%	4.05%	39.31%	10.47%	2.20%	5.01%	19.16%	2.80%	0.12%	0.06%
pjmedia.com/instapundit/	3.55%	3.43%	0.36%	8.76%	31.72%	9.94%	9.47%	7.22%	25.56%	49.47%	11.60%	15.03%	22.34%	11.40%	5.47%	0.90%
www.ann Coulter.com	3.33%	3.33%	3.33%	3.33%	23.33%	16.67%	16.67%	13.33%	16.67%	20.00%	13.33%	6.67%	9.80%	7.84%	0.00%	3.92%
www.foxnews.com	0.03%	5.36%	0.11%	30.12%	3.45%	14.46%	26.32%	16.75%	3.39%	6.07%	0.10%	1.00%	9.70%	0.11%	0.03%	19.56%
www.nypost.com	0.09%	0.58%	0.60%	1.76%	2.66%	1.77%	3.61%	2.46%	86.46%	2.73%	2.99%	0.74%	49.28%	0.24%	0.02%	47.41%
www.wsj.com	0.00%	0.25%	0.12%	0.37%	6.40%	3.53%	6.66%	53.60%	29.07%	3.55%	6.18%	0.28%	23.78%	0.00%	0.00%	4.87%
www.businessweek.com	1.10%	6.60%	3.46%	8.68%	18.32%	12.35%	24.22%	14.48%	10.79%	4.89%	10.31%	6.50%	87.38%	4.95%	0.83%	0.19%
www.weaintgottimetoblead.com	0.00%	0.00%	2.27%	0.00%	18.18%	61.36%	2.27%	11.36%	2.27%	4.55%	0.00%	0.00%	2.13%	2.13%	0.00%	0.00%
www.conservativedailynews.com	8.87%	4.95%	4.50%	6.48%	15.85%	8.44%	10.67%	8.96%	14.68%	5.38%	4.34%	3.92%	14.54%	0.41%	0.00%	0.16%
www.weeklyworldnews.com	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.04%	2.69%	0.09%	0.05%	0.03%	0.09%	96.99%	0.29%	0.09%	49.09%	0.10%	0.00%	0.71%
AVERAGES	0.85%	2.61%	3.32%	6.88%	13.71%	23.10%	16.08%	15.60%	16.55%	11.17%	3.03%	6.67%	24.87%	4.13%	3.06%	1.52%
Source	Johnson%	Hunts%	Santorum%	Bach%	Perry%	Paul%	Romney%	Gingrich%	Cain%	Palin%	Christie%	Ryan%	Obama%	Nader%	Barr%	Ent.%

(CONSERVATIVE SITES, N=89)