

John McCain

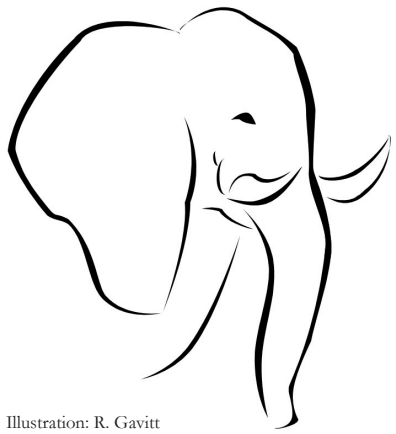


Illustration: R. Gavitt

Students cast their vote

Duncan Cooper
Reporter

When Jordan Sterk '09 steps into the voting booth for the first time Nov. 4, he will make one of the most important decisions of his young life. Since the election is so close in the polls and the presidential candidates' world-views are so dramatically different, Sterk's decision may impact our generation for years to come.

"Having a say in the direction your country is going to go is very important," Sterk said. "I feel it is very important for students to exercise their democratic rights."

According to Rock The Vote, the youth demographic of registered voters has more than doubled; voters between the ages of 18-29 has increased by 109% since the '04 election.

Local Republican Campaign Chairwoman Molly Agostinelli said the importance of the youth vote in presidential elections is crucial: "young voters are the voice of the future."

First-time voting teens are one of the biggest reasons that programs such as Rock the Vote, an '04 rock concert initiative to encourage 18 year olds to vote, and ACORN, an organization whose mission is to register voters, have materialized.

Acorn allegedly registered 200,000 fraudulent voters in the state of Michigan according to the Michigan Secretary of State's office.

Virgin Voters, two different voting initiatives run by students, have sprung up this election. One is run by Noah Gray 16, who is encouraging teens to vote for the first time and post videos of their electoral experiences on Youtube. Gray is offering the winner of the contest a \$500 Apple gift card.

The second Virgin Voters was created by Ava

Lowery 18, who hopes to convince people to get involved in their country. Both Virgin voters were created not only register first time voting teens and get them to show up at the polls, but also to democratically inspire them.

The campaigns' rely a lot on these specialized organizations but they also hope students get informed in public schools about the democratic process. "We depend a lot on your government and civics classes in school," Agostinelli said. Local republicans have no association with youth voting organizations. "We don't have anyone going in and encouraging people to vote."

Although not all students are eligible to vote, many see the importance of being politically active.

Illustration: R. Gavitt



"Too many kids take it [voting] for granted," Kristen Scherner '09 said. "Kids need to know that voting is a right, not a privilege because that's what our country is based on."

Other students believe being politically active is not important until they can vote.

"It's most important for the ones that can be legitimately politically

involved," Ellie Okerstrom '10 said. "A freshman could be like: 'wool! Go McCain!' But when it comes to it, their voice doesn't really count."

So when Jordan Sterk walks into that voting booth, he won't just be casting his vote, he'll be carrying the future. Although it is now too late to register, the young vote is sure to make a very significant impact on this year's election, and the future of our country.



Barak Obama

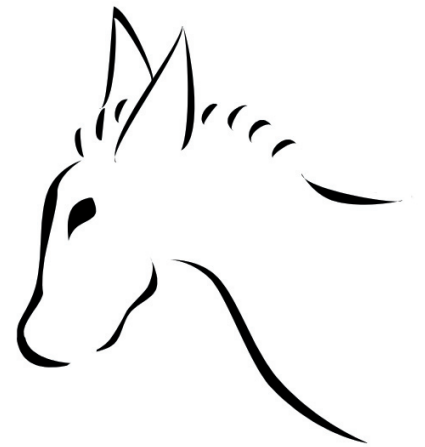


Illustration: R. Gavitt

Candidates turn to technology during campaign

Through emails and text messages, 2008 presidential candidates Barak Obama and John McCain have found a new way to communicate with voters

Kirk Rasmussen
Reporter

O-B-A-M-A: 206,000,000 hits on Google, 492,000 videos on Youtube, all accessible from one's living room. This flood of information, advertisement and discussion is vastly more prevalent now than ever before. Newly emerging accessibility to technology has become the new weapon in politics—a strategy to place candidates' in the corner of the computer screen, not just on Scrubs breaks.

"I think the Internet was a very effective way to reach young people," Diana Ketola, local Democratic Party Chair said. "Teenagers are not prone to picking up a newspaper and reading it. They get most of their information through the Internet."

Many of the hours spent browsing Internet tabloids or checking Facebook are accompanied by pop-ups of the candidates. Numerous sites even encourage this political ubiquity, which has fueled

the surge of youth involvement. Popular networking sites like Myspace feature an "Election '08" section on their home page to meet the rising popularity of Internet inspired politics.

This tactic has a downside for teens, however. "I hope these

political executives in charge don't think that they can just slap a Myspace logo on something and think it means we automatically will love it," Matt Gauthier '09 said.

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The reach of the Internet creates a vast forum for international debate, inspired by quick access to rapidly changing information. Political chatter is posted within seconds of politicians' utterances, as in the "Joe six-pack" web debate.

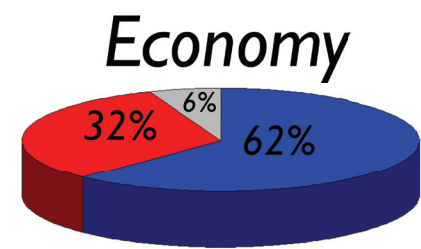
Internet forums encourage massive involvement not just because of technological expediency but also for young people, it is a tool that unleashes the shy. Those who may be timid face-to-face roar from behind the screen. Without direct faces, people are free to diss or discuss issues unfettered.

Text messaging has also significantly influenced the flow of information, as distinguished from the '04 election. Barack Obama sent over 3 million messages concerning his Vice Presidential pick. "It seems like a great way to spread info," Michelle Seman '10, said. "It probably gets annoying, though. It's like spam messaging."

Students weigh in with their opinions on election issues

The Economy:

Barack Obama will increase investments in infrastructure, energy independence, education, and research and development; modernize and simplify our tax code so it provides greater opportunity and relief to more Americans; and implement trade policies that benefit American workers and increase the export of American goods.



"I support a free trade market, but with regulations in place by the government to stop things like the crisis we are in right now," Al Manner '09 said. "One of the biggest problems is that the more libertarian views in the government have caused an epic downfall in the economy."

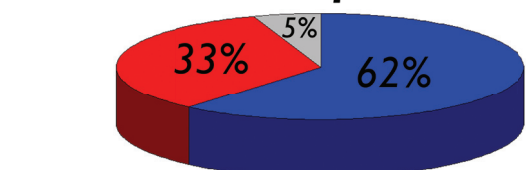
John McCain's economic strategy includes taking the near-term actions needed to provide immediate help to American families while also taking the longer-term steps

necessary to secure America's economic prosperity and leadership in the world. "We first started the free trade market because there was a lot of government regulation but since there isn't as much now it has gone downhill," Hannah Feaster '09 said. "Now we have more government regulation, and it will probably just be one big cycle, until we find a happy medium."

Iraq War:

Before the war in Iraq ever started, Senator Obama said that it was wrong in its conception. In 2002, then Illinois State Senator Obama said Saddam Hussein posed no imminent threat to the United States and that invasion would lead to an occupation of undetermined length, at undetermined cost, with undetermined consequences. Since then, Senator Obama has laid out a plan on the way forward in Iraq that has largely been affirmed by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group led by James Baker and Lee Hamilton.

Withdrawal from Iraq



because it diverted forces away from Afghanistan, but seeing as how we are already there, the best course of action would be a timeline to bring the troops home," Max Elliot '10 said.

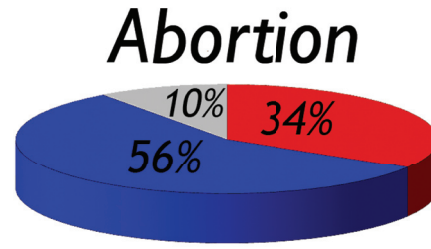
John McCain believes it is essential for the United States to support the Government of Iraq to become capable of governing itself and

safeguarding its people. The best way to secure long-term peace and security is to establish a stable, prosperous, and democratic state in Iraq. When Iraqi forces can safeguard their own country, American troops can return home.

"It was right to go in to Iraq, but President Bush ignored the proper advice from the Pentagon and it was improperly handled," Isaac Niblack '09 said. "The surge worked as a failsafe for what should have been done in the first place. [...] We didn't have control of the situation, and there were unnecessary deaths."

Abortion:

Barack Obama understands that abortion is a divisive issue, and respects those who disagree with him. However, he has been a consistent champion of reproductive choice and will make preserving women's rights under Roe v. Wade a priority as President. He opposes any constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's decision in that case.



"Having an abortion should be the choice of the woman," Paco Diaz '10 said. "I believe it's wrong for the government to decide whether or not a woman should have a child."

John McCain believes Roe v. Wade is a flawed decision that must be overturned, and as president he will nominate judges who understand that courts should not be in the business of legislating from the bench. Constitutional balance would be restored by the

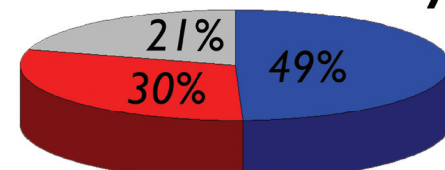
reversal of Roe v. Wade, returning the abortion question to the individual states. The difficult issue of abortion should not be decided by judicial fiat.

"I think that abortion is murder and I don't approve of that, unless the mother's life is in danger," Hope Dingaman '10 said. "If you're raped, then murdering a baby isn't going to help. Unless a mother's life is in danger, you shouldn't abort the baby."

Gay Rights:

Senator Obama believes that marriage is between a man and a woman but he detests the bashing and vilifying of gays and lesbians. Most gays and lesbians are seeking basic recognition of their rights so they're not discriminated against in employment or renting a house, so they can see their partner in a hospital. These are rights for everybody, not just some people.

Homosexuality



"It's ridiculous that the government should have any say in what people do with their lives," Izzy Cooper '11 said. "We shouldn't make decisions for other people; they should be able to do that for themselves."

John McCain believes the institution of marriage is a union between one man and one woman. It is only this definition that sufficiently recognizes the vital and unique role played by mothers and fathers in the raising of children, and the role of the family in shaping, stabilizing, and strengthening communities and our nation.

"Homosexuals should be allowed to be together, and they can make their own choices, but they should come up with a way to have the same thing as 'marriage', without the word 'marriage,'" Nick Thomas '10 said.