Deanspace, Social Networks, and Politics

By Jon Lebkowsky

The Howard Dean campaign's groundbreaking use of the Internet and social software tools was widely publicized, though ultimately the campaign's use of the tools failed to make a winning difference in the 2004 presidential campaign. Their use has been credited for his success in achieving early front-runner status based primarily on his success in raising funds. Overdependence on the Internet was controversially blamed by some pundits for the campaign's ultimate collapse in Iowa and New Hampshire. What's undeniable is the broad impact on campaign politics: Other campaigns, including George Bush's and John Kerry's, have focused more on the Internet based on Dean's early successes, and political conversation on the Internet has gained visibility.

A volunteer project called Deanspace, which operated with little involvement or support from the Dean Campaign organization, has received too little attention for its success as an Open Source project and as a tool for building community among Dean supporters. The Deanspace Team made their first deliverables according to their schedule, created deployment and user support infrastructures, and continued to release revisions and new modules even after it was clear that Dean would not win the nomination. This is pretty remarkable for a software development project that is run totally by volunteers and completely without funds, and coordinated through online meetings in an IRC chat room.

Campaign manager Joe Trippi had a vision: social technology and networks are great tools for democracy and advocacy, and incidentally a great way to build support and raise money for a candidate with little to invest up front.

Trippi made his vision clear in a May 2003 post to the Dean for America weblog. Trippi called it "The Perfect Storm," an analogy the campaign organization carried forward into the primaries. Said Trippi, "It is a storm that has never happened before -- because it could not have happened before. The forces required to come into sync were not aligned, nor in some instances mature enough prior to this Presidential campaign."

Trippi said the first step was citizen participation. "But how do these Americans find each other." he asked. "How do they self-organize? How do they collaborate? How do

they take action together?" The answer was the Internet and the World Wide Web, applications like weblogs and Meetup.com, and clueful web-based political initiatives like Moveon.org. All the campaign needed at this point, he said, was "a campaign organization that gets it" and provides "the tools and some of the direction -- stay in as constant communication as you can with the grassroots -- two way/multi-way communication…."[1]

Deanspace fit Trippi's vision. A distributed development project that depended more on people energy than organizational energy to meet its goals, Deanspace was an attempt to create a complete web-based social networking toolkit for campaign volunteers to deploy broadly, creating many sites for different affinity groups and geographical communities. To the extent that the project was successful, it was because its proponents combined strong project commitment and clueful use of Internet communication tools (email, chat, instant messaging) for sustained communication among project participants. Though there were flaws in the project itself and in the software it produced, it was an important early convergence of social software and political campaign infrastructures. Dean campaign leaders like Joe Trippi and Zephyr Teachout were enthusiastic about the potential for Deanspace to evolve a network of localized volunteer sites supporting the Dean candidacy, and conversations peripherally related to Deanspace influenced the evolution of the campaign's software projects (such as DeanLink, a social networking software similar to Friendster, first proposed in a Deanspace IRC chat.)

The Deanspace system is built on Drupal, an open source content management platform that includes social networking features such as a collaborative "book," personalization, a role-based permissions system, authentication, blogging, syndication, and forums. These features support group-forming, collaboration, and sustained communication among local or affinity groups.

This chapter discusses Deanspace in the context of emerging social software technologies, the process of building Deanspace as an Open Source project, and the relevance of Deanspace to the campaign.

Hack for Dean

Deanspace is an Open Source project that was originally called Hack4Dean, the focus of which was to create the website toolkit that Trippi envisioned, one that could be broadly deployed to create virtual community presences for the Howard Dean campaign. One of the instigators of the project, Zack Rosen, dropped out of the University of Illinois so he could work to get Howard Dean elected. Zack discussed the project with several others, who helped tune the concept in online and offline discussions as the project was getting under way. Zack's original idea: create and distribute a set of tools that anyone with a bit of technical assistance and some degree of comfort with web tools could use to set up ad hoc Dean microcommunities on the Web, smaller communities within the macrocommunity of citizens for Dean. From these communities an autonomous campaign organization would theoretically emerge, creating a platform for the activities of hundreds of thousands of Dean supporters. Given success at this emergent group-forming, Rosen and others felt Dean supporters wouldn't need the kind of hierarchical

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[1] Trippi, Joe. . "The Perfect Storm." http://dean2004.blogspot.com/2003_05_11_dean2004_archive.html#200303997.

command-and-control structure associated with traditional campaigns. Activists might plant the seeds of advocacy and watch as others took up the campaign's message and spread it through the use of the Deanspace toolkit. More practically, they would plant the seeds, spread the message, but do so in addition to a more structured political campaign. Deanspace includes a variety of tools, such as weblogs, forums, and calendars – tools to focus on communication rather than systems for control. But the real value was going to be in linking like-minded communities and building a network that shares information, and you'd do this with RSS syndication (RSS is extended as "Rich Site Summary" or "Really Simple Syndication," among others). RSS is a relatively simple tool for sharing and distributing content through a common standard for describing content data elements (i.e. title, summary, description, etc.) so that they can be published with a common understanding about how they should be parsed and displayed. Syndication extends published content so that it reaches more readers, igniting community as content is shared and responses posted. Sites would become nodes in a network where content is shared in all directions, weaving the microcommunities together.[2]

Ultimately activists deployed over 100 sites using the Deanspace toolkit. This included one or more Deanspace sites for each state and several sites based on affinity (e.g. Catholics For Dean, Seniors for Dean, Scientists for Dean, Women for Howard Dean). Some sites were themed (Music for America, Book Tours for Dean, News for Dean). The goal of most sites was to attract more people to the campaign and keep them informed about campaign activities that were local or relevant to the affinity group represented. Deanspace was really a platform for group-forming with the assumption that the Dean campaign could grow exponentially based on Reed's Law.

Reed's Law

Zack was influenced by David Reed's thinking about networks and group-forming, expressed as Reed's Law: which says that the utility of large networks can scale exponentially with the size of networks.[3] Reed's insight: The number of possible subgroups is 2^n, where n is the number of participants. The growth of a social network's value is much greater than its linear growth. This is significant for political organizations that depend on numbers of adherents to establish influence. . They build support by collecting potential supporters, signing them onto mailing lists and encouraging them to give support, usually by donating money, writing letters, or volunteering time. The network view is that supporters will sign up supporters who will sign up even more supporters, so the growth through group-forming is a social network explosion, and the value is not just in the numbers here. Networking may also result in deeper engagement and what sociologist Mark Granovetter calls "the strength of weak ties.". If I was recruited by someone I know, I have a stronger connection to the network than I would if I was recruited via cold calling.

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[2] This description of Deanspace was captured in part from a video Lisa Rein shot at ILAW 2003 at Stanford University, which is posted at *http://www.onlisareinsradar.com/archives/001562.php*. [can you relate more of this description and the energy Lisa brought to the description – in some ways, the Dean energy was a collection of all these individual passions,]

[3] Reed, David P. "That Sneaky Exponential – Beyond Metcalfe's Law to the Power of Community Building." http://www.reed.com/Papers/GFN/reedslaw.html.

Reed's Law follows on Metcalfe's Law, which says that the utility of a communication network equals the square of the number of users, n^2. An entry in Wikipedia, a collaborative online encyclopedia, illustrates this with the fax machine as an example:

> A single fax machine is useless, but the value of every fax machine increases with the total number of fax machines in the network, because the total number of people with whom you may send and receive documents increases. This contrasts with traditional models of supply and demand, where increasing the quantity of something *decreases* its value.[4]

Reed acknowledged Metcalfe's Law, but said that "many kinds of value grow proportionally to network size and some grow proportionally to the square of network size," however some scale even faster:

> Networks that support the construction of communicating groups create value that scales *exponentially* with network size, i.e. much more rapidly than Metcalfe's square law. I will call such networks Group-Forming Networks, or GFNs.[5]

Reed's thoughts about group-forming is one of several drivers for a social software movement that's been growing (scale-driven, Reed would say) the last couple of years. Other influences include Malcolm Gladwell, whose book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Make a Big Difference*[6] discusses how ideas and trends emerge from networks; Howard Rheingold, whose *Smart Mobs*[7] focuses on technologies for cooperation and group-forming with mobile devices; Albert-Laszlo Barbasi, whose *Linked: How Everything is Connected to Everything Else and What It Means*[8] discusses the scale-free networks underlying … just about everything, really, down to a cellular level. All of these authors talk about the emergence of ideas and actions through social networks, and how emergence is relevant to social movement and social order. Gladwell discusses "social epidemics" where ideas and behaviors spread the way disease spreads. Rheingold covers emergent group behavior among users of mobile wireless technologies, specifically, and Internet users more generally, and discusses group-forming online. Barbasi's book is a more general overview of network science, explaining network structure and relevance to complexity theory, and providing background for more effective network use. These and other books lay the foundation for a politics that conforms to network structure: individuals are nodes that are linked through hubs (communities). This political vision is relevant to grassroots politics. Grassroots political campaigns often fail, at least initially, against the organizational power of centralized political forces, however a grassroots that is both shaped and supported by powerful communication networks can in theory be both well-organized and decentralized. Groups may self-organize and create ad hoc movements. Consider the 1999 protests at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle: using basic Internet tools (web sites, email, immediate messaging, and chat rooms), diverse organizations produced a generally peaceful protest by 30,000 persons. The short-term protest also yielded longer-

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[4] Anonymous, "Metcalfe's Law." Entry in Wikipedia, http://en2.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metcalfe's_law.

[5] Reed, David P. "That Sneaky Exponential – Beyond Metcalfe's Law to the Power of Community Building." http://www.reed.com/Papers/GFN/reedslaw.html.

[6] Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Make a Big Difference*. California: Back Bay Books, 2002.

[7] Rheingold, Howard. *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*. Perseus Publishing, Boulder, Colorado: 2002.

[8] Barbasi, Albert Laszlo. *Linked: How Everything is Connected to Everything Else and What It Means*. New York: Plume, 2003.

term sustained activity, such as the Independent Media Center
(http://indymedia.org/en/index.shtml).

Social Software

These and other authors of similar works laid the theoretical foundation for developers who want to create socially relevant software and systems, systems that extend social capabilities and facilitate collaboration and cooperation. Software and networking tools have evolved in this direction all along. Consider the extent to which we use computers and computer networks to publish, share, and communicate. Email is a social technology, and so is the World Wide Web. Howard Rheingold wrote about this aspect of the technology in his 1985 book *Tools for Thought*[9]. In 2003, Rheingold responded to a blog entry by UK blogger and social software expert Tom Coates regarding Coates' proposal of a working definition of social software with a comment on the history of social technology. Howard said that our ongoing emphasis on social software should remind us that the real capabilities of augmentation are in the thinking and communication that the tools enable, rather than the technology behind the tools. He also noted that "when a particular group of people uses social software for long enough -- whether it is synchronous or asynchronous, deskbound or mobile, text or graphical -- they establish individual and group social relationships that are different in kind from the more fleeting relationships that emerge from task-oriented group formation." This isn't new, it's been happening since the first email distribution lists appeared. Howard suggested that it's important to acknowledge and build on earlier work. "Something new is happening, truly, in terms of the kinds of software available, and the scale of use. But in many ways, this something new would not be happening if many people over many years had not coded, experimented, socialized, observed, and debated the social relationships and group formation enabled by computer-mediated and Internet-enabled communication media."[10]

Deanspace: Social Network as Activist Community

Recent social software developments are a refinement and extension of "virtual community" thinking based in part on an evolving understanding of online social networks and group-forming. The term *virtual community* was coined by Howard Rheingold as the title of his book about his experiences on and through the Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (WELL), the seminal online conferencing system, a collection of online conversations organized as topics within conferences (which is to say discussions within forums, or conversations within high-level subject areas). With more experience, Rheingold grew circumspect about the term:

> When you think of a title for a book, you are forced to think of something short and evocative, like, well, 'The Virtual Community,' even though a more accurate title might be: 'People who use computers to communicate, form friendships that sometimes form the basis of communities, but you have to be careful to not

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[9] Rheingold, Howard, *Tools for Thought: The History and Future of Mind-Expanding Technology. 2nd Revised Edition.* MIT Press: 2000. Available online at http://www.rheingold.com/texts/tft/.

[10] Rheingold, Howard. Comment posted at
http://www.plasticbag.org/archives/2003/05/my_working_definition_of_social_software.shtml.

mistake the tool for the task and think that just writing words on a screen is the same thing as real community.[11]

In the original version of his introduction to the book, Rheingold writes this definition:

Virtual communities are social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace.[12]

As weblogs have become more popular and prominent as personal (and, increasingly, professional) publishing tools, weblog communities have formed, and these differ from traditional forums in that they are communities based on conversations that occur on public web sites, where as forums are "behind closed doors" requiring at least a login to participate. What they have in common with forums, though, is that weblog communities are communities of bloggers that have formed relationships through their online conversations, and sustained those relationships over time.

The Deanspace vision was to facilitate web communities of Dean supporters by creating a tool that can include both weblogs and forums, with the weblog posts appearing as news entries on the home page for the sites. Each site would be a node in an activist network, over which they could share content via RSS syndication.

Weblogs use RSS (an acronym variously translated as "Really Simple Syndication" or "Rich Site Summary") to syndicate content as it is published. The term *syndication* derives from the newspaper industry's practice of distributing the same content, such as a particular newspaper column or cartoon series, to many publications at once. Specialized applications called news aggregators allow users to subscribe to RSS "feeds" from weblogs they read regularly, so that they can track and read all of them conveniently in one place. However you can also create tools to interpret RSS content for display on a web site, which is closer to the newspaper industry's sense of the term. Deanspace does this. Administrators can capture and display syndicated content from other Deanspace sites.

Any one Deanspace site can display weblog content from many other Deanspace sites, and users can select to display either of several weblogs. It's also possible to pick up single weblog entries from other sites and include them in the front-page weblog display for your site, so that a Deanspace administrator can pick and choose news from the entire universe of Deanspace sites. Readers can post comments to weblog entries, as well, so a relatively simple content management tool is potentially a platform for robust communication within the Deanspace network.

In the context of the Dean campaign, this promise was never completely realized. The Dean campaign ended before the Deanspace network was mature enough for the network to form and conversations evolve.

Facilitating Emergence

Joe Trippi's idea for the campaign was to trust the people and let the campaign emerge from their efforts:

The other thing that is needed -- is a campaign organization that gets it -- or at least tries to get it. One of the other reasons I think this has not happened before is

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[11] Rheingold, Howard, *The Virtual Community (Electronic version),* "Introduction." http://www.rheingold.com/vc/book/intro.html.

[12] Ibid.

that every political campaign I have ever been in is built on a top-down military structure -- there is a general at the top of the campaign -- and all orders flow down -- with almost no interaction. This is a disaster. This kind of structure will suffocate the storm not fuel it. Campaigns abhor chaos -- and to most campaigns built on the old top-down model -- that is what the net represents -- chaos. And the more the campaign tries to control the "chaos" the more it stiffles (sic) its growth. As someone who is at least trying to understand the right mix -- I admit it's hard to get it right. But I think the important thing is to provide the tools and some of the direction -- stay in as constant communication as you can with the grassroots -- two way/multi-way communication -- and get the hell out of the way when a big wave is building on its own.[13]

This fit the Deanspace team's intention: Trippi's' thinking would tend to enable group-forming and emergence. His note about top-down military structure is significant, a description of the hierarchical, antidemocratic structure of most political campaigns. If the campaigns are run that way, what does that say about the process style of the campaigners? Activists pushing for a more democratic system can distribute the power and responsibility for the campaign among its workers and volunteers, supporting this more distributed framework this with robust communication using every tool at their disposal: weblogs and RSS, email, file sharing, forums, instant messaging, chat, teleconferences. Deanspace could be part of a toolkit that might also include other tools like Yahoo groups, various instant messaging products, IRC chat, freeconference.com (for conference calls). As Trippi suggests, this creates a somewhat chaotic environment with various challenges – fragmentation, power vacuums, information overload, etc. "*It's hard to get it right.*"

Ideally, given more time to develop, a mature and broadly adopted Deanspace could overcome some of this fragmentation by providing a complete toolkit including shared calendar, email lists, forums, blogs, and file uploads and downloads. Because Deanspace was modular, developers could create other functionalities (such as the Voterfile and Rideboard modules).

An Open Source Project

Deanspace was organized as an Open Source project. Open Source is more strictly a licensing concept,[14] but more broadly refers to a methodology and a set of practices for software teams that are open in the sense that practically anyone with interest and the right set of skills can participate. Successful Open Source projects include the development of the Linux operating system, the Apache web server, and the Mozilla browser. Open source development and support are often described as community efforts, and rightly so. Communities of practice form around Open Source projects, and there is a general sense of an Open Source community that shares common practices and a common attitude of cooperation and sharing. Unlike proprietary software developers, Open Source developers publish their source code and invite enhancement. Anyone can play, undirected by any central authority and limited only by terms of the the license selected for the particular project. Open Source software development can also be

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[13] Trippi, Joe. "The Perfect Storm." http://dean2004.blogspot.com/2003_05_11_dean2004_archive.html#200303997.

[14] "The Open Source Definition," http://www.opensource.org/docs/definition.php.

described as emergent, the result of patterns of interaction within a community of individual developers that operate more or less democratically. This is similar to Joe Trippi's vision for a political campaign that emerges from the actions and efforts of self-organizing grassroots supporters. The Deanspace team worked and met openly online, therefore unrestricted by geographical constraints, and using tools similar to those that they were developing. Meetings were held in a public chat room, meeting notes were posted in public, as were all the details of the project. Decisions were made by group consensus. There were ongoing conversations via email lists and various one-to-one conversations via immediate messaging.

Rather than build a system from scratch, the team looked for a platform that could be adapted for use. They selected Drupal[15], a free Open Source platform for building dynamic web sites with content management and community features. Building onto an existing platform would save time. Drupal wasn't the only platform they considered, but the other likely candidate, Zope, would be harder for less technical users to install. Drupal was stable, well-supported by a community of programmers, modular and extensible. It also had a feature that allowed users to sign onto any site in a Drupal network. This was theoretically desirable, though it was thought to compromise security, and for that reason some site administrators disabled it.

The actual work of writing code for Deanspace fell mostly to Neil Drumm and Ka-Ping Yee, college students and proficient coders with an Open Source focus. However it's significant that the process was open to others who might show up and provide conceptual or technical input, add modules, and assist in installations and support.

Does It Work?

As of January 2004, there had been almost 50 known Deanspace sites, communities built using these tools, with more on the way. Some are location based and some focus on specific demographics (e.g. SeniorsForDean, VeteransForDean, CatholicsForDean). Location-based sites may be set for a city, county, region, or state (e.g. Austin ForDean…). The Deanspace team's goal was to create an open source multifunctional web application that could be installed easily, resulting in an unlimited number of sites reaching as many confirmed or potential Dean supporters as possible. In this sense, Deanspace is an evident success: there are many sites with many users. However volunteer leaders doing actual campaign work on the ground were not enthusiastic about Deanspace because it didn't include the technology they needed. According to one knowledgeable volunteer, Deanspace was seen primarily as a technology for blogging, so other features that might be useful – e.g. the collaborative book where any site member can add content, the event calendar, forums, and a load of optional modules − were largely ignored. Campaign activists in the field didn't see the kind of application that would be useful for them, one that would capture information about specific voters, their commitments and their interests, the sort of information that helps ensure turnout at caucuses, precinct meetings, primaries and elections. There was no way to handle standard voterfiles in the original Deanspace implementation, because the Deanspace team lacked campaign experience and didn't know that voterfiles would be essential to

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[15] http://drupal.org

campaign organizations. By the time a voterfile module was available, it was too late for the first primaries.

In considering Deanspace, we should also consider the difference between democracy and advocacy. The goal of a democratic activist is to give people a voice and facilitate their participation, whereas an advocate is focused on a specific result. Though tied to a specific campaign, Deanspace was about giving people a voice, about facilitating emergence of political will from within a network of nodes. These nodes, the Deanspace web sites, used a technology created to support group-forming and communication. However, despite Joe Trippi's "perfect storm" comments in support of a bottom-up, emergent campaign structure, seasoned campaigners on the ground were still depending on a more focused, predictable command and control model for the campaign. Deanspace didn't fit that purpose.

This wasn't an accident, though. Deanspace was an independent grassroots effort; it wasn't created for the campaign and wasn't designed for campaign management. Though the Dean campaign liked the software and started deploying it as a platform for state sites, it gave relatively little support and attention to the effort.

As Rosen and Drumm later commented, they didn't understand the requirements of a political campaign well enough when they started, so they failed to incorporate important customer requirements. Their goal was to create a toolkit for building political communities a network of Deanspace sites connected via RSS syndication. However this kind of network can take time to evolve and become useful. Viable Deanspace communities might form over time as participants form relationships, share experiences, and begin to have a common history, but the campaign needs were more immediate. The campaign needed a concise approach to the organization of blocs of voters committed to Dean.

As I write this chapter, Dean has no primary victories. Michael Cudahy and Jock Gill suggest that the campaign was too preoccupied with the Internet strategy, and failed to do the kind of organizing on the ground in Iowa and New Hampshire that Kerry's staff emphasized.[16] The web and social software tools have become essential parts of the political scene, but, according to Cudahy and Gill,

> As astounding a tool as the Internet is, it lacks the personal and persuasive commitment- building quality a candidate gains by listening to concerned American voters in face-to-face conversations.

This may be true, but a candidate can have only so many face-to-face encounters. However a candidate, party or movement can cultivate "influentials," the ten percent of the population that provide leadership and direction for the other 90%.[17] You can reach many of these people via the Internet, and leverage their "personal and persuasive commitment-building" qualities. This is where software like Deanspace may have value, though we need time, thought, and empirical observation to assess its efficacy.

According to Josh Koenig, the Deanspace sites that deployed in fall of 2003 and winter of 2004 were underused. According to Josh, "there were … seemingly very few people who

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[16] Cudahy, Michael and Jock Gill, "The political is personal – not web-based." Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette.com*, February 1, 2004. http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/04032/267624.stm

[17] Berry, Jon and Ed Keller, *The Influentials*. 2003: New York: The Free Press. Berry and Keller cite empirical evidence suggesting that 10% of Americans are early adopters with significant influence within their communities. They guide choices about products and politicians.

had enough to say on a daily basis to run high-volume Deanspace sites." The expectation that communities would form around the sites and feed the weblog on a regular basis was unrealized at all but a few sites. It could be that the users didn't quite grasp the software once it was set up, or that they underestimated the ongoing time and energy required to sustain interest.

Koenig notes that, while there was a huge upswell of grassroots support, there was comparatively little independent organizing. "Ever since the end of the summer when meetups became letter-writing sessions," he says, "the tone of the campaign shifted somewhat. In looking back, this is also when supporter growth began to slow down. I don't know if this is germane or not, but it's something I'm personally interested in trying to figure out."

In assessing whether Deanspace was successful, we also have to consider broader goals beyond this one presidential campaign. Rosen, Koenig and other Deanspace developers and proponents were keenly aware of big media and the extent to which public policy and popular belief are programmed and managed via messaging from the few corporations that own and control most of the large broadcast media channels. Joe Trippi, at O'Reilly's Digital Democracy Teach-In on February 9, 2004, said "Broadcast politics has failed the country miserably. You had no debate going into war, no debate about the Patriot Act. That debate isn't happening anywhere except on the Net." The Deanspace plan was to create a network of sites with robust communications and data-sharing capabilities, a broad platform for interaction, for discussion and debate. Though the project focused on a presidential candidate, its developers realized that this was just another step in a process that began when TCP/IP was first developed and the Internet formed. The Internet is a social tool; it connects people as nodes on a social network, and it supports social and community organization with long-term political implications. Says Koenig, "To me, the great long-term hope of what we've begun is that it will democratize the national dialogue."

The Future of Net.Politics

The Internet has gained popular acceptance as a core technology, with over 131 million Americans using some form of Internet access[18], and 50 million with broadband access.[19] In 2000, there were over 200 million potential voters in the U.S., but only 130 million registered to vote, and only 111 million actually voted.[20] Though we could find no specific data on the percentage of registered voters with Internet access, given the numbers it seems likely that the Internet may be, or become, a significant factor in political campaigns. When we say that, though, what do we mean? The Internet is like an operating system, a platform or environment supporting many applications. Where Howard Dean's campaign was concerned, web sites like those created with Deanspace

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[18] *CyberAtlas,* "Traffic Patterns of 2003" (via *Nielsen Net/Ratings*), http://cyberatlas.internet.com/big_picture/traffic_patterns/article/0,,5931_3298891,00.html. January, 2004.

[19] *Nielsen/Netratings,* "Fifty Million Internet Users Connect Via Broadband, Rising 27 Percent During The Last Six Months, According To Nielsen//Netratings," http://www.nielsen-netratings.com/pr/pr_040108_us.pdf. January, 2004.

[20] U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2000," p. 5. http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/p20-542.pdf. February 2002.

were only part of the story. Meetup.com helped Dean's campaign and others quickly organize physical meetings on a national scale. Campaign supporters used Yahoo Groups effectively to create email lists and leverage file-sharing. Campaign organizations in the field used various database tools, calendar functions, listserves, forum software etc. The Dean campaign's official web site included tools like Deanlink, a candidate-focused social network application where Dean supporters could find each other and form connections, and GetLocal, which showed events near a specific zip code. The Dean campaign was breaking new ground and working without precedent; Trippi and others understood that this mean trying many different technologies.

The Dean campaign did succeed in using Internet technology to raise money and create support and this had an obvious impact on the other 2004 Democratic presidential campaigns, even though Dean ultimately failed to translate online success into primary wins.

Is it contradictory to say that he succeeded, if he failed to win even one primary?

Consider that Dean had little money and visibility at the start of his campaign, compared to other candidates ─ yet he raised enough money and found enough support to create front-runner buzz, and became the first presidential candidate to place Internet tools at the center of his campaign strategy. He showed other (not just presidential) candidates that the power and immediacy of the Internet is extremely relevant to their campaigns.

The resulting surge in the development of technopolitical solutions could change the way campaigns operate from now on, though the real impact is outside the campaigns, in the grassroots. Technically-proficient activists, inspired by their involvement with the Dean campaign and the lessons they've begun to learn about political process, are developing and refining technology to support grassroots efforts while the more traditional campaigns, such as Kerry's, focus more on familiar campaign strategies.

Meanwhile Deanspace has become CivicSpace, its goal expressed in the mathematics of group-forming:

5000 Groups
1 group draws 2000 members
1 members affects 10 voters
$5000 \times 2,000 \times 10 = 100,000,000$ affected voters

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