

THE IMPACT OF ONLINE NON-PARTISAN  
VIDEOS ON SELF-REPORTED  
INTENTION TO  
VOTE  
by

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Abstract

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Previous studies have concluded that Web-based get out the vote (GOTV) messages do not impact voting behavior. However, the primary shortcoming of these studies has been the form of GOTV media studied, focusing on lean, text-based internet media, analogous to direct mail. With the advent of Web 2.0, where users are both consumers and generators of content, further research into internet-based GOTV efforts is warranted. To study the effects of richer Internet media, two sets of videos were created, utilizing proximity and peripheral elaboration of messages to positively stimulate voting engagement and intent. Male and female presenters from the same age group as the target audience were used to make the videos. The results indicate that online video messages tailored to be processed via the peripheral route have a positive impact on viewers' intention to vote.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The impact of get out the vote (GOTV) efforts on voter turnout is well documented (Gosnell H. , 1926; Gosnell H. F., 1937; Gosnell H. F., An Experiment in the Stimulation of Voting, 1926; Kramer, 1970-71; Nickerson D. , 2006; Wolfinger, 1974), but multiple studies have established that there is little to no positive impact on voter turnout derived from increased Internet usage (Bergan, 2011; Han, 2008; Nickerson D. W., 2007). However, these studies focused on lean, text based forms of communication.

In the context of Medium Theory (McLuhan, 1962) and Media Richness Theory, as defined by Richard Daft and Robert Lengel (1986), it is likely that richer forms of Internet media have the capacity to positively impact voter turnout. In addition to a demonstrated ability to mobilize partisan audiences with localized get out the vote initiatives, the Internet has also been shown to be an effective tool for disseminating information via “opinion leaders” in on- and offline forums (Norris & Curtice, 2007).

It has also been shown that people are more likely to trust those whom they perceive as similar to themselves, a tendency known as Homophily Principle (Flynn, Reagans, & Guillory, 2010). As such, it stands to reason that Internet media, which incorporates elements that will highlight perceived similarities between the sender and receiver of the message, will also be more effective.

Further, under the Elaboration Likelihood Model, it has been shown that messages can be effectively conveyed through peripheral cues when central cues are ineffective (Zwarun & Torrey, 2011). Based on these findings, and in order to broaden our understanding of the potential effectiveness of the Internet in stimulating voter turnout, this researcher proposes to study the effectiveness of richer media GOTV messages conveyed via the Internet. However, the Internet, or even the collection of Web content

devoted to political information, is not a monolithic entity. Individuals engage with particular parts of the web rather than with the medium as whole and different characteristics of sites may appeal differently to different visitors (Xenos & Bennet, 2007). Therefore, this study will focus only on one feature of the Internet: Online videos.

To that end, this paper first reviews the literature on voter participation. It will discuss the evolution of the study of mobilization efforts on voter turnout as well as some of the methods used by scholars to measure this impact. It will then offer parallel theories that explain previous findings. It will set the theoretical framework and offer the hypotheses under which this experiment is conceptualized. The paper will then elaborate on the methodology and explain the experimental design. It will present the results, before touching on the implications of this experiment in the discussion section.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Voter Participation

One of the most important indicators of political interest and engagement in a democracy is voter turnout. Social scientists have been grappling with the questions of “what stimulates voters?” and “how to increase turnout?” for decades. Harold Gosnell (1926) proved that it is possible to empirically measure voter stimulation. After a low turnout in the 1923 municipal elections in Chicago, Gosnell proposed a study to determine the effects of non-partisan mail campaign on turnout. In 1924, about 6,000 interviews were conducted in 12 districts. The interviewees were divided into a control group, which did not receive any treatment and an experiment group, which received non-partisan mails encouraging them to vote in various languages. Those who received the mails tended to register and vote more than the group that did not receive any treatment. The study also observed relationships between the effectiveness of stimulating mails and various variables such as education, party identity, and familiarity with government functionality (Gosnell H. F., 1926).

Prior to direct mail, voter stimulation and election campaigns relied heavily on face-to-face contact between the electorate and mobilizing groups or individuals (Wolfinger, 1974; Gosnell H. F., *Machine politics : Chicago model* , 1937).

Gerald Kramer (1970-71) used survey data from 1952 through 1964 to estimate the impact of door-to-door partisan campaigning on turnout. While he found that such canvassing methods are effective in presidential elections, they are not as effective in terms of changing voter’s preferences for national and local office elections.

The emergence of direct mail vendors, commercial phone banks, and televised ads; however, has resulted in the decline of face-to-face mobilization. In the early 1970s,

6% of the population reported working for a political party in the early, but that figure stood at below 3% in the mid-1990s. Likewise, in the mid-1960s, 0.24 percent of women over the age of 20 belonged to the League of Women Voters, this figure dropped to 0.07 in 1998 (Putnam, 2000).

Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) claimed that the diminished mobilization efforts explained 54% of the decline in voter turnout in Presidential elections between 1960s and 1980s. "Had candidates, parties, campaigns, interest groups, and social movements been as active in mobilizing voters in the 1980s as they were in the 1960s, even leaving the social structure and the condition of individual voters unchanged, reported voter participation would have fallen only 2.6 percent, rather than the 11.3 percent that it did" (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993).

Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde (2002) examined this claim by studying the "voter contact" question asked in the National Elections Studies (NES) over a 40-year period. They analyzed this data from 1960 through 2000 and concluded that there has been no decline in the quantity of mobilization. To the contrary, they found that reported contact rates were at some of their lowest levels in the 1960s when turnout was the highest and reached some of their highest levels during low turnout elections in 1996 and 2000. They argued that while there is strong relationship between contact and turnout, with the increase in contact in recent years, turnout has declined.

Putman (2000) argues that it is the quality of mobilization rather than its quantity that has declined:

The last three decades of the twentieth century witnessed an accelerating trend toward more and more voter contact but fewer and fewer party workers. By 1996 this ratio was 2.5 times greater than the equivalent figure in 1968. At first blush one might admire the growing productivity in this flourishing industry. Each worker seems to be producing more and more "contacts." In reality, however, this trend is evidence of the professionalization and commercialization of American politics. The "contacts" that voters report are, in fact, less likely to be a

visit from a neighborhood party worker and more and more likely to be an anonymous call from a paid phone bank. Less and less party activity involves volunteer collaboration among committed partisans. More and more involves the skilled (and expensive) techniques of effective mass marketing. This trend goes hand in hand with the explosive growth of direct mail fund-raising and political action committees formed to channel financial support to party organizations... The bottom line in the political industry is this: Financial capital – the wherewithal for mass marketing – has steadily replaced social capital – that is, grassroots citizen networks – as the coin of the realm. (p. 39)

In addition to mobilization, scholars have considered other factors that may have contributed to the decrease in voter turnout. Wolfinger and Rosenstone's (1980) study of census data from 1972 and 1974 found that the level of education was the strongest predictor of voting behavior. They also found that older electorates were more likely to vote than the younger. Another factor in their study was registration laws with more lenient laws having a positive impact on turnout. Marriage, race, income and occupation were also found to be variables influencing voter participation (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980).

In a more comprehensive attempt to explain the decline in turnout from 1960 to 1988, Ruy A. Teixeira studied changes in turnout using the American National Election Studies surveys. He observed a ten-point drop in turnout among college graduates from 1964 to 1988. As the decline was even greater among college dropouts, he concluded that education has prevented even greater apathy among the American electorate. He found that increases in income and growth of white-collar employment tended to slow the decline in turnout, but not as much as increases in educational levels. Over this 44-year period, he found that church attendance had declined, reducing the Americans' ties with their community – another factor that contributes to turnout. The proportion of Americans who were married also had declined. Since married people tend to vote more than single Americans this led to a decrease in turnout. Finally, after the 1960s the American electorate became younger as baby boomers became of age. Therefore, age is

designated as another variable affecting turnout (Teixeira, 1992). Moreover, studies into *how voters vote* have come up with similar predictors (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; Lewis-Beck, Norpoth, Jacoby, & Weisberg, 2008). These intrinsic factors, however, are not the only aspect of voter behavior studied by researchers. In fact, extrinsic factors have long been of interest to social scientists.

Over the course of the 1940 presidential election, Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues surveyed 600 prospective voters in Erie County, Ohio at different time intervals. The surveys were conducted seven times and each time, they contained a combination of new and repeated questions (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944). This study laid the groundwork for an even more influential study in Elmira, New York, during the 1948 presidential election. Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) defined a set of questions and research method to measure changes in individual vote intentions over the course of a presidential campaign via panel studies. The study found that media content has little impact on voter's choices and that the voters' decisions are mostly influenced by religion, social standing, and face-to-face contact with family and friends. The study suggests that campaigns merely reactivate party loyalties, as opposed to changing loyalties (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954).

Campbell and his colleagues (1960) conducted surveys during the campaign seasons and after presidential elections of 1952 and 1956. They published the results in their book, *The American Voter*. Instead of focusing on a single community, they based their study on national survey samples, which are more representative. They identified six "attitudinal forces," which predict the outcome of election with 87% accuracy. They also argue that party identity is strongly correlated with voting behavior. The study argues that partisan loyalties are developed in early stages of life and that the electorate's vote

reflects candidates' personal attributes, perception of how parties manage government, group interests, domestic issues and foreign policy. However, it suggests that for policy issues to impact voters' decisions, voters should be aware of a specific issue, have an opinion about that issue and know the stance of the parties on that issue. As a result, it argues that only a small portion of the population votes based on issue preference (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960).

These studies point to the importance of education, age, social status (income and occupation), party identity, issue, ethnicity, marital status, and religion as variables to be considered, in addition to means of mobilization, in studies of voting behavior.

However, an important limitation faced by studies using survey data (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980; Teixeira, 1992; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954) is that the researcher has no control over the frequency and nature of mobilization effort (political contact) reported in survey data. In addition surveys rely on self-reported data, and reported political contact could be subject to misremembering or deliberate misreporting. Therefore, experiments like Gosnell's (1926) studies are more methodologically defensible in this field (Gerber & Green, 2000).

A study of 10 precincts in Washington, DC, during a 1979 city council election using an official list of actual voters found that partisan telephone calls had significant impact on turnout but had no impact on candidate preference (Adams & Smith, 1980).

Miller, Bositis, and Baer (1981) conducted a field experiment during the 1980 primary election in the 7th precinct of Carbondale, Illinois. They confirmed that canvassing activities by a precinct committeeman could meaningfully increase the size of voter turnout on Election Day. However, the effectiveness of attempts to stimulate voter turnout was age-related. In particular, efforts to increase turnout among elderly citizens

(60 and older) were ineffective. They also found that that not only multiple contacts do not result in any appreciable increase in voter turnout, in some cases they tend to depress turnout (Miller, Bositis, & Baer, 1981).

Gerber and Green (2000) conducted a comprehensive field experiment in New Haven, Connecticut with a relatively large sample size of 22,077. They randomly assigned subjects from the sample to four groups: A control group, a group that received direct mail as treatment, a group that received phone calls as treatment and a group that received face-to-face canvassing as treatment. Graduate students were hired to carryout the door-to-door canvassing method. The direct mail group was divided into three sub groups, with one receiving three pieces of mail, one receiving two pieces of mail and one receiving only one piece of mail. A professional political consultant firm that specializes in direct mail was contracted to prepare the mails. No individual received the same mail twice. And finally, for phone calls, an out-of-state phone bank company was contracted to make 30-second phone calls.

They found that personal canvassing had the greatest mobilizing impact, followed by direct mail. Phone calls were found to have the least impact on turnout (Gerber & Green, 2000).

Nickerson (2006), however, contests the claim that phone calls have little to no impact on turnout. He argues that “the quality of the phone calls matter and that brief, nonpartisan phone calls can raise voter turnout if they are sufficiently personal” (Nickerson D. , 2006).

He maintains that the “professional” phone calls employed by Gerber and Green (2000) were not sufficiently persuasive, and proposes a series of eight voter turnout experiments using “volunteer” phone banks. Over a two-year period (2000-2001), phone calls were made to registered voters in Albany, New York; Stony Brook, New York;

Eugene, Oregon; Boulder, Colorado; Boston, Massachusetts; and Seattle, Washington. By pooling all of the experiments, he concludes that nonpartisan volunteer phone calls do, in fact, increase turnout in a statistically significant manner (Nickerson D. , 2006). This finding, again, emphasizes the importance of quality and personalization of the mobilization appeal.

### The Case For Web

It is widely accepted that those who heard the 1960 presidential debate between Kennedy and Nixon on the radio considered Nixon to be the victor, while those who watched the debate on television agreed that Kennedy was the winner.

This example was often used by Marshall McLuhan to promote his medium theory. McLuhan (1962) and Harold Innis (1964) floated the idea that the dominant media of the time shaped and formed the characteristic features and epistemologies of ancient cultures and civilizations. In other words, people do not experience the world directly, but through different media. “We experience reality through the filters of media – either oral, typographic, or electronic – and these filters determine what we know and how we know it, and our relationship to social power structures” (Ellis, 1999).

Ellis adds that in the years before radio, television and telegram, the rate of change in the society was slow. Politics, fashions, and values were relatively unchanging over extensive periods of time. But, he argues, the age of electronic media has radically impacted the pace of change in individual and social life.

The Web allows for the conveyance of information through multiple media formats, including audio, video, images, text, or any combination thereof. Web 2.0 is the second phase in the Web’s evolution, which provides a rich responsive user interface, allows for collaborative content creation and modification, and establishes social networks of people with common interests (Murugesan, 2007). Therefore, Web 2.0

provides a platform for all people – the vast majority of whom were traditionally just consumers of information – to contribute information at a minimal cost. The information on the Web can be viewed around the globe on a host of different devices ranging from desktop computers to cellphones. These features, according to Doris Graber (2001), turn the Web into a potential instrument for increasing political interest.

Just like the past, when politicians adapted themselves to the technology of the day and began using radio and television as campaign tools, we are witnessing an increase in the use of Internet as a political campaign tool. It is argued that the new technology has brought back the balance in political competition to some extent by helping the candidates cast as “outsider” during primary competitions, at the expense of well-known contestants. Examples of that impact are, John McCain’s efforts in 2000, Howard Dean’s run in 2004, Ron Paul’s attempt in 2008, and Barack Obama’s 2008 success (Bosman, 2007; Dodson & Hammersley, 2003; Klotz, 2004; Schouten, 2006; Smith-Spark, 2007; Trippi, 2004).

Nick Anstead (2008) argues that the Internet is revolutionizing party fundraisers:

The Internet is re-structuring the financial relationships between the parties. At least in recent history, the Democrats have been at a financial disadvantage against their Republican opponents. This was never more the case than during the 2000 election, when George W. Bush was nearly able to outspend Al Gore twice over. However, in 2004, John Kerry came close to achieving financial parity with Bush, largely thanks to his prowess as an Internet fundraiser (Dwyer et al., 2004). Fourthly, the Internet seems to be reshaping where political money is coming from. It has been claimed that, in the past, candidates and parties have tended to rely on large donations from a very small number of wealthy givers.

The low costs of using the Internet and the facilities it offers have the potential to change the strategies adopted by parties in every aspect of campaigning. The same economics that push businesses to move online are also present in the political realm (Nickerson D. W., 2007).

#### Internet And Turnout

Despite the importance of Internet in today's political arena, studies of Internet during the campaign period mostly focus on the content of webpages (Farmer & Fender, 2007; Norris, 2003; Ward & Gibson, 2003; Xenos & Foot, 2005), and few measure the Internet's influence on turnout.

Nickerson (2007) conducted a study from 2002-2004 to measure the impact of emailed get out the vote messages on registration and turnout. The Votes for Students Organization was tasked with sending emails to students in five universities. The Working Assets Organizations was tasked with emailing Internet Service Providers (ISP) subscribers in 6 states.

The email campaign consisted of two stages. First an introductory email was sent with a link containing information about how to register and then a pool of emails were sent encouraging participants to vote. The organizations in charge of sending the emails were able to trace the emails and determine whether it was opened by the subject. Overall about 20% of participants opened the email. Despite the relatively high number of people who saw the emails, no positive impact was observed from emails (Nickerson D. W., 2007).

A similar study (Bergan, 2011) was conducted, but the emails in this study included a link to a webpage containing get out the vote video messages. The webpage in question was maintained by a third-party group, which posted new voter stimulating

video content on a regular basis. Bergan (2011) concludes that emails containing a link to a video webpage do not increase registration or turnout.

Han (2008) examined four dimensions of Internet use to determine whether the Web has an impact on participation. The first dimension was “online exposure,” which he defines as the time per week spent on the Internet, including visiting Web sites and using Web services, but excluding email. The second was “online interaction,” which refers to the time subjects spent in chat rooms, news groups, or other forms of online interaction with other net users. “News accessing” and “political information retrieving” were the other dimensions studied, which are defined as the frequency with which the subjects visit news websites and political websites. He found that “political information retrieving” was the strongest predictor of voting, but that “the more time people spend on the Internet, the less likely they go out to cast ballots” (Han, 2008).

One of Han’s limitations was that he used General Social Survey (GSS) data for his analyses and, as discussed earlier in this paper, he had no control over and knowledge of the type of content the subjects were exposed to during their visits to news and political webpages, their interactions with others and their time spent online doing other activities.

Another study (Norris & Curtice, 2007) was conducted in the United Kingdom in two stages. The first stage was similar to Han’s (2008) study, using British Social Attitudes survey – which the authors claim is comparable to the GSS in the United States. The authors argue that if their study were to conclude with the first stage, they would have found no impact from the Web on voter participation. For the second stage of the study, the author used a set of different questions included in the questionnaire, which asked the respondents if they had discussed the elections with friends or family, either or in person or on the phone, and whether they had tried to persuade someone

else how to vote. The respondents were also asked whether they had done these things online. Using these data, Norris and Curtice (2007) conclude that the Web does, in fact, increase voter turnout when mediated by opinion leaders, who obtain the information online and then persuade their friends and family either online, via telephone, or in person.

A study of campaign strategies used by the Democratic and Republican parties during the 2004 presidential race found that the winning party had made better use of online tools to mobilize its supporter (Reich, 2005).

At the time, the Bush campaign was said to have as many as seven million e-mail addresses in their database, compared with just 2.5 million for the Kerry campaign. Not only did the Republican Party have better numeric advantage, it also made better use of its online capital. While the Kerry campaign continued to send emails asking supporters to donate money until the final hours of campaign period, the Bush campaign unveiled "Your Virtual Precinct." This tool allowed Republican supporters to set up their own "precinct" of friends and family across the country to contact others on behalf of the Bush campaign. It was also a peer-to-peer network designed to help supporters "spread the word about President Bush's record of accomplishment by sending letters to undecided voters in target states." The system even offered users the ability to download a walk list, complete with map and directions. Using this system, the Republicans were able to identify potential supporters, and then leverage the time and energy of their volunteers most effectively in seeking them out (Reich, 2005). Reich's findings are in line with the argument that the quality of get out the vote efforts play an important role in the effectiveness of such efforts.

## Media Richness

Thus far, the literature on traditional voter stimulation methods suggests that Face-to-Face (fff) contact has the greatest impact on voter participation, increasing turnout by 9.8% compared to a 0.6% increase resulting from direct mail (Gerber & Green, 2000). Volunteer telephone calls to get out the vote are found to increase turnout by 3.8% (Nickerson D. , 2006).

These findings can be explained by the Media Richness theory, which posits that communication media vary in their capacity to process rich information. In order of decreasing richness, the Media classifications are: 1) Face-to-face, 2) Telephone, 3) Personal documents such as letters or memos, 4) Impersonal written documents, and 5) Numeric documents, such as statistical reports (Daft & Lengel, 1986). According to Daft and Lengel (1986), face-to-face is considered the richest medium because it provides: immediate feedback so that interpretations can be checked; multiple cues via body language and tone of voice; a message that is expressed in natural language. Leaner media process fewer cues and thus restrict feedback. Richer media, however, are not necessarily better. Media should be selected based on the appropriate cues and feedback required by the intent of the communication. Although Daft and Lengel (1986) argue that leaner media are effective for processing well-understood messages, a call for political participation in terms of voting is not necessarily a well-understood message.

The rational actor model suggests that the decision to vote is based on rational calculations of self-interest. Anthony Downs (1957) argues that the relationship between the electorate and the government is akin to the consumer-producer relationship. Man is a rational creature that makes a decision to vote or to abstain like he makes his other daily decisions, "if the return outweighs the costs, he votes; if not, he abstains" (Downs, 1957). In other words, the A person will vote if the expected gains of voting exceed the

expected costs (Tullock, 1967). Registration requirements and transportation to polling stations are some of the obvious costs of voting (Dyck & Gimpel, 2005), while the potential benefits of voting are not always immediate, tangible, or perceptible. Therefore, any effort to persuade voters to cast their ballot needs to address the cost arguments and outweigh the negativity associated with voting, as well as be persuasive.

Subjects who receive direct mail as part of a get-out-the-vote effort receive an “impersonal written document,” which is ranked fourth in richness (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Direct mail carries very limited cues. The textual content of the message, sometimes accompanied by a picture, is the only vehicle attempting to persuade subjects to vote, and as a result it has the least impact in stimulating turnout. Voluntary phone calls rank second in richness, as they provide the opportunity for instant feedback. Moreover, the tone of the voice, level of confidence, happiness, enthusiasm, and other emotions expressed by the caller may come into play and enhance the salience of the message. In door-to-door canvassing, the communication is carried out face-to-face – the richest medium possible. In this medium, the audience benefits from a large array of cues. These cues include appearance, physical attributes, tone, voice, body language, facial gestures, etc., thus making face-to-face canvassing the most effective form of voter stimulation.

The Web has both rich multimedia capacity and lean text-based capacity for conveying messages. Among the scholars who conducted studies on the impact of the Web on voter participation, Han (2008) found that Internet exposure has a negative impact on turnout. Nickerson (2007) concluded that email does not have an impact on turnout. In contrast to these findings, Pippa Norris and John Curtice (2007) found a positive impact mediated by “opinion leaders,” who acquire information online and disseminate it online or offline (Norris & Curtice, 2007), or by partisan voters who,

received emails from their party containing local maps with highlighted routes to carry out voluntary mobilization efforts (Reich, 2005). As demonstrated here, the general consensus is that the Web has no direct impact on turnout.

People under 35 years of age who use the Internet for informational purposes are found to have higher levels of trust in those who contribute to, or acquire information from, the Internet resources they themselves utilize (Shah, Kwak, & Holbert, 2001). Young respondents are also more likely to use the World Wide Web as a medium to find information for making decision than television or daily newspapers (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). Internet users are less likely to watch TV news coverage compared to non-users, and in a highly political moment – such as the invasion of Iraq or an important political debate – they become politically active, seek information, communicate, and support a particular point of view (Robbin & Buente, 2008). Additionally, the Internet can facilitate greater political participation by giving voters the ability to learn about government, discuss issues and contact their representatives, and register to vote (Bimber, 1998).

While mass media have been linked with political cynicism, or loss of confidence in American institutions (Capella & Jamieson, 1997), social networking and blogging are found to *reduce* political cynicism (Hanson, Hardakis, Cunningham, Sharma, & Ponder, 2010). According to International Telecommunication Union data, 77.86% of the US population has access to the Internet<sup>1</sup>. The figure is even higher for the age group 18-29, 93%, According to Pew Research Center<sup>2</sup>. From the body of research on the impact of Internet as an influential medium in everyday life, it can be deduced that Internet communication has the potential to directly stimulate users' voting behavior. This claim

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1 [http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/material/excel/Individuals%20using%20the%20Internet2000-2011\\_Oct.xls](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/material/excel/Individuals%20using%20the%20Internet2000-2011_Oct.xls)

2 <http://pewresearch.org/millennials/teen-internet-use-graphic.php>

stands in stark contrast with the findings of previous studies on the impact of Web-based mobilization efforts on voter turnout.

Again, the Media Richness theory can explain why past research has not been able to find a significant relationship between Web-based GOTV efforts and turnout. Emails are lean, and while webpages are richer, they are not as rich as phone calls or face-to-face contact. Therefore, while there have been a number of studies on the impact of Web-based get out the vote efforts on turnout, none has measured the impact of get out the vote efforts via the richer features of the Web, such as live chat, video chat, video conference and video streaming. The present study aims to bridge the gap and measure the impact of customized online videos on self-reported voting intentions of young-adult Internet users. In doing so this study uses online video – a medium richer than most media and second only to ftf, which in addition to all the features of video, also provides the opportunity for instant feedback. This study differs from Daniel Bergan's study (2011), in that Bergan used a third-party website, which happened to stream various get out the vote videos with different contents. Bergan did not control for the making and content of the video. Moreover, it is possible that in Bergan's study different subjects were exposed to different videos. The present study will make draw upon Elaboration Likelihood Model, the principle of Homophily, Oneness, and Social Distance to make a set of specific kinds of video with a specific set of intended outcomes.

#### The Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a dual-route, multi-process theory. The dual routes – central and peripheral – refer to attitude changes that are based on different degrees of elaborative information processing activity. Central route attitude changes refer to those that occur when people are both motivated and able to engage in relatively extensive and effortful information processing activity aimed at scrutinizing and

uncovering the central merits of the issue or advocacy. Peripheral route attitude changes are characterized by low degrees of issue-relevant elaboration. Some peripheral route attitude changes are based on processes that differ primarily in quantitative ways from central route processes, but other peripheral-route changes result from processes that are both less effortful and qualitatively different. These low-effort attitude changes are lumped together under the peripheral route label because of the similarity in the antecedent conditions and in the consequences they are postulated to induce (Petty, Wheeler, & Bizer, 1999). Absence of sufficient motivation or ability to elaborately process information can increase the desire to reach a preferred conclusion in a “top-down” manner (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The youths have been found to have low ability and motivation for processing political information (Snell, 2010), which is required for the central route. Therefore, the voting behavior of young adults is mostly linked with the peripheral routes (Zwarun & Torrey, 2011). Non-verbal cues function as peripheral cues, and may lead to judgments through affective responses. For instance, by functioning as peripheral cues, speaking tone, vocal qualities, facial expressions, physical appearance, attractiveness, gaze, and blinking rate influence people’s voting behavior (Kopacz, 2006). If a message is delivered by someone who abides by a set of rules, exudes confidence and self assurance, maintains just enough eye contact (Sullivan & Masters, 1988), and is dressed professionally (Segrin, 1993), it will be processed peripherally by the receiver of the message, and there is a higher chance that the receiver will agree with content of the message without mulling it over (Kopacz, 2006). Therefore, an online video message facilitating the peripheral process of its content by the audience is expected to increase intention to vote. Thus, the first hypothesis and research question of this study are offered:

*H1. Young eligible voters who are exposed to online video messages targeted toward the peripheral processing route will report greater intention to vote than those who are not exposed to such video messages.*

*RQ1. Is there any difference in the impact of non-partisan custom-recorded online video messages on individuals of different ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status?*

#### Social Proximity (Distance)

Whereas spatial proximity refers to the geographical distance between two individuals, social proximity refers to the “distance” between two individuals in terms of their socioeconomic, demographic, and ideological characteristics (Alba & Kadushin, 1976; Jones & Rachlin, 2006; Loewenstein & Small, 2007; Wark & Galliher, 2007). According to Alba and Kadushin (1976), studies of social proximity usually rest on the notion that information and other social commodities “diffuse” in a network in manner that individual A may influence individual B even though they are unacquainted. As the proximity of individuals increases, so does the level of influence (Alba & Kadushin, 1976; Laumann, Verbrugge, & Pappi).

Individuals may feel more socially distant as anonymity between them increases (Bohnet & Frey, 1999), and less distant when they are both members of the same group (Dovidio, et al., 1997). Another theme in proximity studies is homophily, the notion that the closeness between the members of a pair is both a cause and a consequence of their similarity in certain respects (Alba & Kadushin, 1976). The term homophily, along with the term heterophily, which refers to the tendency for individuals to associate and bond with a diverse and dissimilar group of others, was coined by Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) in their study of friendship formation in two different communities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. They found that residents with liberal values tend to over-select other

liberals as their close friends by 43 percent and “illiberals” over-select other “illiberals” by 53 percent.

Although the original application of homophily was to affective relationships (i.e. friendship), it has received rich support in research by social psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists (Flynn, Reagans, & Guillory, 2010). The students’ motivations to communicate with their instructors are positively related to perceived instructor homophily in terms of attitude and demographic background (Myers & Huebner, 2011). A group member’s perceived similarity to others within the group increases subjective identification with the group’s characteristics, and thus the group’s views and opinions can be perceived more easily and confidently by reducing the individual’s thought process during reasoning (Nekmat, 2012). Therefore, it can be established that an increase in perceived similarity between individuals will increase social proximity (Alba & Kadushin, 1976).

*Oneness*, a sense of shared, merged and interconnected personal identities (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg, 1997), is another concept analogous to proximity. According to Cialdini et al. (1997), individuals who experience high oneness with another individual may see themselves as being part of the same in-group and this may lead participants to be more open to persuasion under certain circumstances. A study of over 200 subjects found that oneness, measured based on the Big Five personality traits (Borgatta, 1964; Fiske, 1949; Norman, 1963; Tupes & Christal, 1961), moderates the impact of message persuasiveness in face-to-face and email communication (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007).

Although studies of social distance, social proximity, homophily and oneness are conducted in the context of a network, their application is not at odds with the premise of this study, which uses online videos as independent variables; therefore, restricting the

population to those with access to the Internet. Given that the Internet is but a large network of interconnected networks, methods used in network analyses can be extrapolated to the Internet.

In this study the terms “distance” and “proximity” will be used interchangeably to denote social proximity, social distance, homophily and oneness. Similar to the argument offered for the peripheral process of messages, it can be argued that if the perceived proximity between the presenter of the message and the receivers of the message is high, the receivers are more likely to accept the content of the message. Therefore, high proximity is expected to moderate the peripheral process of the message. To increase the perceived proximity another online video message will be created by incorporating elements and techniques that would increase similarity between the target audience and the presenter of the message to test the following hypothesis:

*H2. The proximity between viewers and the presenter is positively related to the viewers' self-reported intention to vote.*

While the general population is almost sex heterogeneous – given that the number of men and women are almost equal – most environments where networks have been studied are not (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Men tend to have more sex homophilous networks than do women, especially in establishments where they are a strong majority (Ibarra, 1992). Peter Marsden’s study (1988) based on General Social Survey data yielded that people “discuss important matters with” a group of confidants that are roughly 70% as sex heterogeneous as the general population. However, a large portion of the sex heterogeneity is due to kinship. When controlled for kin the confidants are considerably homophilous (Marsden, 1988). These findings lead to the notion that gender plays a role in interpersonal relations.

Moreover, studies of gender difference in persuasion suggest that men are generally more influential than women and more resistant to persuasive efforts of members of the opposite sex in interpersonal communication (Becker, 1986; Carli, 1989; Carli, 2001; Eagly, 1978). Findings of gender role in a computer-mediated communication study suggest that same-sex persuasion measures decrease over email for women and disappear completely for men (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2002). Guadagno and Cialdini (2007) found that same-sex persuasion efforts are more influential for men when they share a low level of oneness. They also found that in a low-oneness environment same-sex persuasive messages are likely to be unsuccessful regardless of communication mode, if message recipients are women. While the field of traditional communication is rich in studies of gender role in message persuasiveness, the impact of gender in online video messages has not been explored; therefore, the following research questions are presented:

RQ2: Do non-partisan video messages affect participants' intention to vote differently based on the gender of the presenter?

RQ3: Do non-partisan video messages affect male and female participants' intention to vote differently based on the gender of the presenter?

Race and ethnicity – used interchangeably in this study – are one of the biggest divide in social networks in the United States and other ethnically diverse societies (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). 1986). A study based on General Social Survey data found that only 8% of adults with networks of size two or more mention having a person of another race with whom they “discuss important matters” -- less than one seventh the heterogeneity that we would observe if people chose randomly from that population (Marsden, 1988). A study of workplace relations found a strongly inverse association between the proportion of “racially dissimilar others” and supportive relations

– as the number of racially and ethnically different employees increases the prevalence of inter group supportive relationships decreases (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Vashdi, 2005). These findings support the homophily principle in inter-racial relationships.

On the other hand, the correlation between race and political participation has long been the subject of study among political and social scientists (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Hill & Leighley, 1999; Michelson, 2003; Shaw, De La Garza, & Lee, 2000). Studies suggest that wealthy Caucasians are more likely to be targeted by mobilization efforts than low income families and minorities (Leighley, 2001), and that minority candidates are perceived more liberal in low information elections in accordance with racial stereotypes (Wielhouwer, 2000).

Studies of Latino mobilization efforts suggest that canvassing of minorities are more effective if carried out by members of the same race (Michelson, 2003; Shaw, De La Garza, & Lee, 2000). While socioeconomic factors are believed to be a strong predictor of voting behavior (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980), Wrinkle, Stewart, Polinard, Meier, and Arvizu (1996) found that mobilization is even a more powerful predictor of political participation.

Studies focusing on the impacts of ethnic and racial elements on persuasion have yielded mixed results. While some studies have outlined the benefits of using ethnic and racial cues in advertisement (Briley, Shrum, & Wyer, 2007; Deshpandé & Stayman, 1994; Forehand & Deshpandé, 2001), others attribute the positive implications of these cues to social desirability, suggesting that the presence or absence of such cues makes no difference in effectiveness of the advertisement (Brunel, Tietje, & Greenwald, 2004; Petty, Fleming, & White, 1999; White & Harkins, 1994). These findings point to a lack of consensus among scholars.

Although the body of research on voting behavior suggests a correlation between race and political participation, these studies mostly focus on the impacts of personal canvassing as opposed to online video messages. In order to bridge this gap and shed more light on the seemingly incoherent findings of persuasion studies, this study proposes to explore the following research question.

*RQ4: Does the race of the presenter have an impact on the effectiveness of non-partisan online video messages in terms of self-reported intention to vote?*

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### Online Videos

To measure the impact of online videos on self-reported intention to vote, a non-partisan script was written to stimulate voting behavior. The script was carefully worded to appeal to the young eligible voters, aged 18-29, who are the focus of this study. The script was also crafted to address voting cost arguments raised by Downs (1957) Tullock (1967) and Dyck & Gimpel (2005). An audition was held to select two presenters for the videos. After careful deliberation and a thorough review of the audition videos, a Caucasian male student and a minority female student were selected to present the script.

A study of four decades of presidential elections from 1960 to 2000 found that the candidate with a lower-pitched voice has always won, with the exception of the 2000 election (Gregory & Gallapher, 2002). The two undergraduate students selected to present the message both had lower-pitched voices compared to other candidates. An analysis of 19 different studies on the impact of attire on persuasion found that “business attire,” followed by “suit and tie” had the most persuasive impact on the audience (Segrin, 1993). Accordingly, to increase the possibility of the message being processed peripherally, the male presenter was dressed up in business attire and the female presenter was dressed up in a suit for the video that is expected to be processed peripherally. Denis Sullivan and Roger Masters (1988) found that political leaders’ facial expressions have an impact on the audience’s support. They found that “Anger/Threat” and “Fear/Evasion” have a negative impact while “Happiness/Reassurance” has a positive impact on support. Therefore, to increase the likelihood of the message being processed peripherally, the presenters were instructed to maintain a “Happy/Reassuring”

posture based on the criteria provided by Sullivan and Masters (see Table 3-1). Finally the videos were shot using a professional 1080p HD camera in an auditorium. Although the videos were shot in an empty auditorium, sound effects were later added to leave the impression that it was recorded before an audience. The two versions of this video, one with a Caucasian male presenter and one with a minority female presenter, are identical with the exception of gender and race of the presenter.

Table 3-1 Criteria for Classifying Facial Displays

	Anger/Threat	Fear/Evasion	Happiness/Reassurance
Eyelids	Opened wide	Upper raised/lower tightened	Wide, normal or slightly closed
Eyebrows	Lowered	Lowered and furrowed	Raised
Eye Orientation	Staring	Averted	Focused then cut off
Mouth Corners	Forwarded or lowered	Retracted, normal	Retracted and/or raised
Teeth Showing	Lower	Variable or none	Upper or both
Head motion			
Lateral	None	Side-to-side	Side-to-side
Vertical	None	Up-down	Up-down
Head Orientation	Forward from trunk	Turned from vertical	Normal to trunk
Angle to Vertical	Down	Down	Up

Source: Sullivan & Masters, 1988, Table 1.

A general observation of youth fashion at The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA)'s Communication Department found an unbuttoned shirt, or sweater, worn over a t-shirt, and denims to be the most frequent articles of clothing worn together by male students. Whereas, the most frequent look for female students was light colored t-shirt and blue denims. Therefore, for the second set of videos the presenters were dressed accordingly to appear similar to the average student. The presenters were instructed to forgo proper pronunciation and intonation, in favor of pronunciations common among young students. The presenters were also instructed to personally hit the record button on the camera, take a few steps back and begin the presentation to appear that they

were making the video without any help to resemble the technology and techniques that subjects are familiar with as to increase the sense of similarity between the subjects and the presenters, thus increasing the perceived proximity. The videos were shot at the University Center, a common student hangout that the majority of students are familiar with, to increase perceived proximity. Again two versions of this video were made, using the two presenters selected earlier. This paper will refer to the videos made to increase perceived proximity as the “Proximate” videos, and in contrast the videos made only to be processed peripherally will be called “distant” videos.

The videos were uploaded to YouTube, which is the most popular video streaming website in terms of traffic<sup>3</sup>. Each video was then embedded in a blog page to control for uncalled for influence of other videos recommended by YouTube on the side bar, or advertisement.

#### Questionnaires

Two sets of questionnaires were created and posted online, utilizing Google Drive’s form share feature. The first set of questions (pre-test) inquires about the participants’ demographic information, media use patterns, past voting behavior and intention to vote in the next election. The questions were arranged in a manner to remove emphasize from the voting behavior and thus reduce the risk of socially desirable answers. The second questionnaire (post-test) inquires about the participants’ intention to vote in the upcoming election to test the first hypothesis. The post-test includes eight questions measuring the likelihood that the participants processed the information provided in the video using the peripheral route based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model to test whether the video served its true purpose. These questions were designed using John Cacioppo and Richard Petty’s (1984) 18-item Need for Cognition Scale. In

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.alexa.com/topsites>

addition, the post-test contained five questions to measure the similarities between the presenter and the participant on to measure the perceived homophily, which will determine the subject-presenter proximity. These questions are based on correlation tables provided by Linda McCroskey, James McCroskey, and Virginia Richmond (2006). These questions were measured on a five-point Likert scale. A question was designed to ensure that participants had actually watched the video. Two more proximity questions ask whether the presenter is of the same ethnicity and gender of the participants. The questions were arranged in a manner to remove emphasis from self-reported intention to vote and thus reduce the risk of socially responsible answers. Both the pre-test and post-test also contained a question about the importance the participant places on voting. This question was also measured on a Likert scale. See appendix B for questionnaires.

#### Sampling

Emails with the subject line "Invitation to participate in a study and to enter contest to win a gift card" were sent to students enrolled in two departments at UTA, inviting them to participate in the study and enter for a chance to win one of the three prizes available. The students were incentivized by being offered a chance to enter a raffle for three Amazon gift cards – two gift cards valued at \$25, and one at \$50. The email explained that participants should complete two online surveys before they can be eligible to win prizes. The first of four emails contained a link to the pre-test, explaining that the experiment was designed to study political behavior and that participants would take a survey, receive another email within a month with links to a video and then take another survey. The email specified that merely clicking on the link was not enough to enter the raffle and only participants who successfully submit their responses would be eligible to enter the raffle. It added that they should carefully read the questions and answer honestly. The email underlined that participants' responses would have no

bearing on their chances to win. A second email with a similar content was sent out to serve as a reminder two weeks after the first one.

Those students who took the pre-test were randomly assigned to one of the five groups of male-presented “distant”, female-presented “distant”, male-presented “proximate”, female-presented “proximate” and control. Two weeks later, the respondents to the first survey, received an email with a link to the designated blog page of their respective assigned groups. The treatment groups’ blog pages each contained one of the treatment videos embedded with a line of text above the video asking the participants to watch the video before taking the survey and another line underneath the video instructing the participants to click on a hyperlink to take the second survey. The control group’s blog page contained a neutral video with no political messages whatsoever with the same text underneath. The control group video was similar in length (90 seconds) to the treatment videos, and contained footage of nature with light instrumental music playing in the background. All of the blog pages were designed with a dark background, and white typography. The comment section was disabled on all the pages. Figure 1 depicts the appearance of the male-presented “proximate” blog page.

# Welcome

Tuesday, August 27, 2013

## Thank you for your participation!

Please watch this video, then click on the following link to take a brief survey and complete your participation.



Please [click here](#) to begin the second survey.

Thank you!

Posted by Anonymous at 3:27 PM

Recommend this on Google

[Home](#)

Subscribe to: [Posts \(Atom\)](#)

Awesome Inc. template. Powered by [Blogger](#).

### Blog Archive

- ▼ 2013 (1)
  - ▼ August (1)
    - [Thank you for your participation!](#)

### About Me

Anonymous  
[View my complete profile](#)

Figure 3-1 The visual appearance of the blog pages

Two weeks after the invitation to the second phase, computer software was used to extract the email addresses of the participants who had responded to the first survey, but did not respond to the second survey. A fourth email was sent to these participants to

serve as a reminder. The participants assigned to the treatment groups were asked to take the “post-test” survey, while the control group participants were asked to take a modified version of the pretest which dropped questions about the big five personality trait and socio economic information. Emails were sent to 602 students from two departments. A total of 103 people responded to the surveys – a response rate of 17.1%, which is well beyond the field’s single digit standard. However, when non-US citizens, and those who failed to answer the security question were removed, the sample size was reduced to 92.

#### Dependent Variable

The purpose of this study is to examine relationships between online video messages and self-reported voting behavior. Therefore, the dependent variable, called “change in intention to vote,” is the difference between self-reported intention to vote before (pre-test) and after (post-test) receiving the treatment. This variable is calculated by subtracting the value of the “Intention to vote before receiving treatment” variable from the “Intention to vote after receiving treatment” variable. The before and after intention to vote variables are both measured by asking the question, “Are you planning to vote in the next election?” The participants could select from five possible Likert-scale answer choices: “Yes,” coded 5; “Probably,” coded 4; “I don’t know,” coded 3; “Probably not” coded 2; and “No,” coded 1.

#### Independent Variable

For the first hypothesis, first the seven items that determine the message’s processing route (peripheral or central) were tested. Then a variable called “persuasive online videos” was coded 2 for participants in the treatment groups that processed the message peripherally, and 1 for participants in the control group. This variable was used

as the grouping variable in the analysis to distinguish between participants who received treatment and those who did not.

Two variables called “Male video” and “Female video” were created for use in research questions and coded 1 for participants who saw the corresponding videos respectively and 0 for the rest. For the second hypothesis, a persuasive online video variable called “Distant/Proximate Video” was created and coded 2 for participants in the “proximate” group, and 1 for the participants in the “distant” groups.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis And Results

The first hypothesis of this study looks for a difference between self-reported intention to vote among young eligible voters who have been exposed to a specific kind of non-partisan custom-recorded online video messages and those who have not been exposed. Lord (1947) states, “the difference between highest and lowest values has always been recognized as a general indication of the variability of quantitative data.” To that end, Lord adds, the t-test has become popular due to its simplicity and ease of application. Therefore, to test the first hypothesis a simple t-test was used to determine whether the difference is statistically significant.

At time one, prior to receiving any treatment, 66% (N = 48) of participants assigned to the four treatment groups indicated that they would, or probably would, cast their ballot in the next election, a notion shared by 63% (N = 12) of the participants assigned to the control group. The figures are in line with the turnout of the 2012 presidential election, in which 66% of eligible youth who have any college experience turned out to vote (CIRCLE, 2012). However, before testing for significance of these differences, the first condition of the hypothesis must be met – in other words, it must be determined which groups of participants processed the videos through the peripheral route, since they are the only ones the first hypothesis applies to.

Several measures were used to determine whether the message received by the participants was processed cognitively (through the central routes), or in the absence of cognition (peripheral route). These measures include the perceived confidence of the presenter (two items), perceived complexity of the message (two items), perception of the presenter’s dress, and perception of the presenter’s eloquence. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The items were presented under the blanket question, “To what

degree do you agree with the following statements?" The items that were used as ELM measures are as follows, confidence: "The presenter seemed confident," and "the presenter's tone was reassuring." message complexity: "I found the arguments in the video intellectually challenging," and "the video was complex and forced me to think hard to comprehend the arguments." Dress: "The presenter was dressed professionally." Eloquence: "The presenter made proper use of pronunciation and intonation." Five of the items were worded in such a way that agreement with the statements would represent peripheral processing of the message, therefore "Strongly agree" was coded 1, "Agree" was coded 2, "Neither agree, nor disagree" was coded 3, "Disagree" was coded 4, and "Strongly disagree" was coded 5. Agreement with the two complexity items would represent the central processing route, therefore, these items were reverse coded so that lower scores on all of the items would be associated with the peripheral processing route.

Ninety-three percent (N = 68) of participants who received the treatment videos agreed that the presenters displayed confidence. Eighty-two percent (N = 60) said that the presenters were reassuring. A majority of the participants said the ideas expressed in the video were neither complex (74%, N = 57), nor intellectually challenging (65%, N = 48). Eighty-nine percent (N = 65) spoke to the presenters' eloquence and 75% (N = 55) said they were dressed professionally. All of the treatment groups were collapsed into one treatment group and multiple one-sample t-tests were conducted for each item to test for the implicit hypothesis, "Participants who receive treatment in form of an online video will score lower than three on '*item*.'" The mean score for all items was lower than 3 – which is the neutral point (i.e. Neither agree nor disagree) – and the t-test results for all of the items were significant (see Table 4-1), indicating that participants processed the messages through the peripheral route.

Table 4-1 Elaboration likelihood of the messages by participants

	t	Mean †	SD	Std. Err.	df
<b>Confidence:</b>					
The presenter seemed confident	48.089**	2.863	.508	.059	72
The presenter's tone was reassuring	29.319**	2.643	.770	.090	72
<b>Message Complexity:</b>					
I found the arguments in the video intellectually challenging.	14.702**	2.315	.883	.103	72
The video was complex and forced me think hard to comprehend the arguments.	20.698**	1.520	.955	.111	72
<b>Dress:</b>					
The presenter was dressed professionally	25.076**	2.527	.855	.100	71
<b>Eloquence:</b>					
The presenter made proper use of pronunciation and intonation	39.897**	2.805	.596	.070	71

\*\* p < .001

† Means of lower than three indicate peripheral processing route.

As a cautionary measure, the sample was bifurcated into “distant” and “proximate” groups and multiple independent sample t-tests were conducted to establish whether the mean scores of the groups are different in a statistically significant manner. With the exception of the dress item (t = 3.450, p < .001) the differences between “distant” and “proximate” groups were not significant, reaffirming that participants processed both sets of messages peripherally. The difference on the dress item was expected as in the “proximate” videos the presenters were purposefully dressed in casual (unprofessional) clothing. Therefore, it can be stated that the participants in all treatment groups processed the video messages peripherally. The first hypothesis predicts that exposure to online video messages that are processed through the peripheral route will increase intention to vote, since all the videos in this experiment are processed through the peripheral route, the independent variable would have to be coded 2 for all participants in the treatment groups.

A t-test ( $t = -3.009$ ) conducted between the control ( $M = .105$ ) and treatment groups' "change in intention to vote" ( $M = 1.178$ ) verified that the increase in voting intention of participants, who saw a persuasive online video, was significant ( $p < .005$ ). The effect size of the treatment was estimated to be 30.2% (Pearson's  $r = 0.302$ ). As mentioned earlier, "change in intention to vote," which served as the dependent variable for the first hypothesis was calculated by subtracting values of pre-test intention to vote variable from the post-test intention to vote variable. Therefore, positive values indicate an increase in intention to vote, negative values indicate a decrease in intention to vote and 0 would represent no change in intention to vote. Table 4-2 displays the results of the independent sample t-test.

Table 4-2 The difference between the control group and treatment groups' intention to vote.

	Independent sample t-test			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	Mean difference	Std. Err. difference	t	df	Lower Upper
<b>Change in Intention to vote</b>	1.072	.356	-3.009*	90	-1.781 -0.364

\*  $p < .005$

The first research question probes the differences in changes in self-reported intention to vote among participants of different gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. For this question, all participants assigned to the control group were eliminated. Of the 73 participants, more females ( $N = 37$ ) had a positive value in their "change in intention to vote" by the non-partisan videos than male participants ( $N = 10$ ). A gender variable was coded 1 for male and 2 for female participants. An independent sample t-test ( $t = -.100$ ) did not find the difference between male ( $M = 1.142$ ) and female ( $M =$

1.186) participants to be significant. This could be due to a sampling bias, which resulted in women making up 74% (N = 68) of the population.

A one-way ANOVA test ( $F = 1.490$ ,  $M^2 = 3.076$ ) did not find the differences in intention to vote of participants of various ethnicities to be significant. For this test, African American participants ( $M = 1.466$ ,  $N = 15$ ,  $SD = .1.407$ ) were coded 1, Asian participants ( $M = .285$ ,  $N = 7$ ,  $SD = .755$ ) were coded 2, Caucasian participants ( $M = 1.303$ ,  $N = 33$ ,  $SD = 1.424$ ) were coded 3, Hispanic participants ( $M = .875$ ,  $N = 16$ ,  $SD = 1.627$ ) were coded 4, Native Americans ( $N = 0$ ) were coded 5, and participants of other ethnicities ( $M = 2.5000$ ,  $N = 2$ ,  $SD = 2.121$ ) 6.

Fifty-three percent of participants ( $N = 39$ ) were members of lower, or lower-middle class, reporting an annual income of less than \$50,000. Twenty-seven percent ( $N = 20$ ) were members of middle, or upper-middle class, reporting an annual income of \$50,000 or more, but less than \$100,000, while only 7% ( $N = 5$ ) were members of high-income families. The socioeconomic variable was missing for 21% ( $N = 9$ ) of cases. A one-way ANOVA test ( $F = 1.841$ ) found no significant difference in terms of intention to vote between participants of difference socioeconomic status. For this test participants reporting an annual income of under \$50,000 were coded one, those reporting an income of \$50,000-\$100,000 were coded 2, and those reporting an income of over \$100,000 were coded 3. Figure 4-1 displays the breakdown of the population by gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

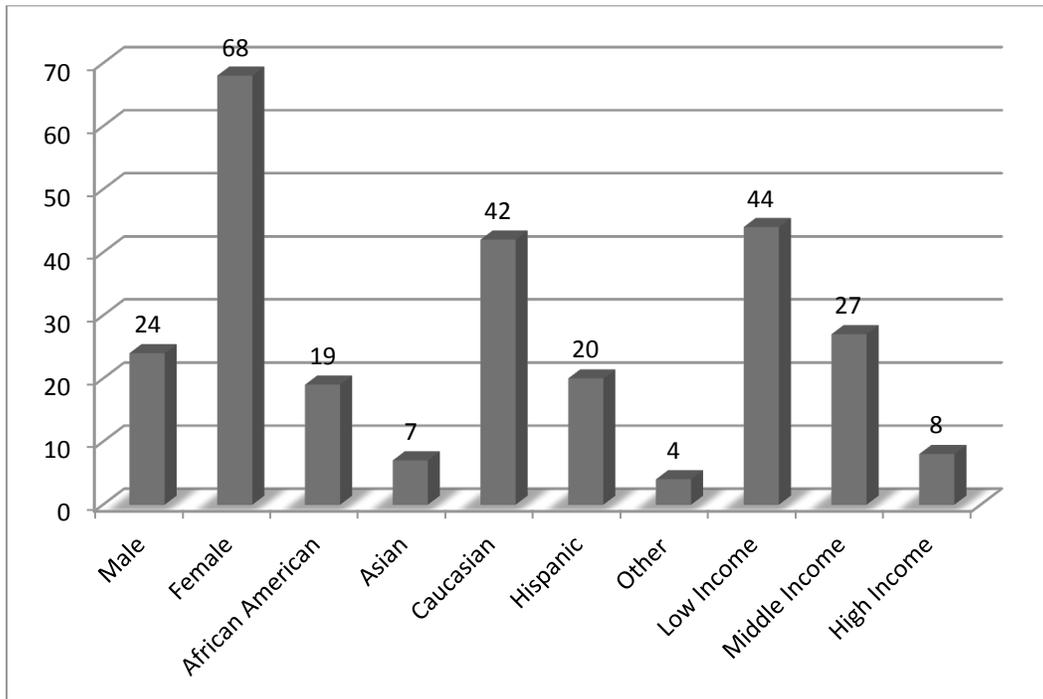


Figure 4-1 Population breakdown by gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status

To test for the second hypothesis, first the big five personality traits of the participants were calculated based on their responses to the brief personality inventory modeled after Gosling et al.'s (2003) Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The participants were scored on their following traits, "Agreeableness," "Conscientiousness," "Extroversion," "Neuroticism," and "Openness." The scores were then dichotomized into high and low scores for each of the five traits, which allowed for 32 different types personalities. Each unique type of personality was coded into a variable called "BF11." The same process was then carried out for the participants' responses to the questions measuring their perception of the presenter's personality traits, and the final scores were coded into a variable called "BF12." Given that the two BFI variables were nominal in nature, any correlation between them would best be determined by the Lambda measure of association (Clason & Dormody, 1994). Lambda can indicate the strength of the

relationship between two variables and its value ranges from -1.0 (perfect inverse relationship) to +1.0 (perfect relationship), with 0 indicating no relationship (Goodman & Kruskal, 1954).

The personality traits of the participants were positively associated ( $\lambda = .35$ ) with their perception of the presenter's personality at a very significant level ( $p < .01$ ). In addition to the big five measure, several other questions were designed to measure the social distance between the participants and the presenters. These items are "outfit", determined by responses to the following statement, "The presenter was wearing something that my friends would wear"; "speech", determined by the statement, "The presenter talked the way my friends would talk"; and "perceived" proximity, determined by responses to the following statement, "The presenter talked the way my friends would talk." The items were then combined into a single variable called the "distance scale," with higher scores representing closer proximity. An independent sample t-test ( $t = -1.707$ ) found the social distance between participants who saw the "proximate" video ( $M = 5.459$ ) and the "distant" video ( $M = 7.166$ ) to be significant. Table 4-3 displays the result of the t-test.

Table 4-3 Social distance between the proximate and distant groups

	Independent sample t-test			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
	Mean difference	Std. Err. difference	t	df	Lower	Upper
<b>Change in Intention to vote</b>	-1.707	.798	-2.137 *	65	-3.302	-.111

\*  $p < .05$

Finally, A factorial ANOVA analysis with "changes in intention to vote" as the dependent variable and "distance scale" ( $M = 6.223$ ) and "proximate/distant" groups ( $M = 1.479$ ) as factors did not find social distance to be a significant main factor but the

interaction with proximate/distant groups was significant ( $p < .05$ ). Table 4-4 displays the results of the factorial ANOVA analysis.

To determine the level and direction of proximity's effect, first the percentages of participants who were influenced by the video and expressed high levels of proximity with presenters is explored, then the results of a regression model is presented. Among those influenced by the videos, eighty-percent of participants who saw the male-presented "distant" video expressed that the outfit worn by the presenter was not similar to ones worn by their peers, while the figure stood at 100% for those who saw the female-presented "distant" video. On the other hand 80% of participants who saw the male-presented "proximate" video agreed that the presenter's outfit was similar to that of their friends. Again all participants who viewed the female-presented "proximate" video unanimously agreed that their friends would wear a dress similar to the one worn by the presenter.

Table 4-4 The effect and interaction of social distance

	Changes in intention to vote				
	M <sup>2</sup>	F	$\eta^2$	Observed power	df
Proximate/distant groups	.097	.063	.001	.999	1
Distance scale	1.442	.932	.237	.480	14
Proximate/distance x distance scale	3.373	2.181*	.318	.817	9

\*  $p < .10$

In terms of speech similarity, all of the participants who viewed the female-presented "proximate" video, 80% of those who saw the male-presented "distant" video and 60% of those who viewed the male-presented "proximate" video agreed, "the presented talked the way someone I know would talk." However, all of the participants in the female-presented "distant" video disagreed with that notion. All of the participants

who saw a female-presented video and eighty-percent of all participants who saw a male-presented video said they could relate to the presenter.

A linear regression model was constructed with self-reported intention to vote in the next election as the dependent variable and each of the three proximity items as covariates (see Table 4-5). None of the proximity variables predicted an intention to vote. However, this was expected, given that H2 found that the distance serves as an interaction as opposed to a main effect. Although non-significant, the model suggests that dress similarity accounts for 4.9% ( $\beta = .072$ ) of variation in intention to vote. Speech similarity almost has no impact (.001%) on intention to vote ( $\beta = .004$ ). Perceived similarity accounted for .05% of the increase in the intention to vote ( $\beta = .074$ ), and finally personality similarity accounts for .01% of increase in intention to vote.

Table 4-5 Level and direction of Proximity's impact on intention to vote

	Intention to vote		
	$\beta$	Std. Err.	t
Outfit:			
The presenter was wearing something that my friends would wear	.197	.174	.917
Speech:			
The presenter talked the way my friends would talk	.219	.099	1.150
Perceived:			
I can relate to someone like the presenter	.259	.299	.1.181
Personality:			
The big five personality traits	.022	.202	.022

Whether the gender of the presenter of the videos plays a role in effectiveness of the message is the subject of the second research question in this study. Overall, the

participants in the group that saw a male-presented “distant” video reported a 39%<sup>4</sup> increase in their intention to vote. The increase stood at 63% for participants in the group that was assigned to see the male-presented “proximate” video, and 39% for those who watched the female-presented “proximate” video. The female-presented “distant” video saw an increase of 15%. However, a one-way ANOVA ( $F = 3.088$ ) -- with “change in intention to vote” ( $M = 1.178$ ) as the dependent variable, and the presenter’s gender as the factor -- did not find the difference between male- and female-presented videos to be significant.

The third research question of this paper inquires about the differences between the impact of male-presented videos and female-presented videos on male and female participants. A total of 73 participants received a video treatment of which 34.2% ( $N=25$ ) saw a video presented by a member of the opposite sex and 65.5% ( $N=48$ ) viewed a video presented by a member of their own sex. Of those who reported a change in their intention to vote after receiving the treatment, 72% ( $N=47$ ) saw a video by a member of the opposite sex, while 27% ( $N=18$ ) saw a video presented by the member of their own sex (see Figure 4-2). But is this a significant difference?

The chi-square test is a 2x2 contingency table that compares the observed count in each table cell to the count, which would be expected under the assumption of no relationship between the row and column classifications (Mantel, 1963). Given that variables relevant to this question are dichotomies, chi-square seems to be the appropriate test for individual participants who reported a change in their intention to vote. A Chi-Square test ( $X^2 = 3.957$ ) suggests that the advantage of the opposite-sex

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<sup>4</sup> The percentage is calculated using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{change in intention to vote value} \times 100}{\text{self reported intention to vote before receiving any treatment (pre-test)}}$$

videos is a significant ( $p < .05$ ) correlation between intention to vote and receiving a GOTV message from the opposite gender.

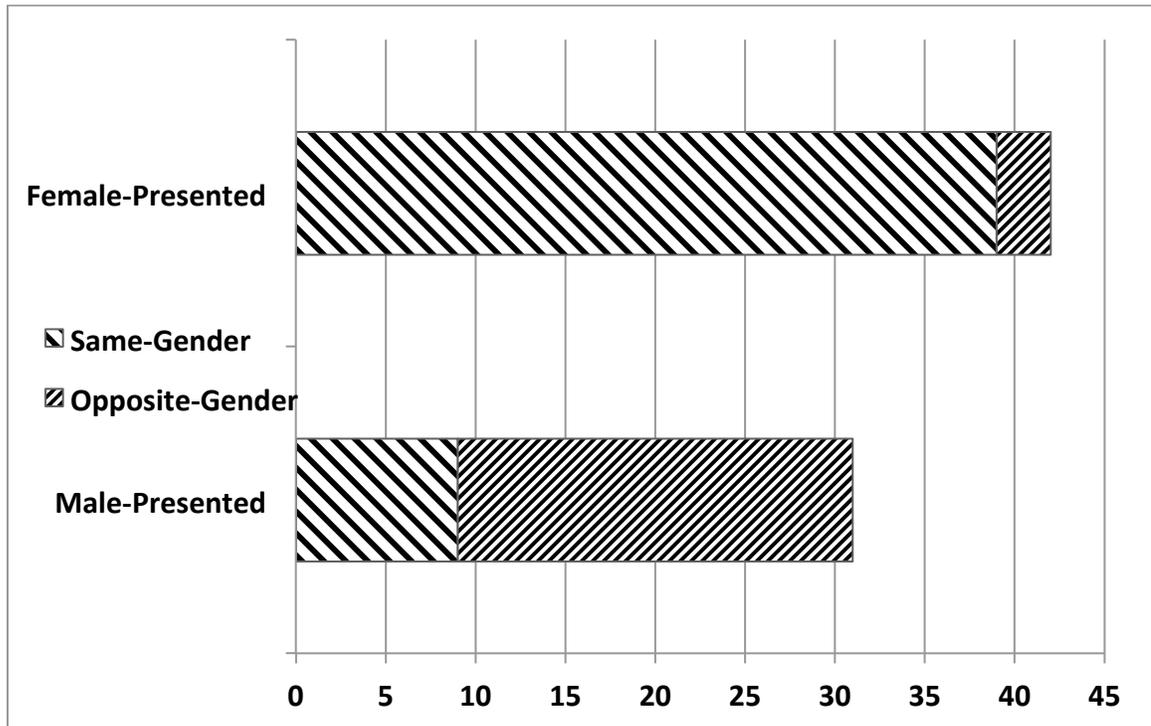


Figure 4-2 Distribution of male and female participants in the two sets of male- and female-presented video groups

Moreover, an independent sample t-test ( $t = 7.499$ , Mean = 1.93, SD = .085) between all subjects who received a video treatment reaffirmed the significance ( $p < .001$ ) of the difference between impact of same-gender and opposite-gender videos. The chi-square and t-test conducted differ in that the former measures the relationship between individuals who reported a change in their intention to vote while the latter tests for the significance of the mean differences of the intention to vote of all individuals. Cases that did not report any change in their intention to vote were eliminated before the tests were run. Figure 4-3 contrasts the total population of same gender and opposite gender groups with the influence of each group. These findings suggest that female

voters are more likely to change their intention to vote when seeing messages delivered by male presenters. In fact, female participants made up the majority of the population in this experiment and that the videos that seem to have the greatest impacts are presented by a male student.

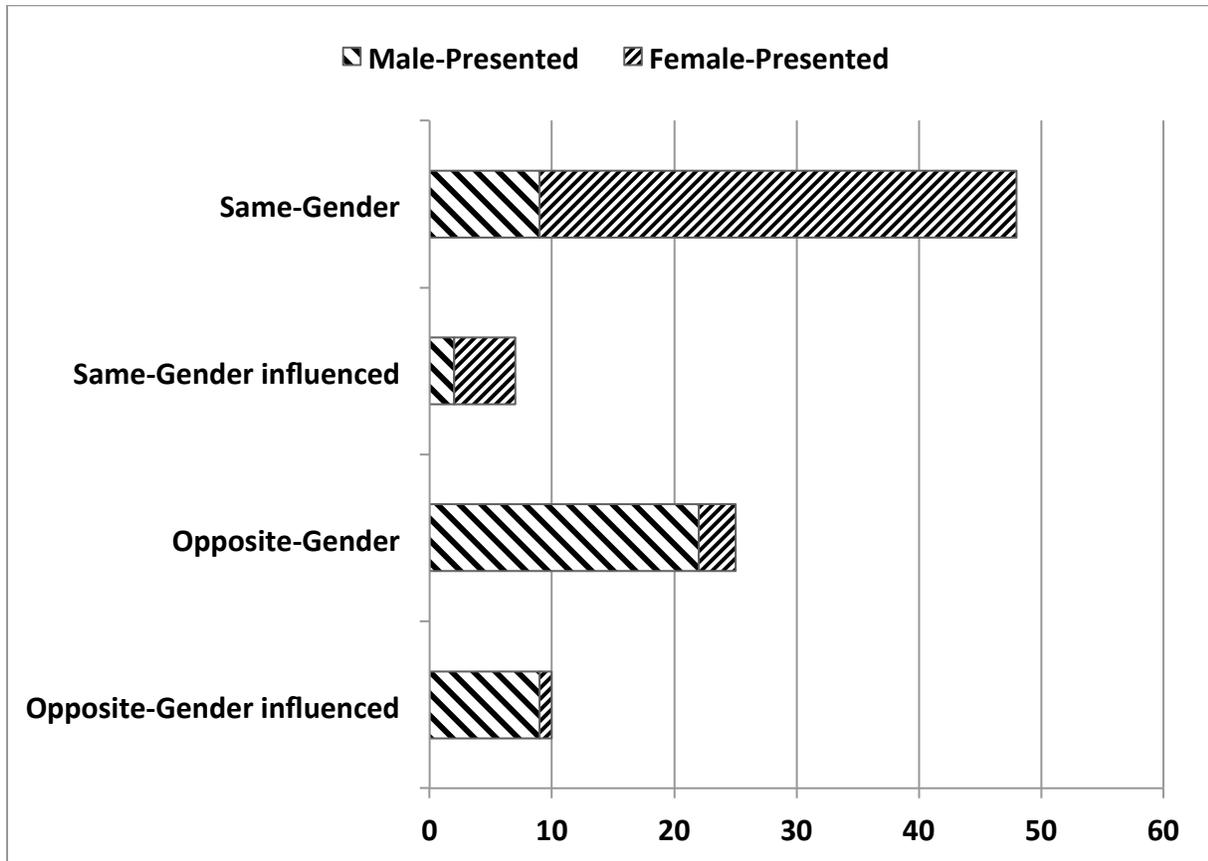


Figure 4-3 The influence of male- and female-presented videos on participants of the same and opposite gender

The final research question of this study probes the influence of the race of the presenter on message effectiveness based on the ethnicity of participants. The treatment sample was made up of 20.5% African Americans (N=15), 9.6% Asian (N=7), 45.2% Caucasian (N=33), 21.9% Hispanic (N=21.9), and 2.7% members of other ethnicities (N=2). These participants were each assigned to a group that saw either a video

presented by a Caucasian male, or a video presented by a minority female. Thirty-three percent of African Americans (N = 5) who saw a white male-presented video reported a change in their intention to vote in the next election. That figure compares to 64% of African Americans (N = 9), who were impacted by the female minority-presented videos.

Hispanic participants were slightly more susceptible to influence with 53% in the Caucasian-presented groups (N = 8) and 46% in the minority-presented groups (N = 7) stating that they would vote in the next election. The greatest influence, however, was observed among the Caucasian participants 64% of whom (N = 18) were influenced by the white male-presented videos and 65% (N = 10) by the minority-presented videos. The following tables displays how the ethnically diverse population compares against those influenced by the videos.

The demographic breakdown seems to suggest that participants of all ethnicities are more likely to be influenced by a Caucasian presenter as opposed to a minority presenter. However, given the uneven distribution of ethnicities in the sample, making such an assumption would be premature. In fact, a Chi-Square test ( $X^2=4.032$ ), and an independent sample t-test ( $t=1.739$ ) reaffirmed that there is no significant correlation between message influence and the race of the presenter. Even if such a correlation existed, it could be attributed to the gender of the presenter, since in this experiment the Caucasian and minority presenters were of different genders. Therefore the answer to the final research question is inconclusive.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion And Discussion

#### Discussion

This study set out to fill a gap in the field of voting behavior and addresses the scarcity of studies on the impact of online video messages on voting behavior. The primary objective of this study was to look for relationships between non-partisan online video messages and voter turnout – which was measure by intention to vote. In doing so, this experiment drew upon the body of research on elaboration likelihood of GOTV messages – which suggests GOTV messages that are processed through the peripheral route will have a greater impact on voter turnout – and successfully made online video messages that were processed via the peripheral. The study then took one step further and introduced the concept of proximity and made two videos with a high level of similarity between the presenter of the video and the target audience.

This experiment found that overall non-partisan online video GOTV messages increase self-reported intention to vote by 2.7% in a statistically significant manner, supporting the first hypothesis. This finding places the impact of online video messages on turnout well above direct mail (.6%) and just under telephone calls (3.8%) (Gerber & Green, 2000; Nickerson D. , 2006), and stands in contrast with previous studies which have reported no positive correlation between online GOTV efforts and voter turnout (Bergan, 2011; Han, 2000; Nickerson, 2007). The media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) argues that presence of peripheral cues such as tone of voice and body language makes for a richer medium. This experiment has managed to capitalize on the multi-media features of the Web to create GOTV messages that richer than text-based material such as email. Daft and Lengel (1986) emphasize on the importance of instant feedback, a feature present in phone calls but absent in online videos. Perhaps it can be argued

that the ability of callers to provide instant feedback has boosted the effectiveness of phone calls.

One factor that may have contributed to the positive correlation in this experiment is the meticulous attention paid to details in making the video and the attempt at maximizing the impact on the target audience – young eligible voters. Previous studies did not control for the treatment, using third-party videos on third-party websites. Another factor, however, may be the reliance of this experiment on self-reported intention to vote in an upcoming election – which is one of the limitations of this study – as opposed to self-reported voting behavior after an election. In other words, while the videos have increased the participants' *intention* to vote, other factors may prevent potential voters from casting their ballot, reducing the *actual* impact of videos. Moreover, the control group of this experiment reported a 3.2% increase in intention to vote. The fluctuation is most likely due to response instability – which constitutes a threat against the accuracy of this study's results. Therefore, the findings should be viewed with discretion.

The majority of participants who reported a change in their intention to vote after watching the videos in this experiment were under 24 years of age, Caucasian, female students from low-income families. However, that demographic also made up the majority of the sample population. In light of this sampling bias, making any generalizations about the interaction of gender and ethnicity – which are the only significant demographic factors in this study – with impact of the videos would be premature.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of this study is its success in making videos that are processed via the peripheral route by the participants. All the items employed to operationalize elaboration likelihood, significantly pointed to the peripheral route, which previous research suggest has a greater impact on political behavior. By incorporating the findings of previous research on peripheral processing of political messages, this

study managed produce four treatment videos that were all processed peripherally, therefore, expanding the independent variable to include the entire treatment population.

Another contribution of this study is production of videos with shorter social distance (closer proximity) between the presenter and the target audience. The high level of perceived proximity means that the participants have accepted the presenter as one of their own – an average student with similar traits, mannerism, and taste in fashion. Previous research suggests that a message is better received and left unchallenged when the sender and receiver share some level of similarity. While the “distance” between the presenters and participants is not a predictor of intention to vote, the interaction with “distant” and “proximate” videos can result in an increase in intention to vote. Given that the same presenters delivered both the “distant” and “proximate” messages, it would stand to reason to assume that at least some level of proximity exists between the presenter and the audience even in the “distant” groups. While some peripheral cues such as the tone of voice, use of body language and dress are distinctly different in the two versions of the video, the presenter and the participants are still the same age, members of the same community (i.e. a large university), and part of the same culture (i.e. student life). Therefore, the baseline here is some level of proximity for the “distant” video and higher proximity for the “proximate” video. Perhaps a better comparison would be between the impact of a message delivered by a seasoned politician and one delivered by a presenter with a high level of proximity with the target audience. The second hypothesis is partially supported. This finding is in line with the studies of the principle of homophily, social distance, and oneness, which found that the receiver is more likely to accept, and agree with, the message when perception of similarity is high between the two.

This study did not find any of the four proximity indicators a significant predictor of intention to vote. However, the impact of proximity should not be taken for granted, since they might well be significant in comparison to a message delivered by a more dissimilar presenter. Perhaps the main reason behind non-significance of Proximity indicators as predictors of intention to vote is that social proximity is an encompassing concept, the effects of which exceed any single variable.

In response to RQ2, this experiment found that the difference between the influence of male- and female-presented videos is not significant. A comparison of the impact of the message based on the gender of the message recipient and presenter -- as inquired by RQ3 -- suggests that participants respond better to messages presented by a member of the opposite sex and the male presenter is more persuasive than the female presenter when it comes to opposite-gender audiences. However, upon closer inspection and considering the sample bias toward female participants, the finding can be interpreted slightly differently. While the male presenter is still more persuasive among female participants, he is only more persuasive among male participants of the "distant" group. This is in accordance with Guadagno and Cialdini's (2007) finding that men-men email persuasion efforts are more successful in a low *oneness* environment. They also reported that in a low-oneness environment female-female messages are most likely unsuccessful, similar to the female-presented "distant" group of this study. In this group there were only 3 male participants compared with 17 female participants. These female participants showed the least amount of variation in their intention to vote among all groups -- eight participants did not change their intention at all, and one was even negatively impacted. While the small sample size and sampling bias are clear limitations of this study, overall the findings suggest that opposite-gender persuasive efforts are more effective than same-sex.

Previous research suggests that GOTV messages are more effective when the sender and the recipient are of the same race. However, in this study, members of all ethnicities were more likely to be influenced by the Caucasian presenter than the minority presenter. Given that the minority presenter was of Filipino descent, very few participants (N=4) perceived themselves as being members of the same race as the presenter. This made any meaningful comparison between the minority and majority presenter very difficult. Moreover, the minority and Caucasian presenters were members of the opposite sex, therefore, attribution of any influence resulting from the race of the presenter would be premature. To draw a meaningful distinction between the impacts of minority- and majority-presented messages, it is recommended that a Hispanic or African American presenter of the same sex as the Caucasian presenter be used in making of future videos to control for sex and increase perceived racial proximity among Hispanic and African Americans who make up 16.4% and 12.6% of the US population, according to the 2010 census data<sup>5</sup>.

#### Limitations and Recommendations for future studies

This study has many limitations, some of which were referenced earlier. But perhaps two of the biggest limitations of this study are its small sample size and reliance on self-reported intention to vote in an *upcoming* election. The study started with a sample size of 92 participants, dividing them into five groups, and thus greatly impacting the statistical power of the findings. The author recommends an effort be made to recruit more participants in future studies.

The next major limitation of this study pertains to its timing. While the experiment is directly related to election, it was conducted during a non-election season. The study

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<sup>5</sup> "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010"  
<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>

asked participants to report their intention to vote in the next election. Apart from social desirability, which has long been considered a limitation in studies of social sciences that rely on self-reported behavior, unforeseen events may result in abstention of even the most honest participants who reported their intention to vote. It is recommended that future studies be conducted during an election season and be designed in such a manner that participants would respond to the pre-test survey, receive the treatment prior to election, but be asked to report their *actual* voting behavior *after* the election, to control for unexpected abstentions and last minute participations.

Another limitation of this study is its limited scope. The participants were recruited primarily from two departments. The participants may have subconsciously expressed greater levels of proximity with the presenters due to the notion that they are both part of the same campus and school culture. The author recommends geographical diversity in future studies to ensure that the findings are generalizable as far as all young college students are concerned.

This experiment set out to explore the differences between the impact of online “distant” and “proximate” videos on self-reported intention to vote with a two-by-two design. While this design allowed for observation of differences between each video and no video, lack of a baseline mainstream GOTV video obscured the impact of the Proximity-specific items. It is recommended that future studies make a set of videos that conform to the mainstream norm of GOTV messages for the “distant” videos, to allow for a more meaningful comparison of the impact of each video, the “distance scale,” and Social Proximity items.

While this experiment captures the differences of male- and female-presented videos’ impact on male and female participants, a more evenly distributed sample in terms of gender would certainly benefit any future study.

This study faced many limitations in its exploration of ethnicity's role in message effectiveness. That the race and gender of the presenters' fell under the same dichotomies effectively eliminated any chance of a meaningful distinction between gender's impact and ethnicity's impact. The choice of the minority presenter – not being a member of the more represented minority groups in the United States – also adversely impacted the perceived racial similarities by the audience. It is recommended that in future studies all videos be shot with a Caucasian male; Caucasian female; African American, or Hispanic male; and African American, or Hispanic female presenters to control for gender's interaction and increase the chances of perceived racial similarity.

#### Conclusion

This experiment found that intention to vote among eligible voters could be increased through online video messages featuring young presenter, who encourage viewers to cast their ballot by appealing to their peripheral processing route. These online video messages should be delivered by a confident, and reassuring presenter, and should not be complex and hard to understand. The significant correlation between online video messages and intention to vote supported the first hypothesis of this experiment. This study found that the impact of messages is not statistically different on receivers of different gender, race and socioeconomic status.

Social distance, or perceived similarity, between the sender and receiver of online video messages has a moderating effect on the impact of the online video messages discussed earlier. Given that, by itself, the distance between the sender and receiver is not a predictor of intention to vote, the second hypothesis of this study is partially supported. However, similarity on no specific item is correlated with effectiveness of the messages. Moreover, the gender of the message sender did not significantly impact the overall effectiveness of the message; however, messages were found to be

more influential when the sender and receiver were members of the opposite gender. Finally, the shortcomings of this experiment masked the possible impact of the sender's ethnicities on reception of the message by receivers of various ethnicities.

This experiment contributes to the field of voting behavior by introducing a new interdisciplinary method of online voter stimulation. Moreover, this experiment expands the field of persuasion by building on ELM studies and incorporating the principle of homophily, social distance, and oneness. Finally, it is worth reiterating that like any other innovative work, the results of this experiment should be viewed with discretion, as more studies are needed to confirm the findings.

## Appendix A

The script to be used to make the videos

You've heard it a million times, repeated over and over every time an election comes up. Everyone tells you to vote!

They tell you about the brave men and women who've fought and fallen for your freedom and rights. They add that if you choose not to exercise the most fundamental right of a democratic society, you're wasting their sacrifice.

But they don't tell you that you can't always win. Just because you vote doesn't mean the election is going to turn out the way you want it to. Your candidate might not win. But that doesn't matter. An election is more than just a popularity contest held on a regular basis.

Elections are a chance for you, as an American citizen, to make a statement and declare your support for the ideas you want to be the guiding principles of our nation. Whether your side wins or loses, whether you're a republican, democrat, or independent, what matters is that you get to tell the country and the world what kind of place you want the United States to be.

You may not be able to change the government, and you may not be able to decide who the president will be, but you can tell them what you think. Remember, even if your candidate doesn't win, your support gives weight to his ideas.

Appendix B  
The questionnaires

### **Pre-test**

This Survey is expected to take about three to seven minutes to complete. **Individual responses to this survey are considered anonymous.** Please read the questions carefully and be honest in your responses. There is no right or wrong answer; people who see the results of this study will not see your name. The purpose of this study is to add to our understanding human behavior and it can only be achieved through your truthfulness.

#### **Email address:**

**1- Gender:**

- a. Male
- b. Female

**2- Ethnicity:**

- a. Caucasian
- b. African American
- c. Native American
- d. Hispanic
- e. Asian
- f. Other

**3- How old are you?**

- a. Under 18
- b. 18-24
- c. 25-30
- d. 30-50
- e. 51 and older

**4- What is the highest level of education you have received?**

- a. High school
- b. Some college credits
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Some graduate credit
- e. Master's degree
- f. Doctorate degree

**5- In your opinion, what is the most pressing issue currently facing the United States?**

- a. Economy
- b. Foreign policy
- c. Marriage equality
- d. Healthcare
- e. Other

**6- Did you vote in the 2012 presidential election?**

- a. Yes
- b. I usually vote but this time didn't
- c. I forgot to register on time
- d. I was registered to vote but had an emergency
- e. I didn't vote because I did not support any of the candidates on the ballot
- f. I didn't vote for other reasons

**7- Have you ever voted in a Presidential, national, or local election before?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I have never been eligible to vote before

**8- What is your primary source of information?**

- a. Television
- b. Newspapers

- c. Internet
- d. Radio
- e. Other

**9- How often do you use the Internet?**

- a. Less than once a week
- b. Once a week
- c. Several times a week
- d. Everyday

**10- What is your primary reason for using the Internet?**

- a. Online videos
- b. Email
- c. Social networking
- d. Reading blogs
- e. Reading gossip columns
- f. Keeping up with current events
- g. Online gaming
- h. Other

**11- In your opinion, how important is voting?**

- a. Very important
- b. Somewhat Important
- c. Neither important nor unimportant
- d. Somewhat unimportant
- e. Not important at all

**12- To what degree do you agree with the following statements?**

I see myself as:	Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree a little	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree Strongly
Extraverted, enthusiastic							
Anxious, Easily upset							
Calm, emotionally stable							
Conventional, uncreative							
Open to new experiences complex							
Reserved quiet							
Critical, Quarrelsome							

Based on the brief measure of big five (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann Jr, A Very Brief Measure of the Big-Five Personality Domains, 2003).

**13- What is your total household income? Please select the figure that is closest to the income of all members of your household combined.**

- a. Less than \$10,000
- b. \$10,000 to \$19,999
- c. \$20,000 to \$29,999

- d. \$30,000 to \$39,999
- e. \$40,000 to \$49,999
- f. \$50,000 to \$59,999
- g. \$60,000 to \$69,999
- h. \$70,000 to \$79,999
- i. \$80,000 to \$89,999
- j. \$90,000 to \$99,999
- k. \$100,000 to \$149,999
- l. \$150,000 or more

**14- Are you a US citizen?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**15- Are you planning to vote in the next election?**

- a. Yes
- b. Probably
- c. I don't know
- d. Probably not
- e. No

**Post-test**

This Survey is expected to take about three to seven minutes to complete. **Individual responses to this survey are considered anonymous.** Please read the questions carefully and be honest in your responses. There is no right or wrong answer; people who see the results of this study will not see your name. The purpose of this study is to add to our understanding human behavior and it can only be achieved through your truthfulness.

**Email address:**

**1- Did you enjoy watching the video?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**2- To what degree do you agree with the following statements?**

I believe the presenter was:	Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree a little	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree Strongly
Extraverted, enthusiastic							
Anxious, Easily upset							
Calm, emotionally stable							
Conventional, uncreative							
Open to new experiences complex							
Reserved quiet							
Critical, Quarrelsome							

Based on the brief measure of big five (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann Jr, A very brief measure of the Big-Five personality domains, 2003).

3- The presenter was wearing something that my friends would wear.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4-The presenter seemed confident.					
5- The presenter talked the way my friends would talk.					
6- The presenter's tone was reassuring.					
7- I found the arguments in the video intellectually challenging.					
8- I can relate to someone like the presenter in the video.					
9- The presenter was dressed professionally.					
10- The video was complex and					

forced me think hard to comprehend the arguments.					
11- The presenter made proper use of intonations.					
12 – I consider voting to be important.					

13 – **What was the color of the presenter’s shirt in the video?**

- a. Red
- b. Blue
- c. Gray
- d. Black

14 - **What did you like the most about this video?**

- a. The message
- b. The presenter
- c. The technologies used
- d. Other

15- **What did you like the least about the video?**

- a. It was too long
- b. The presenter
- c. The message
- d. The technologies used
- e. Other

16- **Are you planning to vote in the next election?**

- a. Yes
- b. Probably
- c. I don't know
- d. Probably not
- e. No

17- **Would you say that the presenter was of the same gender as you are?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

18- **Would say that the presenter was of the same race as you are?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

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