

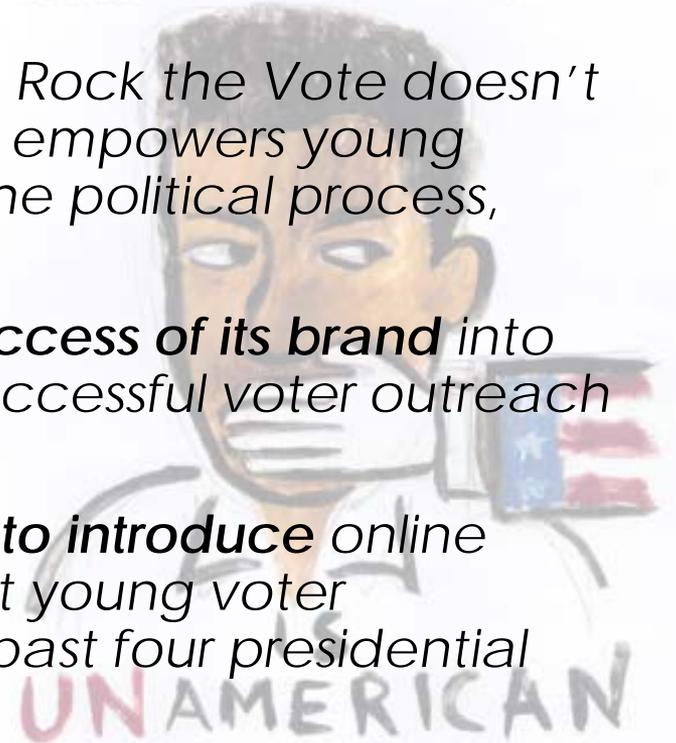


Presented by Heather Smith



# Rock the Vote

- ✓ **Founded in 1990** in response to a wave of attacks on freedom of speech and artistic expression, Rock the Vote will turn 18 in 2008.
- ✓ **As a nonpartisan nonprofit organization**, Rock the Vote doesn't tell individuals who to vote for. Rather, it empowers young people to step up, claim their voice in the political process, and change the way politics is done.
- ✓ **Rock the Vote is able to translate the success of its brand** into real results by running innovative and successful voter outreach and registration efforts.
- ✓ **Rock the Vote was the first organization to introduce** online voter registration and has run the largest young voter registration drives on record during the past four presidential elections.



# The Increasing Impact of the Youth Vote

- ✓ In 2004, more than 20 million 18-29 year olds voted, a 4.3 million jump over 2000.
  - The turnout increase among the youngest voters was **more than double** any other age group.
- ✓ In 2006, the youth vote increased by 2 million over the last non-presidential election.
  - Turnout among young voters **increased two times** that of the overall voting population.
- ✓ In 2008, there will be approximately 44 million young people eligible to cast a ballot. This is nearly a quarter of all potential voters.



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# Voter Registration and the Youth Vote

- ✓ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, **81.6% of *registered* 18-29 year olds voted** in the 2004 elections, exemplifying the fact that one of the biggest opportunities to increasing young voter turnout is voter registration.



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# Young People Online

- ✓ 88% of 18-29 year olds are online.
- ✓ 70% use the web daily.
- ✓ Half of those 18-29 year olds who are online read the news online daily, 84% read it weekly.
- ✓ 41% of 18-29 year olds use online social networking sites daily, 60% use them weekly.

(Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project)



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# Online Voter Registration

- ✓ Rock the Vote was the first organization to introduce online voter registration (first introduced in 1996, re-launched in 2000).
- ✓ In the last presidential election cycle, 1.2 million people used Rock the Vote's OVR tool. Of those, 68% ended up on the voter rolls.
- ✓ At its peak in late September of 2004, nearly 40,000 people came to Rock the Vote's website in one day to fill out voter registration forms.



# Online Voter Registration in 2008

- ✓ This past fall, Rock the Vote and Credo Mobile unveiled the new Rock the Vote OVR “widget.”

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.



# The Most Effective OVR Tool Currently Available

- ✓ The free application is available to all.
- ✓ The entire voter registration process happens on the individual's site. Users are never directed to a third-party website.
- ✓ There are no pop-up windows.
- ✓ The one-page form and seamless integration into the existing website mean less user drop off, making it more likely people will complete the registration process.

# Automatic Follow-Up

- ✓ Rock the Vote automatically follows up with registrants to make sure they complete the registration process and know where and when to vote on Election Day.

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
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# How it Works

1. You register to use the widget at [www.rockthevote.com/partners](http://www.rockthevote.com/partners)
2. You cut and paste a short snippet of code into your web page or blog.
3. Any visitor to your site will be able to register to vote using the OVR widget. He or she only has to print out the pre-populated PDF form, sign it, and mail it to the Secretary of State's office (Rock the Vote provides the address).



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# Young People, Cell Phones, and Text Messaging

- ✓ 48% of 18-29 year olds use their mobile phone as their only telephone.
- ✓ The mobile-only population is projected to reach 30% of the entire American public by the 2008 Presidential election.
- ✓ Text/SMS messaging is already widely used among young people as a form of communications.

(Source: National Center for Health Statistics)



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# Text Messaging as a Mobilization Technique

- ✓ In the November 2006 elections, text message reminders increased the likelihood of an individual voting by 4.2 percentage points.
- ✓ Of the different messages tested, a short, to-the-point reminder was the most effective, with a boost of nearly 5 percentage points.
- ✓ Of all people surveyed, Hispanics had especially positive feelings about the reminders.



# Other Nontraditional Methods of Voter Registration



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# California Birthday Card Program

- ✓ The California Secretary of State's Birthday Card Program delivers a "birthday style" voter registration card to everyone who turns 18 years old and has a California driver's license or California identification card from the DMV.
- ✓ Beginning in 1999, the program was initially a product of a partnership between the Secretary of State, the Department of Motor Vehicles and Rock the Vote.
- ✓ Since the program began, an estimated 400,000 "birthday voter registration cards" have been mailed out each year to people on their 18th birthday.
- ✓ Signed cards are returned to the Secretary of State's office and then sent to the registrar of voters' office in the newly registered voter's home county.



# WVWV Birthday Card Program

- ✓ WVWV utilized commercially available databases that contained birthdates and sent voter registration forms to young women who were just turning or had just turned 18 years old.
  - Total Mailed: 416,881
  - Applications Returned: 26,270
  - Percent Return: 6.30%
  - Cost per Application: \$5.55
- ✓ Of the different designs tested, the most successful was the simplest mailer designed to look like an official government document.



# Rock the Vote Re-Registration Test

- ✓ Rock the Vote sent reminders to young people to reregister to vote after they moved.
  - 6% response rate for direct mail
  - 8% response rate for direct mail plus email
- ✓ The test reregistered 10,000 voters making it very cost-effective.
- ✓ The simplest, most official looking mail piece did better than the more dynamic versions.
- ✓ The projected cost per registration is between \$6 and \$8 when rolled out fully.



# Lessons Learned

- ✓ Organize them where they are, including online and through their cell phones.
- ✓ Keep the process simple.
- ✓ A trusted messenger works best.
- ✓ Reach them when they are thinking about voting:
  - After they move
  - Around their 18th birthday
  - Close to the voter registration deadline
- ✓ Text messaging can be a cost-effective method for GOTV but not for voter registration.





[heather@rockthevote.com](mailto:heather@rockthevote.com)

<http://www.rockthevote.com/research>

