

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

GET OUT THE VOTE: UNDERSTANDING VOTER MOBILIZATION

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Introduction and Moderator:

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Featured Speakers:

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. MANN: Welcome to Brookings. I'm Tom Mann, a Senior Fellow in our Governance Studies Program, and I'm delighted to moderate this session on the occasion of the publication of the second edition of *Get Out the Vote, How to Increase Voter Turnout*. I proudly remember conversations with Don and Alan some years ago as their body of evidence from a fascinating new line of research using randomized experiments began to grow and they thought about putting this together in a book, an accessible book, accessible not simply to political scientists, but to campaign practitioners and told them I thought Brookings was the perfect place to publish it. I think their experience has been positive and we are delighted to welcome them back for the second education of the publication and another opportunity for them to discuss this really extraordinary body of work.

I have to admit as a political scientist that we don't have a lot of examples of where the most rigorous of our research is immediately transferable to the world of public policy or practical politics. We try to make that happen but we don't often times have a strong basis for it. Witness if you will the difficulties that experts have had cogently and accurately analyzing the current presidential nomination season. But this is certainly the exception because Don Green and Alan Gerber have now

developed alone and in association with a growing number of colleagues around the country a strategy of research to see the ways in which various approaches to voter mobilization, get out the vote, work, at what cost and with what effectiveness.

So that's what we're here for today, to have them share with you the additional body of evidence that's built up since the first edition of this book which as I recall was published in 2004, and here we are in 2008 with a much more substantial empirical basis on which to make some judgments about the efficacy of various forms of GOTV. I read the book yesterday. It was wonderful to catch up with the new evidence and the new findings. They've also really expanded the setting in which these experiments have been conducted but also the means of voter mobilization. There was just a hint of the media last time around and now we have much more that is present. There was I think a greater reliance on nonpartisan voter mobilization activities initially and now we have some partisan activities which gives us also opportunity to ruminate on the connections if at all between turnout and persuasion.

Speaking of that, persuasion, before Alan and Don make their presentations, we have two colleagues with us who are going to make some initial observations by way of introduction from their own points of view. Each is a political consultant. One, David Carney has worked with the Republican Party in a variety of settings going back to the

Senate Campaign Committee and working for a large number of candidates, but in connection with this activity it was really the Rick Perry for Governor Campaign. And then Hal Malchow who is the Chairman of MSHC Partners, an organization that has worked for Democratic candidates, parties and other organizations in direct mail, in internet activities, and other forms of voter mobilization as well. Each of those will make some introductory marks. Then Alan Gerber is going to make an initial presentation. We have color and bells and whistles for you. No telling what surprises they are going to spring on you. Alan and Don are professors of political science at Yale University and imagine that Alan is really an economist but we happily accept him into the fold. He directs the Center for the Study of American Politics at Yale. Don directs Yale's Institution for Social and Policy Studies and they have worked together and developed this field for a number of years and we're very much looking forward to their presentations.

So let's begin with Hal. Then we're going to turn to David, then Alan, then Don, then you. Let's go.

MR. MALCHOW: It's an honor to be here, and I'd like to start with some thank-yous. First I want to thank Alan and Don for telling all my clients that direct mail doesn't work. Second, I want to thank Alan and Don for giving Karl Rove the big idea that reshaped the 72-hour program and helped the Republicans win major victories in 2002 and

2004, along with which I guess we could thank them for George Bush, the Iraq war, and maybe a little global warming. Finally, after having attempted to read their academic articles for years, I want to thank them for finally writing something that a normal person like me can understand.

I first met Don Green at a voter contact services conference in 2003. I'd had some interest in measuring what we do in politics and in fact had been to the DNC several times to advocate this during presidential elections always unsuccessfully. And all of a sudden here was Don Green speaking in front of this conference talking about the things that we do and describing in a very professional and empirical way that many of the things we do don't work at all and of the ones that work that we can actually measure, what it costs to produce another vote, really shined a light of knowledge on a business that had frankly become unaccountable, uninformed, and ineffective.

I was so excited I probably did exactly the wrong thing. I invited Don Green to come to D.C. and meet with all our clients. Many of them were excited to learn about these new techniques and the work that they're doing, but I also got a lot of comments like Hal, why did you bring these people down? What if our funders hear about all of this? Or people in the mail business who would say this is not good for our business. But despite initial resistance, the work of Alan Gerber and Don Green has had a transforming effect on American politics. Today at the Republican

National Committee they measure all of their voter contact activities and put it on a yardstick and have instituted a program of continuing improvement in feedback and knowledge that is not possible without the techniques that these two gentlemen have brought to politics.

On the Democratic side, we now have an Analyst Institute where people who are interested in experimentation and measurement, accountability, and improvement meet every other week at the AFL-CIO, share ideas, promote experimentation, and take what Don Green and Alan Gerber have brought to politics and are pushing it forward. And probably most importantly, in small local campaigns all across America, people are buying this book, they're reading it, and they're improving the effectiveness of what they do.

In Washington so much of what we do is really about hype. We win an election and we're all geniuses, we lose an election and we're all fools, and often times this judgment has very little to do with either our ability or accomplishments. I think the real accomplishments, the ones that never really get in the newspaper, are displayed in how they affect the work of others throughout a profession and few in America have reshaped my profession in such a fundamental way like Alan Gerber and Don Green.

They conducted their first experiment in New Haven in 1998. Like all great things, it took a while to get published. It took them 2 years

to actually get it into print. They published the first edition of this book in 2004 which I think was really a landmark event in helping people understand the process of increasing voter participation in politics, and since then have conducted over a hundred studies and now have former students spread out all across the country who have picked up the gospel and are accumulating knowledge almost so fast that it's hard to keep up with. This book is a great book. It's accessible for anyone who is interested in understanding what you have to do to get your voters to the polls.

Sometimes it's hard to be in a profession that at times like it's lost in the wilderness, but it's always great to be rescued. So I want to just say a special thank you to both Don and Alan who are a team that has brought the truth, accountability, and great improvement that our profession has needed for a long time. Thank you.

MR. CARNEY: Thank you. First of all, I've always wanted to try what would happen if you're late and how long the professors wait before they leave, and it didn't work so now I know why I didn't do it in college more often. I would first like to recommend that nobody buy this book particularly my competitors. I think it's bad that we put these trade secrets out in the public and I discourage anybody particularly on the Democratic side from reading any of this myth that Don and Alan are going to talk about.

We spend billions of dollars over a 4-year cycle in political communications and it's probably the least thought of in terms of accountability, in terms of what works, in terms of experimenting and testing that we do. There's not a corporation or an industry or an association in America or in fact the world that would spend the kind of resources we spent combating ideas in the political arena without some sort of accountability. Hal, on our side when we win, it's the greatness of the consultants, when we lose, it's the candidate. It's never our fault.

I read this book in the summer, the first edition, of 2005. I had ordered it during the 2004 session as one of those propagandas from the Brookings Institution. I looked at it, kind of interesting, too busy to read it actually during work. On an airplane ride down to Texas I read this book and by the time I landed I had ordered a copy for every one of the 35 people who are engaged in Governor Perry's political activities, our vendors, all of our consultants, all of our political people, and emailed these guys out of the blue if they'd be willing to work with a Republican campaign, a major statewide campaign, I think we spent \$25 million or something like that, and work with us throughout the entire campaign. And they agreed and our side agreed and you should have seen the very first meeting. All of our consultants were there and these guys came in, we do thousands, millions of automatic robo calls we call them, but automatic dials, and Don and Alan go through how these have zero

impact, and in fact maybe even hurt the actual vote. It was just so much fun to watch all of our vendors who work all around the country on dozens of campaigns and make a very good living to have their work just ripped apart from soup to nuts. And it made our campaign much more accountable--people put more thought into what they were doing because every single thing we did for the entire year we tested. We did a lot of fun and interesting things and we figured out what worked and didn't work and I guess in reality and in hindsight in politics I think we're very qualitative, every campaign is a series of stories about this one thing won a campaign and we tell war stories about how it was this thing that hurt us or this one thing, this press release, this gimmick, this phone call, this piece of mail, this clever ad, but getting into the sort of quantitative side of politics, very, very few people except on the finance side ever are held accountable. And so this has really brought a whole new dimension and it's a procedure I think that every single campaign that I'm involved with from now on you can do -- it's very reasonable, but I think most campaign professionals are realizing not just the donors wanting more accountability, but candidates and clients wanting to know what they're getting the millions of dollars we spent and we finally have a framework to work off that, a matrix, if you will, to kind of evaluate what we do and not just keep running the last campaigns again and again and again. And again I suggest you not read

this book, do not talk about this book, and if you're in politics particularly, forget everything Don and Alan are about to tell you.

MR. GERBER: Thank you, Hal and Dave. I should say that it's very nice to hear the extent to which they appreciate the experimental method and the testing that Don and I bring to the table. That's what we do. We do research design and statistical analysis. But I should also say, I'll speak for myself and I know Don feels the same way, that we both learned a tremendous amount from Hal and Dave who are extremely savvy and have great amounts of experience and wisdom about politics and in some ways the right approach I believe, and I think I speak for Don as well, is to test these insights, these hard-won insights, that the practitioners have gleaned to see which ones are the most robust, which ones are perhaps fallacious, but it's not our expectation that most of what they think is wrong. In fact, really what's most important is to separate out what they think that's right and what they think they know that actually is incorrect. And it's a method that we bring forward that hopefully is able to do that and the method is randomized experimentation and so I'm going to talk to you a little bit about the work that Don and I have been doing. The way Don and I have divided up the labor here is I'm going to present a bit of background, intellectual background and context, and then Don is going to present an account of some of the new findings in the second edition.

The basic question that Don and I have been attempting to address is a very simple one but also a very subtle one which is, How do you know what works? People will make many causal claims, but it's obviously extremely difficult to verify the accuracy of those claims. In geek language, if a movement in X causes an observed change in Y, how do you know if a movement in X causes the observed change in Y? Your volunteers knocked on a thousand doors before the election and turnout in your town reached a record level. Your candidate gave a great speech. Your candidate won. Your candidate had a great ad. Your candidate won. Your candidate had an ad and lost. Did the ad win? Did the ad lose? It's very hard to know. But it's easy to fool yourself into thinking that you do know.

In the case of the canvassing effort, how do you know what turnout would have been if the canvassing effort had never occurred? So you went out there and you hit a thousands households, but there is no control group. There is no case or no set of households that were not contacted. And so how do you know that your canvassing did any good? Secondly, how do you know there was not a more effective way to use your resources? You did canvassing, but maybe phone calls would have been better. Again, there is no way to know if you just simply tally up the times you went and canvassed or the times you went and called without having control groups or fair tests, randomized comparisons. Basically,

these sorts of claims that X caused Y are very common and I just want to say be alert to these claims. In fact, every time you watch television and every time you see a political pundit explaining why the candidate is doing well or why the candidate is doing poorly this week, there is a causal claim behind that and think to yourself what is the scientific basis, what is the real basis in knowledge for that causal claim. And I think a lot of times if you approach this skeptically you'll realize that it's a lot of guesswork. So what we're trying to do is study those situations and study them in a way that reduces the amount of guesswork and uses the best scientific methods in order to separate out guesses from scientific conclusions. So my talk is going to do a few things. I'm going to try and give you a brief historical background and intellectual context for the book. I'm going to describe the work that came before the recent move to experiments. There were a lot of experiments in the last 10 years or so, but there is some work before that and I would like to describe it to you. I'd like to explain to you some of the attractive features of the experimental research designs that we're using. And also briefly introduce a few of the interesting studies that this line of research has produced.

What is the big idea here? I don't want to be overly modest, but there's one big idea and it's not ours. The big idea is randomized controlled trials. This idea is not something that Don and I invented. It goes back to agricultural experiments in the 1920s, medical experiments

in the 1950s, but it was rarely used in politics. And so what we tried to do was to move this very attractive research design wherever possible into the study of voter mobilization. Let me give you an example of how these studies are doing because all of the studies in this book are randomized controlled trials. What do I mean by that in this context? I'll describe to you the New Haven experiment from 1998. This is the first large-scale experiment that Don and I did and it's now 10 years ago which is frankly a shocking realization as I look at this number of 1998. That's a long time ago. We've been at this for a while.

This experiment was we compared nonpartisan face-to-face canvassing, mailings, and live phone calls on a sample of New Haven registered voters. What are the key features of this experiment? The first was selection, who got the treatment. The selection method was random. That is, we took a group of voters. Some were randomly assigned to the canvassing group, the mail group, and the live calls. So that's the way we did selection, that's not how campaigns do selection, that's how we did selection.

Secondly, measurement, how did we measure the effects of what we did? First, we have perfect measurement of who got the treatments because they were controlled by us. That's a very attractive quality in terms of research design. Second, we measured voter turnout using public records. So we didn't ask people did you vote or not, we

actually went down to town hall and we got a copy of the voter records and we were able to compare the different randomized treatment groups just as if this had been a drug experiment or some other kinds of experiments, and the basic findings were this. The face-to-face canvassing was extremely effective at turning out the vote, the brief commercial phone call was not very effective. We assigned it a value of zero. And the mail was much less effective or ineffective. I think we estimated it to be worth maybe a quarter or a half a percentage point per mailing, so we went up to one, two, or three mailings.

We sent this to the America Political Science Review and it was a sad story but a familiar one to the political scientists in the audience. We received lukewarm reviews. Eventually we did get this paper in the APSR, but that's a long story. But referee three is indicative of the kind of rough treatment we received, and I will just read to you the highlighted portion. This is painful: "I don't have too much difficulty accepting the arguments of this paper but I cannot recommend its publication in the American Political Science Review." At this point I didn't have tenure so I took this kind of hard. "In short, its findings are entirely confirmatory of previous work." That's a real dis I should tell you in academic speak. "The paper does not offer any new theory about turnout and the results are consistent with that of Rosenstone, Hansen, Eldersveld, and Gosnell. Admittedly," (this is grudging,) "the findings offer

a slightly different view of the effect of canvassing efforts but the effects are well within the 1 to 9 percent effects found by the Gosnell study.” Gosnell I should say is probably the most important American politics scholar in my view over the first half of the 20th century so at least we're being dissed in a polite way I guess, but there we are. “Essentially the contribution is a more refined estimate of the substantive effects of canvassing upon turnout.” And I love this line, “that said, I think the study is useful and I wish the authors luck in getting it published elsewhere.”

Wonderful.

So the main problems with our paper, it's old news, the issues are settled, Gosnell and Eldersveld, they did experiments and we're just very late to the game here, and Rosenstone and Hansen did survey analysis and they were also very consistent, and in particular, the estimates are already well known, canvassing is worth between 1 and 9 percentage points and there it is. So this negative referee report is a great jumping off point to review the literature prior to the New Haven study and give you a sense of the context for what we contributed and what we hope to be continuing to contribute.

The first point is Gosnell. We were scooped by Gosnell. Gosnell wrote in 1927. He was very concerned with the effects of the Nineteenth Amendment. Does anyone know what the Nineteenth Amendment was? Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote.

So what he did was he did a study, not a randomized experiment, but he did a study in Chicago sending out pieces of mail and he found that in the 1924 election it increased turnout by I believe 1 percent, and in the 1925 election it increased turnout by 9 percent. So there is Gosnell.

But what about Eldersveld? Eldersveld wrote in 1956. So that's not fair. That's -- from the 1930s. Eldersveld did an experiment in Ann Arbor, Michigan and he actually studied a number of different approaches, but as we'll see, his studies while very important and very interesting were extremely small. People complain about whether or not our results on nonpartisan campaigning in 1998 apply to other elections in 1998, but maybe all these things aren't settled issues.

So what about all the literature put together? Here is a great summary of all the literature prior to our study, and I'll just point out the different things. What you see here is the effective turnout, the effect of the experimental dimension on turnout, and the sample size is the X axis. This is in log terms, so the studies on the left are very small, like 40 people or something like that, and when you get over here, this is our study, this study here, which had 30,000 subjects was the 2000 New Haven study. So what you've got is one of the Eldersveld studies, a study by some folks in 1980, Miller, Baer, and Bositis. The next study is Eldersveld's second study. This study over here, the triangle, is a phone experiment by Adams and Smith. This study here is Gosnell, and this is our study. So this is the

experimental literature as of the year 2000. I think that's every published study with one debatable exception which isn't really a GOTV study. So maybe there's another circle there.

I just want to point out a second thing. Not only is this very sparse, but it also displays a very interesting tendency. That literally is a 40-percent increase in turnout associated with a canvassing effort. We know that's not correct, that's a very large number, or it might have been correct maybe in 1954, but I don't think so. What I think is going on there is that when you have a very small study, you have a get a very large effect to achieve statistical significance and you really have a very difficult time in contemporary or even historical political science publishing nonstatistically significant results. So I think what happens is is there's severe publication bias. So not only do we have a very limited literature, but I think it's a literature that is not generating accurate findings because of publication bias.

What about other work that came before? There's a book by Rosenstone and Hansen. This is a survey where you look at the correlation between people who say they were canvassed or say they were contacted by the political parties and say they voted. The problem with that sort of work might be, not necessarily, that the folks who are in fact contacted by political parties or candidates are a nonrandom sample so those sorts of studies might be suffering from selection bias. That is,

the kinds of people who might tend to be contacted might be the kinds of people who would otherwise vote, so you can't get reliable estimates from that sort of a design.

What's a better design? Randomized trials. And all the studies in the book are randomized trials. By that I mean folks are randomly assigned to get a treatment. It's not self-selection so there's no bias due to people selecting into given treatments, but it's really randomized experiments. So virtually everything you read in this book is backed up by a randomized trial and we synthesized the results of over a hundred studies. Why randomize? You get unbiased measures of causal effects because you have balanced groups. That is, if I randomly assign two different groups, then there's no reason to believe in the absence of the treatment effect there would be any difference in the turnout levels except due to chance, and you can calculate that in a precise way with measures of statistical uncertainty. In addition, not only are all of the individual studies in the book randomized trials, but the main conclusions are based on meta-analyses and that means we use a method of synthesizing the results of many randomized trials. So it's not the case typically that there's one study or two studies that suggest the findings that we report, but it's really the combined judgment, the combined synthesis of maybe a dozen studies or maybe 15 studies, and this method is now increasingly being used and used to great effect by medical research.

And if you're interested in learning more about this, I would recommend checking out the Cochran Collaboration which is a huge international effort to combine the results from different medical trials. One of the things that they've found is that there are a large number of areas of medicine where individual studies might suggest no statistically significant effect but when you combine the power of a lot of studies together, a relatively clear result emerges and in many cases it recommends a different treatment path than you would get if you looked study by study or at an individual study. So the method of meta-analysis which is what we use in this book is a very important complement to the individual randomized controlled trial.

For example, in the case of canvassing, there are 39 studies and we do a meta-analysis and are results that there is about a 7 percent increase with a 2 percent standard error is in some ways the combination, the combined judgment, or nearly 20 studies. So whereas in the earlier edition we had two to three studies, a very small number of studies, now we're increasingly getting more and more evidence to back up our claims.

Where do campaigners fit in? I don't know how many people in this audience are campaigners, we've collected many results, but for folks who are actually practitioners I would say just as important is Chapter 10 of our book, and in particular pages 145 to 155, because that describes and encourages you to perform your own tests. There is no reason, there is nothing particularly magical or mystical about doing these

randomized tests. It's actually extremely straightforward. The most important thing is good clerical skills. We provide both a description of the logistics as well as a website link that will allow you to calculate the basis statistical effects. So in some ways the next edition of the book can have your study in it and that would be great, and in fact, that's happened in a number of cases, that people who we've spoken to or who've read the first edition now appear as contributors in the second edition. Don and I are always happy to help. Send us emails. Give us phone calls. We'd love to help you on your studies. We'd love to brainstorm with you about ideas for get out the vote interventions.

One last question, isn't collecting even more studies one after another after another of voter mobilization kind of dreary? In some ways I have to say maybe yes is the answer to that question, but that's not how I view it when I've had a fair amount of sleep or I've had a moment of vacation because what it really is about is about generating reliable understandings of both what gets people to participate in politics but also about human behavior more generally because this is a very interesting behavioral problem so understanding how you motivate people to contribute to this collective project which is an American election is actually a fascinating and very general problem. So I've got pictures of two cathedrals. This is Chartres which doesn't really exemplify my point because it was built relatively quickly, but Notre Dame took a long time.

So Notre Dame de Paris which you may recognize here, the towers there were built from 1163 to 1245, and it took until 1345 to finish the cathedral. It took forever. So one might think this was dreary too, but actually it's sort of magnificent. So in that spirit I just want to call your attention to the acknowledgements part of the book and there are tons of people whose studies are part of this work. Here is I hope a fairly comprehensive list of the folks who generously gave us unpublished papers or whose published work appears in this volume. My guess is by the time we come up with a third edition, it won't be able to fit on one page and we won't shrink the type down anymore, we'll actually go to a second page because this book is much more than your typical volume, this is a synthesis of the work of many, many scholars and many, many folks and so it's a great privilege to be able to collect all of this and synthesize it and present it to you. And I'll turn this over to Don.

MR. GREEN: I think of the book actually, if you're an Austin Powers fan, Dr. Evil has his twin Mini Me and I think if you were here 4 years ago for the same talk, you realize it's the same jacket and the book is fatter and I am too, so I'm a personification now of this co-authored manuscript. Like Alan I wanted to begin by thanking a number of the people who have made this book possible, the many foundations that contributed to the studies that ultimately were done, but also our many partners in the field, some in advocacy groups, some in nonpartisan

groups, some like Hal and Dave in partisan campaigns, all willing to sacrifice in the name of science.

Let me give a sense of the main findings of the book. At Yale as you know we like to joke about the distinction between books you've read and books you've read yourself, so this could be in either category depending on how you want to play it, but today I'll give you enough so you can fake your way through it and in fact you can even pretend to have read the first edition. So let me first give you a sense of what the first edition was about and then what's new in the second edition.

In the first edition the main theme was personal versus impersonal, that quality matters, that having an authentic, heart-felt conversation with someone at their door really has much more impact on whether they turn out to vote than a series of relatively impersonal reminders communicated say through robotic calls or emails or some such thing. And we tested progressively more elaborately through a variety of different tactics starting with canvassing, calls from telemarketing firms, and direct mail, and then gradually branched out into other areas like email. And then developed our theory still further when we looked at nuances in the penumbra of things that might fall under the telephone category, different kinds of telephone calling campaigns.

I would say also the main theme of the first edition is the theme of motivation, that it's not really just about reminding people that an

election is upcoming, mere reminders seem to be ineffective. It's really a matter of motivation. People know that it's election day, sometimes they don't, but even when you remind them that it's election day it's really a matter of making them think that they are themselves wanted at the polls, that they are being invited to something that they should be excited about taking part in.

Then I would say this is the most galling thing to most people who work in politics, that variations in message didn't seem to matter very much. People obviously spend a great deal of time crafting messages, they are very smart people and they have long experience in politics, but what we were finding is that at least within the range of reasonable messages there just wasn't much variation in terms of effectiveness so it didn't seem to matter very much whether the mail focused on civic duty or on standing up for your neighborhood or casting a vote in a close election, and subsequently I'll embellish on that when I talk about partisan versus nonpartisan themes.

We had more tentative findings in the first edition, some quite thought provoking I think, one having to do with habit formation, the idea that encouraging people to vote in a given election also makes them more likely to vote in subsequent elections and this idea is not only important from a research standpoint, it's also important from the standpoint of resource allocation for campaigns. Most campaigns working

for a political candidate have a here-and-now focus, they don't really care very much about raising turnout in elections that the candidate him- or herself might not be participating in. Political parties or labor unions or other kinds of organizations that have the broader view might have a different calculation however if they were thinking about all of the future elections that they might be influencing by bringing one person to the polls.

Another similar kind of engaging idea has to do with spillover within households, the idea that encouraging one person to vote through say a door-to-door canvassing effort would also be more likely to bring out the housemate is one of the most engaging propositions ever studied experimentally and the current issue of the American Political Science Review has a very elegant experiment demonstrating that.

Then a final line of speculation in the first edition concerned super treatments. We were thinking of it as super intensive efforts to raise turnout not by 2 or 3 percent, but say 10 percent or 15 percent by really leaning on people and drawing upon the special persuasiveness that people have when they are exhorting their friends neighbors to turn out, and you will see how each of these themes plays out in the second edition. We have already said the second edition includes about a hundred more experiments. It tackles some of the same old topics but

then it adds some new ones, and let me just say very briefly what the findings are about the new ones.

First of all with respect to mass media as Tom mentioned, we have some new studies. We have studies on radio, cable TV, we have some studies on giving people random dollops of free newspaper subscriptions, a clever study that Alan did with another colleague of ours at Yale. So the short story there is that while all those studies like all research needs to be replicated and extended, there are some initial indications now that these kinds of mass media campaigns have some impact. The Rock the Vote campaign for example in 2004 when we tested it in 75 cable TV markets seemed to have successfully raised turnout among 18- and 19-year-olds. It did not work particularly well among older Americans, but it did work in that targeted age demographic. The effects were not massive, they were in the 2 to 3 percentage point range, but they were quite compelling because if true, if they can be replicated and extended, that would be a potentially cost-effective way of mobilizing people at least in that age demographic. We've since replicated that study in the context of mayoral elections and congressional elections with respect to radio and especially using Spanish-language radio again looking for low-cost ways of communicating with vast numbers of people hoping that a little bit of a nudge, a 1 or 2 point nudge, in voter turnout turns out to be cost-effective because it can be done very, very cheaply on

a mass scale. The newspaper subscriptions paper is still under review, but when it comes out I think you'll be interested to see that there's also a hint that providing people with newspaper subscriptions does make them more engaged in politics and maybe the effect is even cumulative over time and we will see.

Another quite interesting line of research that I conducted with a series of colleagues, Elizabeth Addonizio at Yale and Jim Glaser at Tufts and some of Jim Glaser's colleagues and students involved election day festivals. Why was it that turnout was so high in the 19th century? We think of the 19th century as being a time when there were 80 plus percent turnout rates even though the typical American had very low levels of education, even though registration was really difficult in those days, there was typically only one day in which you could register, even though it was anything but convenient, there was no multi day election mail in ballot kind of stuff back in the 19th century. So what was going on? We think we have some ideas and I'll share another one in just a moment, but one of them is the idea of seeing and being seen and being part of a social milieu was festive and collegial. Voting was something you would do typically in public and in the public eye, you were casting a public ballot. It was the days before the secret ballot. And it was also the days before the 100 foot rule which meant that social separation between you and party leaders. The whisky flowed freely. One of the reasons that women got the vote so

late was in part because many of the polling places in the 1860s for example were in saloons. And so the idea then is that you would be encouraged to vote by the kinds of party-like things that might happen. So the question was could we recreate a little bit of that atmosphere in the 21st century setting where we did not serve alcohol and the answer is, yes, a bit. We didn't bring turnout back to the 85 percent levels of the 1880s but we did see a noticeable boost in turn out. And I think that one of the questions is what happens if people were to throw festivals a lot better than what professors can throw, presumably they could do a lot better, and so that's a line for further investigation.

Let me just say a bit about what the main theme though of the second edition is. I think the main theme is looking for ways of building a better mousetrap. Here we're trying to take tactics that we've dissed in a various ways like direct mail and tried to find ways of harnessing basic social psychological forces, powerful social psychological forces, in ways that will take a kind of lackluster tactic and soup it up. So one of the tactics that has been on the airwaves and in the blogosphere over the last 2 weeks, if you've been attending to it, is an experiment that Alan and I and Chris Larimer did in collaboration with a political consultant named Mark Grebner in Michigan. This perverse little experiment was designed to illustrate the effects of social pressure on voting. So there were five conditions in this quite large experiment

involving hundreds of thousands of people but the basic idea is you have a control group which gets nothing, a basic treatment group which gets a mailer, a simple on graphics tri-fold piece of 8 by 11 paper saying do your civic duty and vote. The next level of social pressure is do your civic duty and vote, and by the way, researchers are going to look at public records to see whether you vote, and you won't be contacted but we'll be watching you. That's sort of the Hawthorne effect or treatment. Then the next one beyond that is do your civic duty and vote, we're going to be checking on whether you've voted, and by the way, here is whether you and your housemates voted in the last two elections. Then the most intrusive social pressure experimental group is do your civic duty, we'll be checking to see whether you voted, here is whether you and your housemates voted, and here is whether you and 10 of your neighbors voted, and we'll be sending you an update and them an update as well so that your behavior will be publicized. These kinds of treatments and especially the last two showing your own voter turnout records, showing people their neighbors' turnout records, have explosively large effects, 5 percent for showing your own, roughly 8 percent for showing you and your neighbors. These are extraordinarily large effects given that it's just direct mail, just a single piece of the most bland mail you've ever seen, and it shows a number of things. One is that people do read their mail and the other is that this is in some sense an indication of how powerful social pressures can be. So

when you institute the 100 foot rule that says you're going to vote in secret, you're going to vote away from the public eye, that in part reduces the social pressure to vote and might explain why there's this 19th century versus 21st century difference. So it's quite an interesting line of experimentation.

Another line of experimentation concerns robotic calls. We've now done six large-scale experiments on robotic calls. We've had pastors record robotic calls for their neighbors and congregants, we've had governors record robotic calls in Republican primaries to support the judicial candidate that they nominated and endorsed, no effect, and no effect of having Vanessa Williams do her thing or Bill Clinton or the local registrar, just a big, big zero, so we couldn't resuscitate that one.

But volunteer phone banks is an interesting one because here we just kind of fumbled our way toward a tactic that again needs to be confirmed through future testing. I wouldn't recommend this as something that has a high level of scientific knowledge because after all our book is famous for its star system where three stars is something that's established as a way of communicating to a lay audience what level of statistical precision we place on things, so I wouldn't give it three stars, but I certainly would give it enough credence to warrant future testing and it's a tactic that the PIRGS developed in 2003 and then the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project did to great success in 2006

where you call people, get people to commit to voting, and then you call back just the committed people and remind them of their promise and cash in on it and that seemed to greatly magnify the effects of volunteer phone banking and presumably could be done with professional phone banking as well although as we continually say with professional phone banking, everything really hinges on training and supervision so that the calls don't become reutilized and perfunctory.

And finally, canvassing. Again, I wouldn't call this a three star finding, but I would call it an interesting finding. Here we have some preliminary evidence suggesting that canvassers are more effective when they're close to home which is a thought-provoking idea if you look back at the 2004 election and wonder why it is that, for example, Republicans seemed to be so effective in mobilizing voters and very often they were home-grown canvassers as opposed to many of the Democratic canvassers who were brought in from afar, again, a working hypothesis and not a lead pipe finding.

So what about some other findings and some gaps? We find no support for the sandwich theory, the theory that says you got to hit them with the robo call then two pieces of mail then a phone call, visit, and then you do two more pieces of mail until the list is like this gigantic sandwich with 60 slices of bread. Actually, we don't find any evidence that treatments magnify each other's influence. We do find that more

treatments are often better but that's different from the synergy theory which says that it's the special combination of mail and phone call and visits that produce explosively large effects. We just don't see that kind of explosive combination theory vindicated in our data.

One of the things if you were scoring at home that you might have been amused about in 2004 was the rather vitriolic critique of the book by campaign consultants published in *Campaigns and Elections*. Basically they said all of this work is done in nonpartisan elections which wasn't exactly true, at the time it was predominantly true, and of course everybody knows that those kinds of weak-kneed nonpartisan messages are not going to have any effect, why don't you test partisan messages before pronouncing that these things do or don't work. So one of the nice things about the new edition of the book is that there are a few experiments that do head-to-head competitions between partisan and nonpartisan messages and there is no evidence that partisan messages are the Eldorado of messages, that they really get things going. In fact, the head-to-head competitions have faired rather poorly for partisan messages, they have not broken out in front as the more effective option.

I would say as far as not black eyes but just the kind of embarrassment that we haven't gotten anything in the public domain, we have no experiments on voter registration per se which is shocking. Here it is 2008, 10 years after we've started this experimental program and

there isn't to our knowledge even one large-scale experiment testing the effects of registration drives on actual voter turnout. If anybody here wants to get one going, we're happy to lend a hand. I think there are some proprietary studies, and I just want say two words about that. One of the things about our work is that it is all done with the understanding that it will be published, that it will be public. We do not do proprietary secret studies, and I think that the reason we don't has been driven home to us many times, but it was driven home to me just today because on the train I was analyzing some data that had been analyzed by a campaign consultant and that person is not in the room and will remain nameless, I'm not trying to out anybody, I'm just saying that this person made basic mistakes which caused the conclusion, it was like one of those doctor's diagrams, a medical chart, where it's actually upside down, completely misread it. Why? That's because the data are not in the public domain and the study is not in the public domain so you can't ask basic questions of it. And to the extent that you have proprietary studies, you have studies that have an unknown quality to them and we're down on that. So our studies are done with the understanding that they might be anonymous, we might not mention the campaigns or where they were taking place, but we will make them public.

So what about the bottom line? We have people who want to campaign here, what has changed in the second edition? The output

numbers really haven't changed very much. It's kind of funny, it's not as though nothing has been learned because we learned that some of the things we used to know were right and now we know them with greater precision. In some cases we have reversed conclusions and I'll describe those in just a second, but many of the output numbers with respect to canvassing and other kinds of things have remained about the same. Volunteer phone banks, that's about the same conclusion as it was. Standard commercial phone banks, there was a kind of dust up in the American Political Science Review about that and I think that that one is now settled, that there is no way that a standard commercial phone bank without any kind of special supervision or scripting produces a five point effect, in fact, the effects are closer to a half a point. What the exact effect of robo-calls is is unknown, but we're down to a very, very small margin of error. Our best guess is now that we've got it down to .2 percentage points and our margin of error is within a percentage point, and this gives you a sense of what it looks like to do a meta analysis of 39 canvassing experiments. So this gives you a sense of where each of the studies is in the box in pointy headed statistical work, the size of the box gives you a sense of the precision of the study, and then this little thing down at the end gives you a sense of what your conclusion is having looked at 39 studies and you can see that the conclusion is about where you'd expect if you had been paying attention to all the studies all those years.

So very few surprises, but one of the things, and actually we anticipated it in some ways with our star system, there was some hope that leafleting would have some special cost-effectiveness and that's now gone down the drain, so bad news for leaflets, but they're looking a lot more like just plain old mail. Alan predicted that there may not be a leaflet chapter next time because it may just be stuff you find in your mailbox or near your door. At any rate, it does not look like it has special effectiveness.

We're also a little bit less sanguine than we used to be about the cost per vote of canvassing but only because we've raised the wage rates and diminished the contacts per hour at the advice of people who sell other kinds of services. No, that's not true. That's not true. That was just a joke, but we've in some ways calibrated down what we think a typical canvasser will do.

So why don't we wrap up and just say why lies ahead. I think that one of the most underexplored aspects of campaigning is social networks. Social networks, friends and neighbor networks, people who work in the same office who are part of the same organization, belong to the same religious group, to what extent are these people especially able to mobilize each other and that is a line of research that really needs more work especially with respect to things like email. We know that mass email has no effect and that's been studied now I think to the tune of 11

randomized trials on a very large scale, but what about email from friend to friend, could that have an effect? I think that maybe matching email together with social networks and social pressure might be the right recipe. Social events, I'm thinking of events that are akin to house parties but involve people who are like minded who are supporting say the same candidate or same issue getting together and basically transforming the turnout problem, turning out at election times, into a turning out to go to a party problem which I think is an easier problem to solve. Mass media, here we've got some promising new ways of studying the mass media, but the task ahead is to actually do it and before all of these tiny little cable markets disappear it would be nice to seize the opportunity to use them as little laboratories, randomly assigning some to get some ads and others to get other ads and examining on the ground rates of voter turnout in those different areas. We have the anomaly of text messaging to deal with. Those of you who have been watching the news are aware of the fact that there is a fascinating study done by a former student of mine, Alison Dale, and her study with her colleague Erin Strauss showing, I'm not going to say purporting to show, it does show that text messaging has a fairly large effect, roughly a 3 point effect. That's completely at odds with the email finding showing no effect, so what's going on there, the cell phone commands you to do and you must obey? I'm not quite sure what the right theory is, but that's one of those things that really needs to be

replicated. And then finally I think the next frontier of get out the vote research and really completely wide open is to study the organizational context within which these kinds of campaigns are executed. What would happen if we were to change the incentive structure so that campaigns were organized more or less along the lines of 1920s Chicago where you had ward bosses who were responsible for delivering votes? Essentially the incentive structure is working very differently now and there doesn't tend to be a kind of block captain model and to the extent that there have been block captains and they've been tested, they've worked rather well so the question is could we do a randomized experiment where we have different kinds of structures for get out the vote activity.

Finally let me say that as Alan mentioned the get out of the vote line of research is a work in progress and professors are funny creatures. We're kind of grown-up students and we're basically always students in our own minds and there is nothing more gratifying in a way than sharing the activity of learning and teaching with people who are our readers and I would say that the most gratifying thing that has happened in the 4 years is to get a series of emails over the transom from people who read the how to do your own experiments sections of the last chapter and did their own experiment and the experiment was really inspired and in some cases down right ingenious and we love that. So bring more of that on to us, we're always eager to engage it.

But I would say that, of course, the ongoing challenge in a presidential election year is to do experiments in high stakes elections. It's really the last frontier in terms of the kinds of elections that have been studied. There have been lots of studies of nonbattleground states or quasi-battleground states in presidential years, but the next line of research is to do a presidential year study involving the presidential campaigns where it might actually matter. Let me leave it there and open it up to questions and invite the august panel to come back to this podium and maybe we'll have Tom MC from here. Thank you.

MR. MANN: We have mics. We have willing presenters.
Do you have questions?

MR. KELAHER: Chris Kelaher from Brookings, and one question that occurred to me, Don and Alan as you do your work and as your disciples carry on your work in other areas, do you see much difference in the effectiveness of different GOTV efforts according to region or according to the type of area someone lives in like rural versus suburban versus urban? Canvassing door to door seems to work very well, but I can imagine a door to door canvasser in midtown Manhattan receiving a canvasser somewhat differently than somebody in Oklahoma City or somebody in Taos, New Mexico. I wonder if the difference could be regional, if it could be more according to the geographic context in a

metro area, or is that something that you haven't gotten into, or is there really not much difference?

MR. GERBER: Yes, we should both answer I guess. I'm just thinking that there's a lot of canvassing studies and they've taken place in rural and urban areas. I don't know if we've spliced the data carefully by urban and rural but I'm thinking that say in the New Haven experiment which is fairly urban, canvassing produced 8 percentage point or so increases, but there were a series of experiments by Andrew Gillespie in New Jersey and St. Louis in heavily urban areas that were similar to some of the urban areas we canvassed in New Haven that produced a much smaller effect. So I don't think there's any consistent evidence that says that some places are a lot better than others, but the evidence for all types of places is a little mixed. So in the case of canvassing while the average canvassing efforts have been quite successful, there have been some unsuccessful canvassing efforts as well and I'm thinking of one in India by Benion not successful, but in a similar environment there have been very successful canvassing efforts. Did you ever splice the data in this way?

MR. GREEN: I think part of the problem in a way is that almost all of these experiments are done in the context of a town or a city. They seldom work in a large enough area so that you could really ask how did the same campaign fare in different kinds of environments. That said, I

think what's really kind of interesting about the canvassing experiments, thinking about the three dozen or so, is that you have relatively similar rates of success in places as different as Eugene, Oregon, Columbus on the one hand, Bridgeport, Detroit, rural central California, the Fresno area, south central Los Angeles. I mean there are places that could not be more different in their demographic makeup, and they're sort of different in the way the cities are laid out. But urban versus rural per se, I don't think we really have a good bead on.

MR. GERBER: I think one other thing that I'm not sure how we put this exactly in the book and if we state it explicitly, but while we try and create a summary table that gives a basic idea of the relative merits or the cost-effectiveness hierarchy of different approaches -- phone, mail, canvassing -- you have to take into account the practicalities of the situation. And so, in some of the really rural areas that Don suggests we haven't studied canvassing in, part of the reason we haven't studied canvassing in those areas is that it's, to some extent, an impractical political strategy to do canvassing in those areas. So, as a result, we haven't had the opportunities, but that reflects the fact that that's a rarely used tactic in those areas.

MR. COURTNEY: Yes. John Courtney, I'm at Brookings for five months from Canada in the Government Studies Program.

I just wanted to share something with you about Canadian

experience in this area, if you don't mind, and I think you're really onto something when you suggest that there may very well be a link to be explored between voter registration and registration drives and voter turnout and levels of voter turnout.

The reason I say that is Canada, at one time for many, many years, many decades, had what we call a door-to-door enumeration in which just prior to an election being held, whether it was a federal or a provincial election, had two enumerators go from door to door, from household to household, preparing a list for that election.

Ten years ago, Canada, for a variety of reasons that I won't go into, chose to abandon that system and to replace it with what we now call a national register of electors, which is a list compiled and maintained in a central databank in Ottawa, fed all kinds of information from hospital records, immigration and citizenship records, driver's licenses from all of the provinces, and it's maintained continuously. So we've gone from a system in which the state came to the door, and I think early on in your presentation you said reminded the voter of an election, saying there's an election two or three weeks down the line, to a system in which there's an anonymous databank somewhere that maintains this without the door to door contact.

Our voter turnout has dropped since that by about four to five percentage points, and not all of that can be attributed to the change in the

data. I mean there are other factors as well, but the early multivariate analysis suggests that there is a significant impact of the change of the system from one method of registering voters to another and the impact on voter turnout.

MR. GREEN: That's an extraordinary account. Do you know? Just before you lose the microphone, I just have a couple questions about the institutional details. Maybe you know or maybe you don't.

Was this adopted for the entire country at the same time or was this adopted for some provinces earlier than others?

Were there any differences within provinces in how this sort of thing was handled that would enable you to compare institutional structures, that would allow you to attribute a causal effect, at least a little more reliably than just the sort of before and after design that you were implicitly describing?

MR. COURTNEY: That's right. No. There are possibilities there for intra-Canadian comparisons. The country as a whole, that is federal elections, changed literally overnight. The big provinces all went onside at the same time -- Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia -- and indeed British Columbia had a prior permanent voters list. The smaller provinces have all come onside now. But for a 10-year period, there was a lag feeding that for provincial elections, but for federal elections it was one standard list.

MR. GREEN: Great. That's great because then you have a prayer, maybe, of being able to tease out the effect of the institution. That's great.

MR. COURTNEY: That's right, exactly.

And, one possibility for an experiment, by the way, it occurred to me just at the end when you were referring to your concluding chapter. The chief electoral officer in Canada and in all of the provinces sends out a congratulatory You've Turned 18 note to every potential registrant and every voter. It would be kind of nice to have him send the note out to half the 18-year-old population in a year and not to the other half to see what happens.

MR. GREEN: I don't know if Hal wants to speak to that. This is something I remember you talking to me about, these 18-year-old things. You don't have to, obviously.

HAL: Yes. Well, yes, we have worked for an organization called Women's Voices, Women Vote that works to increase participation by unmarried women in the electorate, and we have a birthday program. We mail young women turning 18 a voter registration application at their birthdate, their 18th birthdate, and it's the most successful program we've ever done not only in response rate but in what it costs to produce in that additional registration and in that additional vote.

MR. MANN: Right here and then back to Curt.

MR. DAKIN: Hi. I'm Shawn Dakin with the National Political Do Not

Contact Registry. We're working to stop robo calls.

First, just a general kind of acknowledgement of gratitude to this work of the first edition because when I first started looking at robo calls and personally how they affected me, I decided to do this and wanted to find evidence about whether these things worked or not and, of course, the only evidence that I was able to find that was a third party study was your book in 2004.

So now, as I'm growing and becoming successful, in fact, yesterday, talking to the Washington Post, everybody asks me: Well, why do politicians do this? Why do candidates do this? In fact, I testified at the U.S. Senate a couple weeks ago and Senator Bennett said, why do people do this?

Of course, my answer was: Well, they do it because they can, and they do it because they're cheap, and the only evidence that there is out there is that these things don't work. And, I cited your study and it's in my testimony at the U.S. Senate, so just a huge thing of gratitude.

So then I will ask you with the new study and I'll ask the consultants up here, if robo calls do work at all in that kind of 0.2 percent that you talked about, what is it about robo calls? If, in fact, they could work, what does work?

Then I'll kind of go on to a specific. If there's any more kind of demographic information that you guys have, do you look at it

demographically, men versus women, age ranges? Because I'm collecting data with almost 50,000 members and about 50 percent of my members are over 50 years old, and I'm getting a 60-40 split between men versus women, 60 percent women, 40 percent men. I just wanted to know if you had any other further comments.

Again, thank you very much.

MR. GREEN: You're welcome. I'll jump in about robo calls. One of the funny things about analyzing an effect that's vanishingly close to zero, just so close to zero, is that in order to find a difference between, say, men and women or Democrats and Republicans or old and young, whatever, you essentially have to find that it's working for one and repelling another group, which seems a little bit implausible. I think that one of the reasons we haven't gone too far in that direction is because when you're at zero and you think that the only way you're going to find something is to find something that's kind of implausible, you kind of give up pretty easily, but we really should get back at it.

I guess if I had to venture guesses to under what conditions robo calls would be effective, I think that they would be effective if they exerted social pressure which would probably be exactly the kind of robo call that you would dislike most but also maybe a robo call in terms of influencing vote, not necessarily voter turnout, a robo call on behalf of a candidate who has low name recognition. Those kinds of robo calls might actually

do something.

I think, though, that part of what's going on is that people hang up almost immediately, notwithstanding the claims by robo call vendors that that doesn't occur. Or, to the extent that two-thirds or three-quarters or more of these robo calls are left on voice machines, voicemail, I think there's just deleted almost instantly. And so, it may be that they're not effective because they're just not breaking through.

Now the robo call vendors will tell you no, that people really just love to hear a celebrity in which case it's not that they're not listening, but this is not the kind of thing that increases their motivation to vote.

MR. GERBER: I would say one thing in addition to those comments, and that is that the thing about robo calls is that if someone told you there was a technology that costs I don't know what. If you have your own machine, it's like one cent a call if you're a big enough company. If you have to buy them, is it five cents a call? It's very, very inexpensive. Okay. So it's compared to a piece of direct mail which may cost 10 times that.

So, once you start out with the idea that I have a technology that costs a cent a dose, 1/50th of a piece of direct mail or 1/10th of a piece of direct mail, how much effectiveness does there have to be in order to make it a desirable thing to just do? Okay.

So, unless you actually repel the voter, if you think it's causing a

trivial increase -- 1/10th of 1 percent -- in effect, much too small for us to measure in a study of even 10,000 or 100,000 people, we can't measure it. But if it's that small, it might still be cost-effective because they're so inexpensive. And so, in some sense, we have to.

As a campaign strategy, the answer to your question might be that no, it's not going to swing the election. It's not going to cause a large change in turnout, but it still might be quite reasonable to include it in your closet of weapons when you're trying to increase turnout because of its extraordinarily inexpensive price tag.

MR. MANN: Curtis?

Mr. GANZ: Curtis Ganz.

The first thing I want to do is thank you two on a systemic basis because you returned, with credibility, the person to politics which had been totally dominated by media prior to your work. So I think we all owe you a sense of gratitude.

The second thing I want to say is I actually did a study about registration versus voting, that I was hired by a number of foundations in 1984 when they did this massive registration campaign on the theory that (a) it would strongly increase turnout and (b) that it would be partisan favorably to the Democrats. Neither one of those turned out to be true.

I have a question for you because some of the findings, I think, need to be put in context. Rock the Vote claimed credit for a high youth

turnout in 1992, and I'm sure they and MTV had something to do with a substantial increase in the youth turnout. In 1996, they spent about the same amount of money and used about the same tactics, and youth turnout was the lowest ever.

I assume that when you dealt with the issue of Rock the Vote, you dealt with it in terms of the context of the 2004 election which was the most highly polarized election in my lifetime and the highest turnout since 1968.

Do you have the ability to exert controls so that it's for context as well as for impact?

MR. GREEN: I'll take that.

MR. GERBER: Yes, please.

MR. GREEN: So I'll say a couple things. Well, first of all, thank you for the thank you.

But, secondly, with respect to something like Rock the Vote or any media campaign, the exact problem that you're raising is why it is absolutely essential to have a randomized assignment to treatment and control because if you simply take a snapshot in 1992 and another snapshot in 1996 and ask how much money did you spend in both elections, you could get completely misleading results. One of the things that we try to steer clear of is sweeping claims about shifting voter turnout from one election to another because that runs counter to the spirit of all of

the analysis we do which involves typically random assignment within the context of an election.

So that said, in the 2004 Rock the Vote experiment, we had scores of little cable TV markets in non-battleground states, so it was not in the context of the high-flying Ohio, Florida, Wisconsin, Minnesota group. They were randomly assigned to either get a steady dose of these public service announcements, the notorious ones, the ones that were mocked on Leno, Letterman, or not. Then, after the election, we did our usual tallying up voter turnout records.

So there's no question that that was an unbiased way of assessing the impact of Rock the Vote in that election, but when I say more work needs to be done, it's because, well, that's one election and one context and one set of states and one target demographic group. When you think about the amount of money that changes hands with these media experiments, very few of which -- very, very few of which -- are ever subjected to a serious evaluation, this is a call from going from a very, very low level to something beyond a low level of research.

So I take your challenge to be a kind of friendly endorsement of this impetus to do more research.

MR. GERBER: I was just going to say that given that we were earlier blamed for the Iraq War, I'm pleased that we brought the person back in the politics.

The other thing is that I think the spirit of your comment is also --

DAVE: And global warming.

MR. GERBER: And global warming, excuse me. Thanks again, Dave.

The spirit of your comment, the way the narrative structure of the chapters and especially also the appendices of the book unfolds, I think, very much addresses some of your concerns. That is that typically we start with the earliest experiments. Then we say, well, do these same results hold if the political context is different, if we move from nonpartisan communications to partisan communications, if it's a close election versus a not close election?

So the idea is that any given experiment is necessarily kind of timebound. It's necessarily conditional on all of the various important dimensions of the context, some of those you described. Then you want to know whether or not the same results generalize to other contexts. The way you can figure that out is either if you have a very reliable theory, which we rarely do, or by doing other experiments.

And so, as Don described, that's the sense in which what you're saying is very friendly, I think, to our agenda to actually empirically investigate the various critiques that you might make of any given experiment that we might do.

MR. MANN: Listen, I'd like to end this by raising a general question

and maybe have all four of you: Alan, Dave, Don and Hal. It really goes to the changing campaign technology that's underway, and it's kind of future-oriented question. I want you to imagine experimental designs that would allow us to get a handle on the efficacy of new styles of fundraising, of campaigning, of voter mobilization.

It comes out of some claims that have been made in this election that, for example, Obama's campaign is kind of state-of-the-art when it comes to exploiting the internet, that they have done much more than other candidates have done to develop lists, to put people into social networks, to figure out how to take full advantage of what has been a striking candidacy and, on its own, just by virtue of the candidacy, has probably increased turnout and fundraising possibilities.

I'd be curious as to whether the research approach has some possibilities here more generally within the context of a campaign like this, a sort of high stakes campaign ongoing. Do you see any possibilities of getting some purchase on the cost effectiveness of different uses of the internet, to move beyond just email communication and begin to capture the richness and subtlety of this medium?

MR. GREEN: Who should start?

MR. MANN: Whoever would want to jump in.

MR. CARNEY: Sure, I'll jump in. I did my master's thesis on Howard Dean's internet strategy and how it was really, my conclusion at

the time was it didn't work. He's actually not president.

In reality, it has a lot to do with what's coming. I mean we are seeing every cycle this becoming more and more and more effective. We're seeing the whole web site, email, internet. They all work in certain aspects now: communication, dealing with the media, dealing with their supporters, dealing with their donors.

Campaigns are getting more and more sophisticated. It has a lot to do with content, though, more than anything and the way the campaigns use the technologies, the more sophisticated, the more subtle, the more technology they invest into it, the effective it will be.

But the whole trend, I think, you're going to see regular TV is only bought when people buy shows they want to buy. We know more TV as we all knew it. I mean it's not the way it was when we grew up. In a short period, who now exactly when, but in a few years, there will not be primetime. You'll buy the damn shows you want to buy when you want to watch them, and you pay 90 cents to do it, and maybe you pay \$1.50 for no commercials.

So all the technology for politics is under extreme stress in the sense that the old ways of doing it, just getting faster computers, getting better lists, that's only a small, small part of it. It's really thinking where and how you're going to communicate to people. The internet, particularly with emails, is a very effective way to communicate to your known

supporters and getting your supporters to join the effort.

If you think about the Meetups and all the things that Howard Dean did, the thousands, the energy that they spent on it, if they spent half of what they did on the internet and the rest into actual spending money on communicating, they may have had a different outcome in Iowa.

But you see the claims of six or seven million phone calls made by the Obama people through MoveOn.org into the Ohio and Texas calls. The question is whether or not that technology in this generation is going to be as effective as it's going to be in four years. I don't think so. In four years, it's going to be a tremendously more helpful thing. I just think we're growing on.

The famous story about the New York mayor who was caught, he basically had automated phone calls. They went to some by mistake for like 3:00 in the morning, started calling all over the thing, and people all got upset because somehow the machine just malfunctioned and kept calling all night long to people.

You're seeing some of those things, but it's much more than the internet. It's going to be a time when the campaigns are probably going to have to get back to even more of this personal contact. There are so many protections people have: caller ID or spam blockers or signing up for internet emails where people don't want to be touched. It's getting more difficult. People who want to be on your team, it's easy. You can

talk to them 100 times a day, but the undecided voter is going to be really difficult to get to without some sort of really humanistic approach, high-tech soft touch sort of thing.

MR. MANN: Hal?

MR. MALCHOW: Yes. I think it should be much harder to measure what's happening as we go forward because something fundamental is happening in politics, and I think the internet is at the heart of it. What's happening is that I think participation is becoming a lot more bottom-up instead of top-down.

Your mailbox is about someone else's agenda, and it's easy to set up a control group because you've got a list. You're going to send out this communication, and you can set this aside. When the activity is generated by individuals from the bottom-up, it's pretty hard to set up a control group.

I think you can talk about, wow, look at how successful Howard Dean was with the internet and look how successful Barack Obama was with the internet. I don't think it's really much about their internet technique. I think obviously they can do some things better than others, but these two candidates have been successful on the internet because they really excited people and because people then went and looked for these candidates and looked for how to give money, and this is very much self-generated.

We've moved much. I think you're seeing this same sort of behavior even in the commercial world where commercial companies are developing many different kinds of niche products, and there are 22 kinds of Coca-Cola. Consumers are involved in that, and they're going to the web sites and telling the companies what they want, and the companies are responding to this. What the internet has enabled in our society is much more power at the bottom in controlling the transactions that go on people's lives, whether it's political or commercial.

This will be a more important part in politics as it's been in the Obama campaign this year. A lot more of it in the future will be less about who's palatable to the largest group but who's exciting and who gets people enthusiastic and what generates word of mouth. These things will be harder to measure than the traditional techniques that we do today.

MR. MANN: Both sets of comments are fascinating as we look ahead. Don and Alan, what do you think?

MR. GREEN: I'll throw out something, and then Alan can chime in.

MR. GERBER: Sure.

MR. GREEN: I think on the one hand, it's easier and on the other hand, it's harder. It's easier in the context of, say, the Obama calling campaign. If they had a notion to do a randomized experiment, it would have been trivially easy because they're generating massive numbers of calls and they could just randomly delete some numbers or prop up

others.

But in the context of something like a YouTube phenomenon, that's more complicated because it spreads without geographic boundaries very, very rapidly. It's very difficult to set up control groups. I was thinking that maybe for something like that, and this is far from a great idea, one would use an encouragement design. To what extent does your search engine remind you of this breaking news as you are Googling for this and that?

Since they know exactly where you're coming from, they know your IP address, they know typically your location, they might conceivably link that up with the file that indicates whether you voted, but it is so much more difficult than the mail experiment. It's going to require a new level of ingenuity for scientific investigators.

MR. GREEN: Alan?

MR. GERBER: Yes, I would agree with what Don said, that for the distributed phone calls, that's a very easy design to do. There's no reason that can't be done easily.

And, there's no end to the trivial experiments that could be easily done. For example, whenever you go to a web site, it's trivial to vary the web site randomly in one way or another and see if it stimulates more contributions or more click-throughs or whatever variable you want to look at. So, in some ways, the online environment makes it virtually costless, I think, to do a lot of those sorts of tests of web design, web layout.

Also, you could easily do various fundraising gimmicks like, again, easily randomly assign different messages, like if you contribute a certain amount, then we have a matching rate of this amount of that amount. So there's really no end to that amount of kind of tinkering experimentation that can be done, and it can be done quite easily because of the technology.

There are lots and lots of experiments. Don't be discouraged if you are interested in such things, but there is also the fact that a lot of the activity, a lot of the most essential activity is going to be bottom-up driven as Hal described, and that stuff will be very, very hard to measure. And so, there are going to be a lot of challenges ahead. As things like self-generated advertisements and things like that become very common, individual supporter-generated advertisements and viral emails and things like that become really important parts of the political environment, I think those are going to be a challenge to try and measure how those are affecting people's candidate preferences and their turnout.

MR. MANN: Well, it's always good to have challenges, right?

I want to thank Dave and Hal for joining us and Alan and Don for the second edition. Thank you all for coming. Onward and upward.

(Applause)

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