Appendices

A Tale of Two Blogospheres: Discursive Practices on the Left and Right

Published in *American Behavioral Scientist, (56)*4: 459-487.

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Last Revision: May 26, 2011

Appendices

Appendix I: Supplementary Information on Research Methods and Design

In order to test for differences in the collaborative and discursive practices across top U.S. political blogs, we designed a qualitative content analysis instrument. We then selected the 155 top political blogs and coded them using the instrument during a two-week period in early August 2008. Following the completion of coding, we then categorized the political orientation of the blogs in our sample and compared the results across ideological groups. This Appendix presents a more detailed overview of several key concepts and variables, our coding scheme, sampling procedure and analytical techniques than space allowed in the paper itself.

Instrument Design[1]

The coding instrument we use in this study draws on techniques of content analysis adopted widely by communication researchers (Krippendorff, 2004). The instrument captures information related to our research questions about the blogs' (A) organizational form; (B) community of participants; (C) content; and (D) technological architecture. Our questions focused on stable, structural attributes of each blog, avoiding time-sensitive elements of the text and hyperlinks.

To examine *effective participation*, that is, speech that is not only easy to make but also susceptible to being heard by a relevant community (Benkler, 2006), we developed an objective measure of *primary* and *secondary* content of a site. To do so, we adapt Hargittai's (2000) distinction between *accessible* and *available* online content. Early optimism about the ability of

the Internet to radically reduce the costs of media production and distribution overlooked the problems that would result from such an overwhelming flood of information. Building on studies of server logs indicating that people rarely went "deeper" than a couple of clicks on any website, Hargittai shows that although the Internet makes an enormous amount of information *available*, most users are unlikely to encounter the vast majority of it. Her results imply that unless online content is presented, indexed, curated, or otherwise linked-to in such a way that it becomes more easily *accessible*, it will likely remain unseen.

Operationalizing Hargittai's insights, we term content located on the front page of a site "primary," and everything that requires additional clicks to reach "secondary." Our distinction reflects the fact that many blogs with multiple authors contributing posts, comments, and/or forum threads reserve the front page for high status authors and posts. Doing so creates a core-periphery distinction among participants on a site. The distinction between primary and secondary content therefore allows us to characterize how the blogs in our sample organize and structure their site irrespective of particular writing styles or the substance of the content. It is worth underscoring that we do not aim to over-interpret our distinction between primary/secondary content in the absence of empirical data about the behavior of site visitors. Further research on blog reading and writing practices would be necessary to confirm or refute the extent to which these categories play a role in the actual production and consumption of site content. Nevertheless, the distinction between front page and non-front page content is likely a valid proxy for accessibility. Inasmuch as the distinction reflects a status hierarchy as well as a formal aspect of the website's structure, it is also an important marker of organizational relations on the site, even if future studies find that it has little or no effect on reading practices.

We also coded another crucial aspect of blogs that no previous study had rendered explicit: the boundaries between primary content producers and other users or readers. In this regard, not all secondary blog content is created equal. Some blogs retain rigid barriers between user-generated contributions (whether in the form of comments, internal blogs, and/or forums) and "authorized" primary content. Frequently, a combination of technological and social affordances keep primary content insulated from secondary content. For example, as of the time of our data collection, the blog Little Green Footballs (http://littlegreenfootballs.com) had an extremely active discussion forum and comment threads, none of which are more than a click away from the site's landing page. Nevertheless, author/owner Charles Johnson is the only person with primary content posting privileges very rarely includes user-generated secondary content on the front page of the site. Both Johnson's habits as well as the configuration of the software he has embedded in the site maintain a clear distinction between the site's primary and secondary content areas. Occasionally, a blog will create opportunities for user-generated and secondary content to earn a "promotion" to the front page.[2] Less often, a site excludes secondary content entirely. Most unusual of all, a site can make no meaningful distinction between user-generated work and the work of site-leaders – among the sites in our sample, this is most closely approximated in especially large, dynamic forums such as Free Republic or Democratic Underground.[3] The primary/secondary content distinction therefore allows us to identify an externally-observable, objective measure, from which we can evaluate the character of participation: the degree to which contributions by people other than the owners/operators/core authors of a site are practically visible on the site; the degree to which they are separated from high-status statements; and the degree to which they have been filtered as relevant and credible

for reading and discussion.

Even collaboratively authored blogs with more permeable content boundaries, however, generally have a core group of contributors that is not numbered in the hundreds. DailyKos.com, for example, which has one of the largest core groups, has approximately 20 core authors. The major question with regard to participation, therefore, is how contributions by non-core participants are handled. At one end of the spectrum, we observe websites where a sole author is responsible for all content (whether detailed commentary or link pointers), and does not even enable comments, so that users are relegated to passive reception of the blog's contents. Instapundit is an example of such a blog on the right, and LiberalOasis on the left. At the other end of the spectrum, we see sites in which content generated by non-core participants is easily and widely included and plays a substantial role in the highly visible parts of the site, so that it can be said to have a core role in shaping the discursive space. Broadly speaking, there are three types or formats for such non-core contributions. The first, and most common, are comments. These tend to be relatively peripheral to the main content, are culturally understood to be short and punchy, and are usually linked-to from the front page, as part of a deeper dive a reader may take into a given post, and so remain secondary content. The second are forums (also called bulletin board systems). These are usually portions of a site dedicated to user interaction, separated from the main page of the site and its primary content. Forums tend to have somewhat more extensive debate, but, like comments, are relatively punchy and short, and are located off the front page of a site, outside of the main stage. (Although in some cases, like FreeRepublic.com, they may, as a cultural practice, become the primary focus of the site.) The third are diaries or secondary blogs, which tend to include longer posts, and which are easy to

integrate into the main parts of the site.

Some of the earliest blogging platforms included features that enabled comments from readers. Consistent with the historical model provided by broadcast media and "letters to the editor" pages of newspapers, the designers of these sites generally assumed that there were no more than one or a few core contributors to the site and that site visitors would be content to leave only comments (or join a forum if they felt a need for more interaction and discussion). All of these assumptions changed with the rise of large-scale peer-moderated communities like SlashDot (http://slashdot.org). Slashdot was built on a customized platform that made it possible for every visitor of the site to register, make contributions in much the same way as the site's editors, and moderate the contributions of their peers. The result was a cross between a forum or message board and a blog (as it was then understood) – and it gave rise to a dynamic conversation with a continual churn of freshly posted material which was constantly being vetted by members of the community in a distributed fashion.

Within the political blogosphere, secondary blogs or diaries appear to have first emerged on Daily Kos in October, 2003 and MyDD shortly thereafter.[4] The adoption of platforms that could support this kind of distributed moderation and contribution signaled an important shift in terms of the structure of political debate in the networked public sphere. By the time of the presidential election the following year, political blogs had become a widely-publicized media phenomenon and Daily Kos had developed a reputation based on its large, and often controversial community of members.

We added one more observable measure of participation by evaluating the technical features that enabled it. It is easy to make the mistake that there is only one technology or cluster

of technologies involved in blogging. In fact, the term "blogging" has more of a cultural meaning

than a technical meaning. In particular, there are many different kinds of platforms and plug-ins

available that enable user participation and allow participants other than the primary author(s) to

make contributions that have prominent placing in the site. Some of these technologies are

explicitly intended to facilitate contributions and the management of large numbers of

contributions. These include Scoop, Drupal, SoapBlox, and Expression Engine.[5] Furthermore,

standard blogging platforms like Blogger or WordPress themselves also offer options (through

plugins such as Disqus, phpBB, and HaloScan) that allow for potentially richer interaction

between the core blogger or bloggers who have primary author privileges, and many contributors

who do not have those privileges. For example, site administrators can configure Scoop, Drupal,

SoapBlox or Expression Engine to allow registered users of the site to maintain their own blogs

or "diaries" and to recommend other users' content. Daily Kos and Calitics are examples of

prominent sites that run Scoop and SoapBlox respectively. Similarly, Disqus and phpBB extend

the commenting functions of more traditional blogging tools, facilitating threaded commentary,

collaborative filtering, and user reputation scores as in America Blog

(http://www.americablog.com/) or Eschaton (http://eschatonblog.com).

In particular, we categorized whether or not the blogging platforms used by the sites in

our study included enhanced technical affordances for collaboration, participation, and

discussion. For the purposes of this question, we counted any of the following technical tools as

an "enhanced" affordance: forums; chat; secondary and user blogs; stable user profiles or content

feeds; and collaborative moderation or filtering tools. Comments alone are standard in almost all

blogs, and we did not count them as "enhanced." In this regard, our coding mirrors the analytical

scheme and categories developed independently by Karpf (2008b).

Finally, we sought to characterize the predominant style of both primary and secondary content appearing on each blog. In this regard, we use a distinction between "linkers" and "thinkers" that originally appeared in response to an April, 2002 blog post by Steven Den Beste (quoted by Drezner & Farrell, 2008).[6] The premise of Den Beste's analysis is that some bloggers tend to write little and link a lot, effectively acting as an editorial filter for their readers; while others tend to write a lot and link much less. In order to evaluate this aspect of each blog's primary content, we looked at the twenty most recent front page posts. For secondary content, we included as many as possible of the most recent fifty comments drawn from at least three separate comment and/or forum threads; and the five most recent user blogs or diaries. In both cases, we assessed qualitatively whether primary and secondary content tended strongly towards the linking or thinking extreme. We also included an option for content that embraced both practices equally. Given the limitations of this qualitative assessment, we interpret the results of this variable with care.

Blog Definitions and Sample Selection

As noted above, we contend that blogging has more of a cultural meaning than a clearly delimited technical definition. As a result, we did not seek to pre-define or inductively develop a definition of what constitutes a blog and then apply it as part of our sampling process. Instead, we purposefully structured our sampling procedure to incorporate a range of definitional and ranking criteria used by scholars, independent blogging experts, authors, and blog analytics companies. Our sampling methods thus enabled us to overcome the absence of an objective set

of *a priori* criteria for defining blogs in addition to the proliferation of metrics for producing blog rankings.

In order to do this, we first generated a large and inclusive list of URLs categorized as "top political blogs" by aggregating seven existing lists from six different sources.[7] The list of these sources is included in Table 1 in the paper. Each of these lists uses slightly different metrics to determine its ranking, such as hits, total in-links, blogroll in-links, ranking algorithms, and editorial opinion. We chose the seven lists with the objective of including valid and widely respected ranking systems which, once combined, would provide a ranking of top political blogs. Our selection followed the work of previous blogosphere research in this regard (Adamic & Glance, 2005; Wallsten, 2007; Hargittai et al., 2008).[8] Roughly speaking, if a URL appeared on more than one list, we judged it likely to be both a blog and more influential.

We ranked the URLs in our aggregated list based on the number of original listings in which each URL appeared. This process resulted in a list of 1080 URLs, each with a ranking from 1-7 corresponding to total number of lists on which the URL appeared. Finally, we applied the following criteria to the ranked aggregated list. To be included in our sample, a URL had to:

1. Appear on at least four of the seven lists of "top blogs" (or at least five of the seven lists, for the top 65 blogs in our study);

2. Show signs of active posting and/or commenting within the 30 days prior to the beginning of our coding;

3. Contain content that predominantly and/or consistently addressed U.S. political issues;

4. Contain at least one page linked to directly from the URL in our list which was labeled or described explicitly as a "blog."

In response to comments from one reviewer that our set of URLs included sites that might not necessarily be considered blogs, we wish to underscore the final item in this list of criteria. We did not code sites that emerged through our list aggregation procedure which did not also have some explicit statement that they were blogs. Also, if our list brought us to a URL which itself was not a blog, we looked for links from that page to a blog (for example, this was the case with msnbc.com). While this approach does raise the possibility that we included some false positives – sites that represent themselves as blogs, but that might not be widely-accepted as blogs based on a narrower definition – we also believe the process of deriving the selection criteria ahead of time and then applying them in a rigorous manner eliminated the possibility of coder-bias entering into the categorization.

The resulting list contained a total of 165 URLs, ten of which were later discovered to be duplicates, and therefore excluded, leaving the total number of unique blogs in our sample at 155.[9] It is important to underscore a few characteristics of this sample. First, even though it includes over 150 URLs, the group of top political blogs in our study remains very small and exclusive. There are literally millions of blogs in the English language and many thousands of those are concerned with political topics on a regular basis. A random sample drawn from this universe would fail to capture the blogs that attract the vast majority of site-visits and in-links, which previous research has shown follow "power law" type distributions (Adamic & Huberman, 2000). Given the unequal nature of readership distribution, our method of discovering top blogs has resulted in a sample that likely accounts for a very high proportion of the total number of site-visits and in-links in the U.S. political blogosphere.

Coding Procedure

The development of the coding scheme occurred between March and June, 2008. During that time, we refined both documents by applying them to subsets of the blogs included in Adamic & Glance's (2005) sample. We arrived at a stable version of the codebook on the basis of these preliminary tests, at which time we added an additional coder. The training of our second coder took place in the month of July, during which time we ran and discussed the results of three separate pilot studies on 6-10 blogs. Further changes to the codebook were prohibited following the completion of the third pilot study.

Full coding of our entire sample took place during the first three weeks of August, 2008. As in Hargittai et al. (2008), we chose this relatively slow period in the Presidential campaigns in order to avoid major political events.[10] We randomly assigned a set of 129 URLs to each coder, including a randomly chosen overlapping set of 42 URLs, which we then used to test inter-coder reliability. For each URL, coders were asked to confirm that it met the aforementioned criteria for inclusion in our study. Then, they spent approximately 20-30 minutes answering the questions in the codebook without the aid of any sources beyond those available within the site's address domain. For the sites that were coded once (i.e. that were not part of the intercoder set), we accepted the answers provided by each coder. A small number of conflicting codes emerged within the intercoder sample and [AUTHOR] settled these disagreements by reviewing each conflict by hand and, if possible, revisiting the site in question.

Subsequent to the completion of all coding, [AUTHOR] applied left, right, and center codes for ideological affiliation to all of the valid URLs within the sample. In doing so, he

applied the same criteria for left and right used by Hargittai et al. (2008). Blogs which (a) did not demonstrate explicit signs of partisanship or (b) demonstrated equal representation of left and right views were coded as "center." We chose to apply left, right, and center labels after the completion of our substantive coding so as to prevent these labels from influencing our assessment of the sites. To ensure that this process did not introduce bias in the form of selectively labeling sites that conformed with our hypotheses, another researcher randomly checked [AUTHOR]'s codes against the categorizations made in prior studies (Adamic & Glance, 2005; Hargittai et al., 2008) as well as the independently labeled list of blogs from Morningside Analytics which we used in our sampling procedure.

To be coded as "center," blogs had to meet at least one of the following two criteria: (1) demonstrate relatively moderate points of view that did not map clearly onto any of the predominant political ideologies of the right or left in the United States; (2) explicitly function as a platform for a broad diversity of views encompassing positions on both the right and left in more or less equal measure. After applying these requirements by visiting the front page of each blog, we found 23 blogs in the center out of the 155 blogs in our sample. The fact that we found such a relatively small proportion of blogs in the center suggests that the most visible and heavily linked blogs remain strongholds of partisanship. The limited number of center blogs also constrained our ability to draw statistically meaningful conclusions about the relationship of the top center blogs to the top blogs of the left and right.

Statistical Tests and Analytical Techniques:

For each question in the codebook we tested whether there was a significant difference in

the distribution of responses by political affiliation. Our null hypothesis was that there is no difference in response based on affliation. Most of our questions had a binary response or were collapsed into binary form, for example, whether comments are permitted on the site or not, giving us a simple contingency table. As is typical for a contingency tables, we test used the χ^2 test for independence to determine whether what we observed from our coding of the blogs was significantly different from what we would expect if the null hypothesis were true.

We classified whether a blog was left, right, or center by a visual inspection of the front page of the 155 blogs. See section on Center Blogs Results and Analysis (below) for a discussion of selection criteria. Our sample broke into 65 and 67 blogs on the left and right respectively, and 23 in the center. The small number of blogs in the center made it impossible to calculate the χ^2 test across the three groups for many of our variables. As a result, we separate the results and analysis for the Center blogs in order to avoid the implication that our findings about them were comparably robust to our findings about the left and right. We used the software package R for the statistical testing and compared left versus right, then each against the center coded blog responses. Previous literature suggests a power law distribution (Adamic & Huberman, 2000; Drezner & Farrell, 2008; Shirky, 2008: 46) of traffic, links, and attention in the blogosphere Since the characteristics of the higher ranked blogs may be different than those ranked lower, we created a second smaller sample from those URLs that appeared on only five or more of our seven lists of the top political blogs. We then repeated the left/right analysis for these 65 super-elite blogs.

Appendix II: Center Blogs Analysis

Center Blog selection criteria:

To be coded as "center," blogs had to meet at least one of the following two criteria: (1) demonstrate relatively moderate points of view that did not map clearly onto any of the predominant political ideologies of the right or left in the United States; (2) explicitly function as a platform for a broad diversity of views encompassing positions on both the right and left in more or less equal measure. After applying these requirements by visiting the front page of each blog, we found 23 blogs in the center out of the 155 blogs in our sample. The fact that we found such a relatively small proportion of blogs in the center suggests that the most visible and heavily linked blogs remain strongholds of partisanship. The limited number of center blogs also constrained our ability to draw statistically meaningful conclusions about the relationship of the top center blogs to the top blogs of the left and right.

Center Blog Results and Discussion:

Despite their underrepresentation in our sample, center blogs varied from both the right and left along a number of the dimensions included in our instrument and we can draw some tentative conclusions based on our results. A pattern emerged suggesting the coexistence of characteristics we identified as predominant on the right and left. Among the center blogs, secondary content and collaboration appear to play a relatively minor role. At the same time, however, the tenor of the discourse in the center was oriented more towards substantive discussion than sarcasm, combative one-liners, or short linking posts. With regards to technical affordances for collaboration, almost none of the center blogs had user diaries or secondary blogs

or offered anything in the way of enhanced commenting, social networking, recommendation, or reputation functions. In this, they were more similar to the right than the left, although the number of center blogs offering collaborative affordances was too low to render statistically meaningful comparisons. In contrast to the right, however, the center blogs called for more reporting tips and had more "in-depth" secondary content, although the intensity of secondary participation remained relatively low. Taken together, these attributes suggest that the center may have a culture of participation that is distinct from that of the right or left. Further research will be necessary to confirm or reject these observations.[11]

Appendix III: URLs coded in our study
(grouped by ideological classification)

Center Blogs:

http://www.politicalwire.com
http://www.themoderatevoice.com
http://www.realclearpolitics.com
http://www.balloon-juice.com
http://www.theagitator.com
http://www.warandpiece.com
http://www.msnbc.msn.com
http://www.marginalrevolution.com
http://www.poliblogger.com
http://www.memeorandum.com
http://www.andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com
http://www.mediabistro.com
http://blog.thehill.com
http://www.laobserved.com
http://www.cqpolitics.com
http://www.professorbainbridge.com
http://www.oxblog.blogspot.com
http://blog.foreignpolicy.com
http://econlog.econlib.org
 http://www.pollster.com/blogs
http://www.watchblog.com
http://www.samizdata.net
http://www.right-thinking.com

Left Blogs:

http://www.mydd.com
http://www.washingtonmonthly.com
http://www.crooksandliars.com
http://www.wonkette.com
http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com
http://www.dailykos.com
http://www.thinkprogress.org
http://www.atrios.blogspot.com

http://www.juancole.com
http://www.firedoglake.com
http://www.oliverwillis.com
http://www.talkleft.com
http://www.liberaloasis.com
http://www.burntorangereport.com
http://www.theleftcoaster.com
http://www.democraticunderground.com
http://www.digbysblog.blogspot.com
http://www.huffingtonpost.com
http://www.thismodernworld.com
http://www.pandagon.net
http://www.swingstateproject.com
http://www.tpmcafe.com
http://www.rawstory.com
http://www.thewashingtonnote.com
http://www.dneiwert.blogspot.com
http://www.blogforamerica.com
http://www.patriotboy.blogspot.com
http://www.tomburka.com
http://www.crookedtimber.org
http://www.americablog.blogspot.com
http://www.commondreams.org
http://www.majikthise.typepad.com
http://www.boomantribune.com
http://www.susiemadrak.com
http://www.angrybear.blogspot.com
http://www.rudepundit.blogspot.com
http://www.obsidianwings.blogs.com
http://www.iowatrueblue.com
http://www.motherjones.com
http://www.thenation.com
http://www.culturekitchen.com
http://www.xnerg.blogspot.com
http://www.salon.com/opinion/greenwald
http://www.bradblog.com
http://www.theoildrum.com
http://www.agonist.org
http://www.newshounds.us
http://www.mahablog.com
http://www.correntewire.com
http://www.sadlyno.com

http://www.alternet.org
http://www.journalism.nyu.edu
http://www.fafblog.blogspot.com
http://www.taylormarsh.com
http://www.matthewyglesias.com
http://www.reachm.com/amstreet
http://www.mathewgross.com
http://www.smirkingchimp.com
http://www.dynamist.com/weblog
http://www.bagnewsnotes.com
http://www.pamshouseblend.com
http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com
http://www.mediamatters.org
http://www.pacificviews.org
http://www.leftyblogs.com

Right Blogs:

http://www.instapundit.com
http://www.powerlineblog.com
http://www.michellemalkin.com
http://www.ace.mu.nu
http://www.deanesmay.com
http://www.stoptheaclu.com
http://www.wizbangblog.com
http://www.littlegreenfootballs.com
http://www.newsbusters.org
http://www.outsidethebeltway.com
http://www.imao.us
http://www.rightwingnews.com
http://www.hotair.com
http://www.blogsforvictory.com
http://www.rogerlsimon.com
http://www.mypetjawa.mu.nu
http://www.evangelicaloutpost.com
http://www.betsyspage.blogspot.com
http://www.polipundit.com
http://www.patterico.com
http://www.redstate.com
http://www.dailypundit.com
http://www.althouse.blogspot.com

http://www.lashawnbarber.com
http://www.michaeltotten.com
http://www.sayanythingblog.com
http://www.nationalreview.com
http://www.jihadwatch.org
http://www.americandigest.org
http://www.volokh.com
http://www.vodkapundit.com
http://www.scrappleface.com
http://www.pajamasmedia.com
http://www.iraqthemodel.blogspot.com
http://www.jonswift.blogspot.com
http://www.mudvillegazette.com
http://www.dakotawarcollege.com
http://www.opinionjournal.com/best
http://thepinkflamingo.blogharbor.com
http://www.fallbackbelmont.blogspot.com
http://www.capecodporcupine.blogspot.com
http://www.blogsofwar.com
http://www.conservablogs.com
http://www.anklebitingpundits.com
http://www.nicedoggie.net
http://www.coldfury.com
http://www.floppingaces.net
http://www.blackfive.net
http://www.kausfiles.com
http://www.blog.electromneyin2008.com
http://www.townhall.com
http://www.freerepublic.com
http://www.atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com
http://www.commonsensewonder.com
http://www.corner.nationalreview.com
http://www.alarmingnews.com
http://www.proteinwisdom.com
http://www.hughhewitt.townhall.com
http://www.senatesite.com
http://www.redstate.org
http://www.drudgereport.com
http://www.bamapachyderm.com
http://www.gopusa.com
http://www.billhobbs.com
http://www.debbieschlussel.com

http://www.rightwingnuthouse.com
http://www.sweetness-light.com

Notes

1   We only review some of the key variables here. The full coding instrument is available from the authors upon request.

2   See, for example, this post on the left-wing "Swing State Project" which was a user diary that one of the site editors promoted to the front page of the site: http://www.swingstateproject.com/diary/5072/amazing-political-history-of-ny23

3   See http://www.freerepublic.com and http://www.democraticunderground.com.

4   Markos Moulitsas announced the change on October 15, 2003: http://web.archive.org/web/20040321023148/www.dailykos.net/

5   See http://sourceforge.net/projects/scoop, http://drupal.org/, http://www.soapblox.net/, and http://expressionengine.com/

6   See http://denbeste.nu/cd_log_entries/2002/04/Lotsoftraffic.shtml (Accessed December 5, 2008) In fact, Den Beste used the terms "writers" and editors" in his post; however he quickly added the following update: "Several people have already pointed out that instead of 'editors' and 'writers', a much better pair of terms is 'linkers' and 'thinkers'. Sheesh; I should have thought of that."

7   The site we used twice was "The Truth Laid Bear," which publishes separate lists based inlinks and site traffic. Because the author of this site, N.Z. Bear, does not separate out political blogs, we reviewed 100 of the URLs on his link-based list and 250 on his hit-based list to determine which ones were political. We counted a URL as political if both coders found that it contained some political content on its front page. We did not consider ads or third-party content as political.

8   For another approach to ranking top blogs, see Karpf (2008a; 2008b). Our method produced nearly identical results insofar as we captured the vast majority of his top blogs in our sample.

9   The resulting list of blogs included in our study is in Appendix III, below.

10 The Democratic National Convention took place several days after the completion of our coding – August 25-28.

11 Among the top 65 blogs, seven were in the political center, making meaningful statistical analysis difficult. These are, in order of ranking, http://www.politicalwire.com, http://www.realclearpolitics.com, http://www.balloon-juice.com, http://www.theagitator.com, and http://www.msnbc.msn.com.