INTRODUCTION BY:
Dr. Christopher Hudspeth
UPCOMING EVENTS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29
FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE
8 PM | Virtual through Discord
Join us along with sponsors AASCU & ADP for a virtual debate watch party.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30
ELECTION EXPERIENCE: Gerrymandering in Wisconsin: Role of Geography in Election Outcomes
12:00PM | Virtual

Register for Events at: www.uwp.edu/eeeevents
Political Advertising on Social Media

Dr. Jacquelyn Arcy
Political Advertising on Social Media

Dr. Jacquelyn Arcy
Assistant Professor
Department of Communication
Which ad was paid for by Russian agents?

1. Army of Jesus
   - Today Americans are able to elect a president with godly moral principles. Hillary is a Satan, and her crimes and lies had proved just how evil she is. And even though Donald Trump isn’t a saint by any means, he’s at least an honest man and he cares deeply for this country. My vote goes for him!
   - SATAN: IF I WIN CLINTON WINS! JESUS: NOT IF I CAN HELP IT!
   - PRESS ‘LIKE’ TO HELP JESUS WIN!
   - 97 Reactions 15 Comments 29 Shares

2. Jesus4Trump
   - Would Jesus vote for Trump? 84% Say “Yes”, add your vote Today!
Which ad was paid for by Russian agents?

1. Project Pulso
   The Young Lords went from being a street gang to powerful Puerto Rican activists in our communities 🙋

2. Blacktivist
   Black Panthers were dismantled by US government because they were black men and women standing up for justice and equality.

never forget that the Black Panthers, group formed to protect black people from the KKK, was dismantled by us govt but the KKK exists today
In 2016, 11.4 million people saw Russian-backed ads
What is it about social media that leads to misinformation and misuse?
What are political ads?

Content that promotes a cause or appeals for a candidate in an election.

Distributed or promoted in exchange for some sort of payment.
Is this a political ad?
Is this a political ad?
History of Political Ads in the U.S.

- 1920s Coolidge and Hoover were aided by PR professionals
- 1930s & 40s Roosevelt employed Hollywood stars to make radio ads
- 1952s Eisenhower used TV to advertise
- 1960 Kennedy expanded Eisenhower’s strategy using radio and TV to transform him into a celebrity
- 2008 Obama’s social media campaign
What is social media?

Interactive platforms that enable users to create and share content.

“The term “social media” emerged at the time that companies began harnessing what people were already doing online, turning socializing into revenue streams for venture capitalists and the people who run internet companies.” - Nancy Baym
Business Model of Social Media

Facebook Business Model in Action

Hidden Revenue Generation
While users don’t pay for using the service, over 98% of Facebook revenue streams (in 2017) came from targeted advertising Facebook shows on the feed (also Instagram) thanks to the data users provide to its algorithm. That data (in the form of advertising) is sold to businesses.

Users
- Provide free data to power up Facebook’s algorithm
- Unlimited source of entertainment for Facebook users. The feed is an infinite scroll!

The Feed

Businesses
- Businesses pay Facebook ads based on impressions, Likes, clicks, shares and so on

Users' data sold as targeted ads in the feed
1. Political Group
2. Buys ads on Facebook
3. Political Ad
4. Votes, Donations, Engagement
5. Page Fans
6. Organic Shares
7. Friends of Fans
“People are accustomed to thinking these platforms are reliable, trustworthy news sources. What they really are is large-scale advertising platforms.”

- Safiya Noble
Algorithms & Filter Bubbles

Social Media companies design algorithms to select what we want to see based on demographic information, interests, past clicks, search history, etc.

We become isolated from other ideas and perspectives.
Microtargeting

Microtargeting uses people’s data to segment them into small groups for content targeting.
A/B Testing compares two or more variants of an advertisement or message to determine which one performs best.
How do political campaigns use social media?

- Match supporter lists with social media users
- Create “custom audiences”
- Message testing
- Targeted ads
Why should we care about political ads on social media?
1. Spending

Political Advertising is Booming on Social Media
Money spent on U.S. presidential campaign social media advertising

- 2012: $0.16b
- 2016: $1.40b
- 2020*: $2.90b
2. Effectiveness

Ad Performance

Marsha Blackburn
Sponsored • Paid for by Marsha for Senate

Human Trafficking is a horrific crime that must be stopped and I will work to keep our children and our communities safe.

Stand Up for Tennessee Values.
MARSHABLACKBURN.VOLUNTEERS.COM

10K - 50K
Impressions

$100 - $499
Money spent (USD)

Audience Breakdown

Age and Gender

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Location

...
3. Misuse
Effects of Political Ads on Social Media

Individual Level- Privacy Concerns

Interpersonal and Community Level- Polarization

National Level- Democracy Undermined
What can we do?
Policy Suggestions

- Funding Transparency
  - Honest Ads Act
- Banning Microtargeting
- Mechanisms for Counter Speech
- User Consent
- Government regulation vs. self-regulation
33% say govt. should regulate political advertising on social media

Do you think the government should or should not regulate how social media companies (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) ... ? (%)

- Government should regulate
- Government should NOT regulate

Allow groups to target advertising in order to prevent illegal discrimination

Run political advertising

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March 31 - April 2, 2019
For more on: Political Ads, Social Media, and Regulation

Tune In on Tues October 20 at 6 pm
Questions?