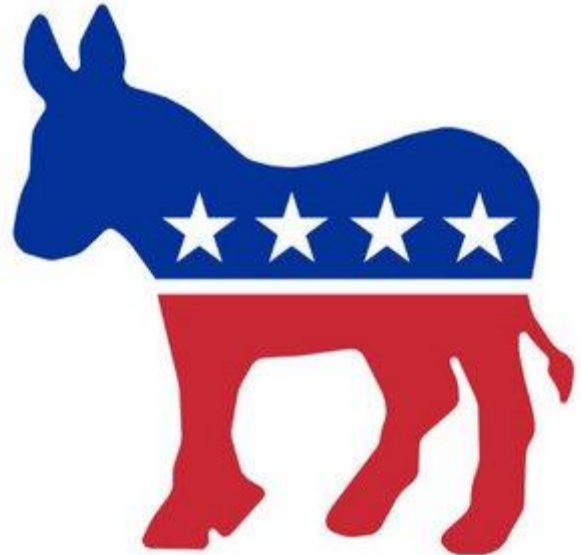


vs.



Who REALLY Owns the Web?

A closer look at the online battle for The White House

updated 9/25/08

1. Overview

The battle between John McCain and Barack Obama is a war of words. What makes this election different is how far and fast those words can go. The Internet accelerates the reach of the candidates' messages through online news media, and blogging amplifies the voices of both sides' supporters. Attributor is tracking how McCain and Obama's messages move across the Internet and, for the first time, has measured the size of the online audience reading these messages.

This is the third of a series of regular insights Attributor will be sharing between now and November 4th.

What we did:

- Used the Attributor platform to capture each candidate's key issues and speeches as stated on their official web sites: www.johnmccain.com and www.barackobama.com.
- Tracked the distribution of each candidate's words across 25 Billion+ pages, including blogs and social networks, looking for unique web pages containing matches of their speeches and official position statements.
- Analyzed and categorized the individual sites and pages containing the candidates' messages.
- Using our Audience Finder™ Technology, estimated the reach of each candidate's messages across the Internet.

Key Findings (9/25):

- Due to a huge post-convention bounce, McCain took the lead over Obama in overall web traffic for the first time in this campaign. The online audience viewing McCain's messages has grown 61% faster than Obama's since the convention.
- Palin's convention speech has been viewed by an estimated 18,000,000 online viewers.
- McCain's campaign messages are more likely to be picked up from his position statements (55%) than his speeches (45%) Obama's messages are picked up more often through his speeches (67%) than his issue statements (33%).
- The economy is the most copied issue for both candidates. Iraq has fallen out of McCain's top 5 issues for the first time in the campaign.
- Despite allegations of media favoritism, McCain's words are featured 80% more often on news sites than Obama's. In September there were over 29 Million views of McCain's messages on news sites.
- Obama still leads the blogosphere with over 15 Million views of his messages occurring on blogs in September. Almost twice as many bloggers repeat his messages than those of McCain.
- McCain is closing the lead in the blogosphere with Palin post-convention buzz, as Obama's blogosphere traffic lead has shrunk nearly 43%.
- The attacks are in full swing: Obama's content is appearing on conservative sites almost twice as much as McCain's content is appearing on liberal sites.

2. Most Popular Issues and Speeches

Figure 1.1: Obama’s Hottest Content

Most Popular Issues as of 9/25/08	Most Popular Speeches as of 9/25/08
Economy	A More Perfect Union
War in Iraq	Berlin: A World that Stands as One
Technology	The American Promise (Democratic Convention)
Health Care	Final Primary Night
Energy & Environment	The America We Love

1.1 There was considerable movement in Obama’s top speeches, as his “A More Perfect Union” regained its number one spot, narrowly beating out his speech in Berlin. Surprisingly, Obama’s acceptance speech at the Democratic Convention is only his third most popular speech, despite delivering it to a packed football stadium and almost 40 million television viewers (source: Nielsen ratings). There was a not a whole lot of shifting in his issues, with Economy remaining as the top copied issue.

Figure 2.1: McCain’s Hottest Content

Most Popular Issues 9/25/08	Most Popular Speeches 9/25/08
McCain Economic Plan	Sarah Palin’s Speech to (Republican Convention)
Human Dignity and Sanctity of Life	McCain’s Acceptance Speech (RC)
Lexington Project (Energy)	Remarks at American GI Forum
Protecting Second Amendment Rights	Los Angeles World Affairs Council
Health Care System Reform	Energy Security

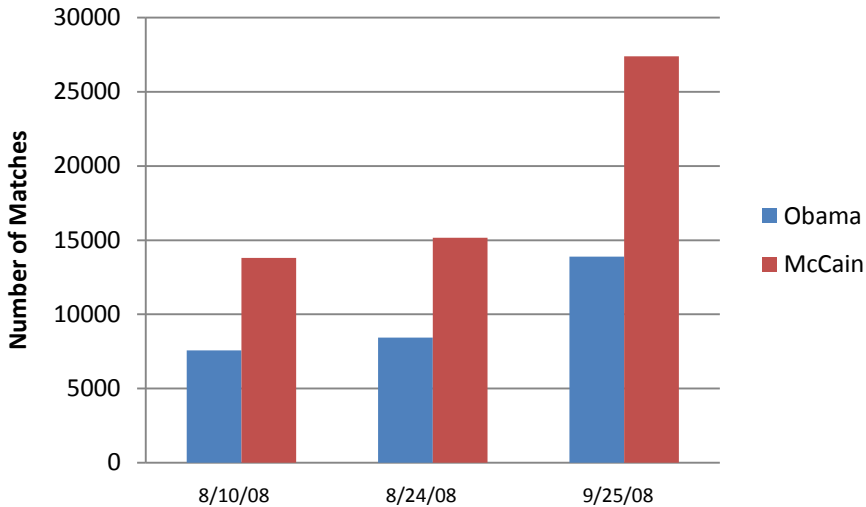
2.1 There was significant movement in McCain’s speeches and issues. Sarah Palin’s acceptance speech at the Republican Convention skyrocketed to the top of the list, surpassing McCain’s own acceptance speech. It is the most copied source (speech or issue) for any candidate, with almost 20 thousand instances on the Web and around 18 million views. Iraq fell out of the top 5 of McCain’s issues for the first time in this campaign, and his energy policy issue and speech on energy security both dropped in the rankings. Economy remained his number one most copied issue.

3. True or False? Attributor Investigates Election 2008's Conventional Wisdom

Conventional Wisdom: The news media is in love with Barack Obama and gives his messages a disproportionate amount of coverage.

Attributor Says: False

News Site Matches



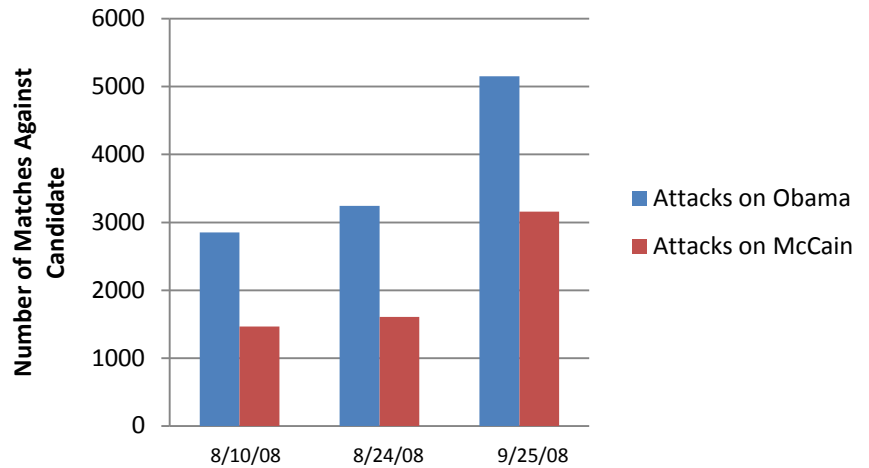
Perhaps this is true when it comes to television or print. But when it comes to coverage of each candidate's position statements and speeches, McCain is trouncing Obama. He's out-matching Obama almost 3 to 1 on the major networks' websites (Fox, NBC, CBS, ABC, and CNN). When local and national newspaper and magazine websites are factored in, McCain still outdoes Obama almost 2 to 1.

Conventional Wisdom: Obama and McCain are attacking other with negative messages at roughly the same rate.

Attributor Says: False

At the start of this study, Obama and McCain were each being criticized on issues and speeches at roughly the same rate. Within the last month, criticism of Obama has surged and his words have been attacked* more than twice as much as McCain. Since our study began, McCain’s lead in attacks has more than doubled.

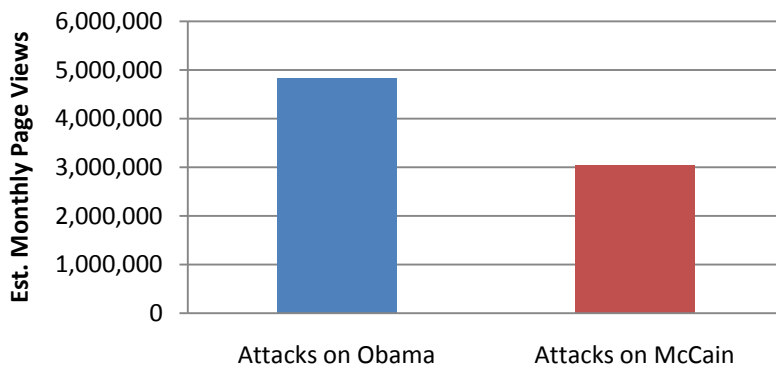
Attack Matches



Conventional Wisdom: Americans discount negative campaigning as “politics”.

Attributor Says: False

How many are viewing the online attacks?

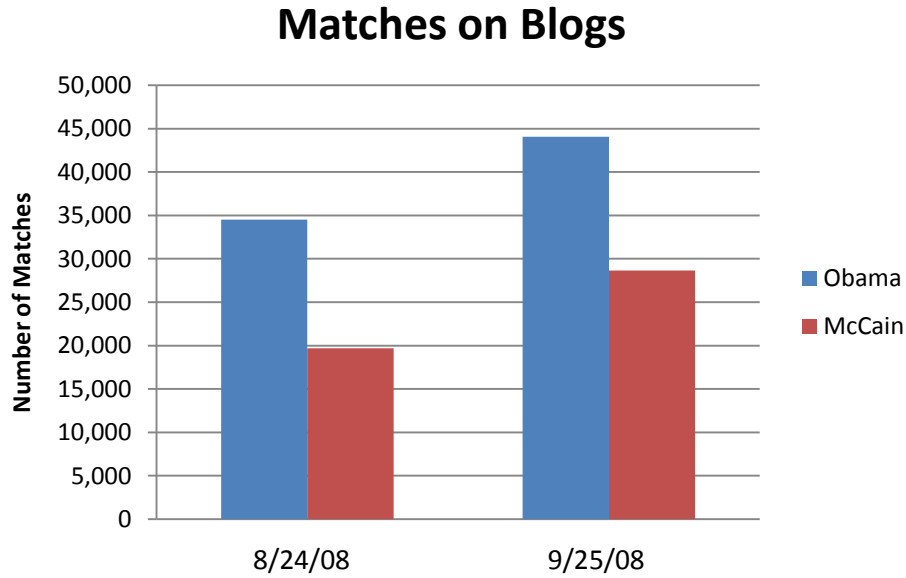


The rapidly increasing online negative campaigning on McCain’s behalf is paying off. People are reading the attacks- and in significant numbers. In September, almost 5 million people viewed attacks on Obama, compared to the roughly 3 million people who viewed attacks on McCain- almost 2:1

*An “attack match” represents an issue or speech match on a site known to be “unfriendly” to the candidate. We matched against the 50 most trafficked liberal sites, the 50 most trafficked conservative sites, and many other sites known to be political based on our domain keyword search. McCain’s issues and speeches were matched on 160 unique liberal sites, versus 281 conservative sites for Obama. Each candidate matched on approximately 320 “friendly” sites. “Site” refers to a unique domain.

Conventional Wisdom: Obama’s grassroots efforts have resulted in a substantial lead across the blogosphere.

Attributor Says: True

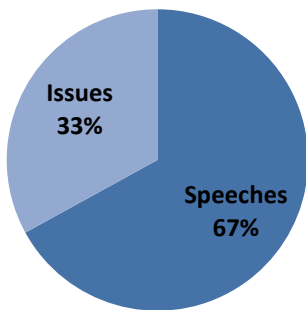


Obama is still the leader in the Blogosphere, but his lead shrank 43% after the conventions.

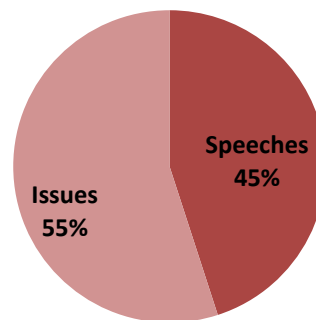
Conventional Wisdom: Obama’s message is best delivered through speeches, while McCain’s strength is with his position on issues.

Attributor Says: True

Obama's Message Makeup



McCain's Message Makeup



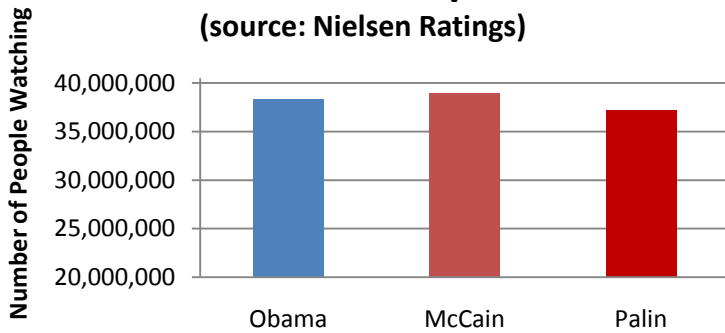
Obama’s speeches are being picked up on the Web much more than his position statements. The opposite is true for McCain.

Conventional Wisdom: TV viewership follows the same pattern as online content.

Attributor Says: False

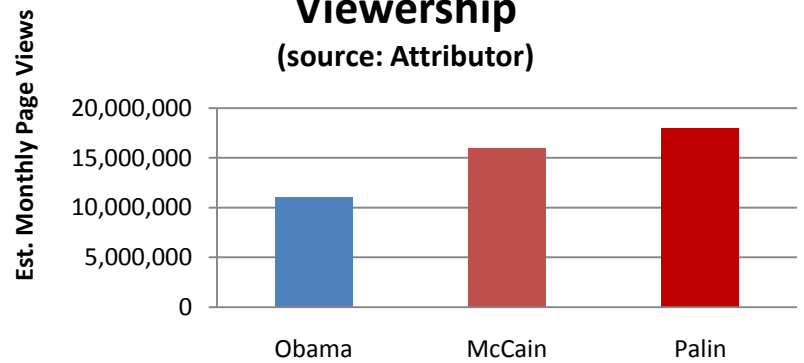
Convention Speech TV Viewership

(source: Nielsen Ratings)



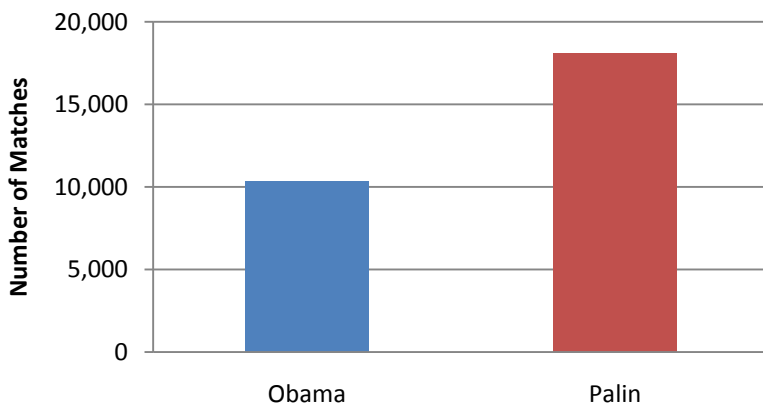
Convention Speech Online Viewership

(source: Attributor)

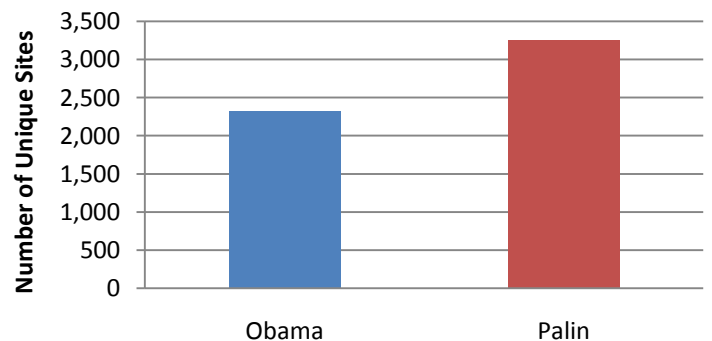


The nominee speeches at the Democratic and Republican Conventions all received huge television audiences around 38 million viewers (Biden’s speech viewership was significantly lower than the others, with 24 million viewers). The question then became which speeches would have the greatest post-convention buzz. While TV is still king in terms of total audience, the web is substantial and shows different results. Online, the McCain and Palin speeches combined attracted an additional 35 million views of the speech text after the convention. Palin’s speech alone garnered almost 20 million versus Obama’s 11 million. Clearly, the “Palin Effect” is at play on the Web. And it’s a huge reason why McCain surpassed Obama is

Appearances of Speech on Web



Sites Hosting Convention Speech



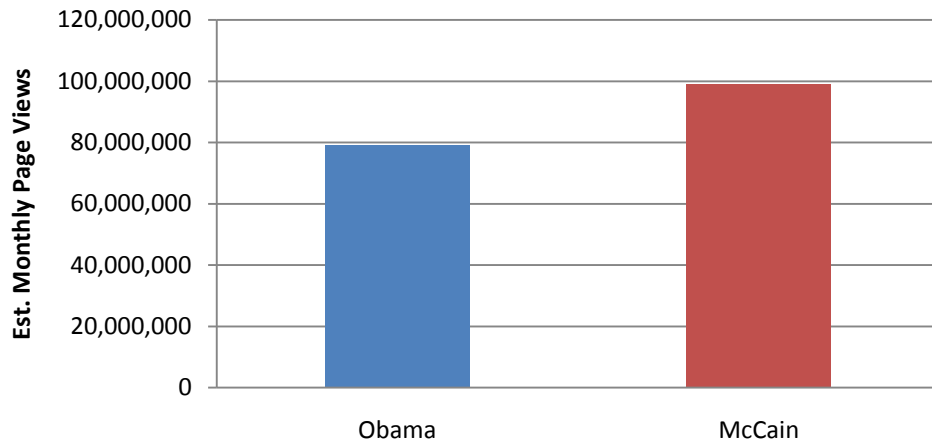
Comparing the Obama and Palin convention speeches reveals the post-convention popularity of the Palin’s coming out party. Instances of Palin’s speech appear on the Web almost twice as much as Obama’s. 3,256 unique sites are hosting text of the Palin speech, compared to only 2,316 for Obama. The Obama acceptance speech is not even his most popular speech- it is behind his speech on race in America and the speech he delivered in Berlin.

Conventional Wisdom: By virtue of his appeal to a younger demographic, Obama is reaching a larger audience online.

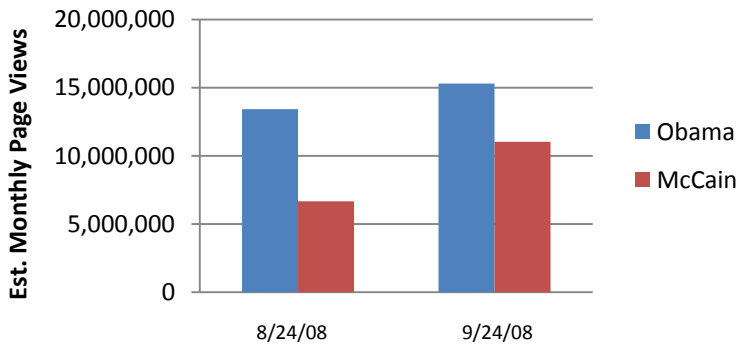
Attributor Says: False! For the first time, McCain has surpassed Obama online.

McCain's huge boost from his and Palin's convention speeches now place him above Obama. Since the convention, McCain's online audience grew at a rate of 61% faster than Obama's.

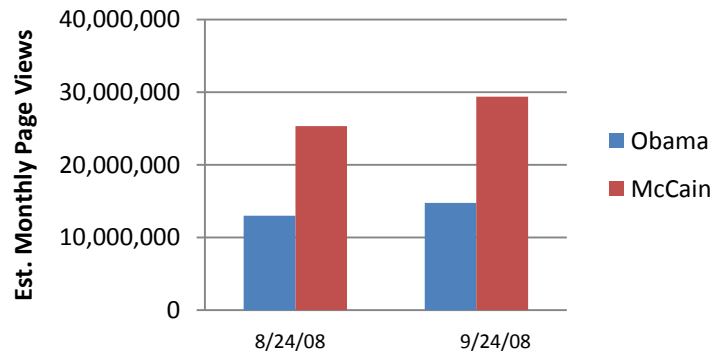
Whose Messages Are Viewed Most Across the Web?



Whose Messages Are Viewed Most Across Blogs?



Whose Messages Are Viewed Most Across News Sites?



About Attributor

Attributor is a privately held technology company headquartered in Redwood City, California. Its content tracking and programming platform enables publishers to build value with their content wherever it appears on the Internet. With Attributor, publishers can now program when, how and where their content is presented across the Web and social networks. Advanced fingerprinting algorithms, a large-scale crawling infrastructure and detailed contextual analysis provide publishers with Web-wide visibility of their articles, images or videos. Customers like the Associated Press, Reuters and CondéNet, can identify new sales leads and revenue-sharing opportunities, monitor licensed uses and derive more links and better search engine placement. More information can be found online at <http://www.attributor.com>.