



Media and Politics: Key Quotes

	<p><i>The Role of Media in Elections: Helping Students Understand Media's Influence</i> by Frank Baker, media educator (Workshops available; contact me) ©2004</p>	
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Key quotes (about media, politics, advertising)

“There’s more television being watched now (2015) than ever before ... For the most part, voters tend to be 35 and older. These are the people who statistically vote the most. So that’s why you still see TV as your biggest megaphone.” Evan Tracey, senior vice president at National Media Inc ([Source](#))

“This will be the first presidential election where there isn’t an incumbent [running] for president since the *Citizens United* decision, and the Koch brothers are already talking about spending \$1 billion, which would be more than they spent for the last presidential election.” ([Source](#))

A 2012-13 [Pew Research Center analysis](#) of the presidential election coverage found that, “[C]ampaign reporters were acting primarily as megaphones, rather than as investigators, of the assertions put forward by the candidates and other political partisans. That meant more direct relaying of assertions made by the campaigns and less reporting by journalists to interpret and contextualize them.” ([Source](#))

“People are always on the move, and they’re consuming their media in many places and in many contexts.” During the days of broadcast media, you could put an ad on TV and be pretty sure that most people would see it. Now, you have to do a very multilayered approach that makes sure that not only are you

reaching each voter you care about, but you're reaching them in multiple ways." (Source: Michael Podhorzer, a cofounder of the Analyst Institute quoted [here](#))

"Some of the techniques used in today's TV ads are familiar propaganda devices: repetition, quotes out of context, insinuation, ad hominem arguments. They may be old methods but they are still effective, and big money and modern technology are making them more so."

(Source: [Media Literacy & Political Campaigns](#))

"People actually get a lot of information out of negative ads in ways that they don't with positive ads. Most positive ads from either Democrats or Republicans are largely devoid of policy information, but negative ads are usually very specific about something that an opponent has proposed or something that their opponent has done."

David Wiltse, a political science professor at Briar Cliff University, quoted [here](#)

"This (Campaign 2012) will likely become the first truly digital election because so many people are not paying attention to live TV,"

Darrell M. West, director of the Center for Technology Innovation at the Brookings Institution (quoted [here](#))

"An analysis by The Associated Press has found that the (PAC funded) ads have been more effective in swaying voters and affecting election results than any other way of campaigning."

([Source](#), AP, 2012)

"Americans don't trust traditional media – or politicians – to provide unbiased information, which is why they are now taking matters into their own hands, going online to conduct their research and participate in civic discussions with their neighbors," (Chris Tolles, CEO of [Topix](#), quoted [here](#))

"Politics is an emotional game and TV is an emotional media, that is why it is the preferred battle ground," (Kyle Roberts,

president of Smart Media Group – quoted [here](#))

“Ideally, you’d rather have (voters) paying attention to debates. But they don’t. That’s why people use TV ads. They are the most powerful way still to reach voters who are only paying limited attention to a campaign. ... People who see TV ads usually end up knowing more about candidates than people who don’t.” “the public is persuaded by ads; they pay attention to ads, but they hate them.”

(Drake University political expert Arthur Sanders – quoted [here](#))

“Modern American politics is mainly a business of advertising, mainly on television, and mainly with the point of convincing voters that the person in the ad is or is not ‘one of us’.” ([Source](#))

“Political figures have to be guarded 24/7 because the technology has changed, there’s somebody there with a cell phone or a BlackBerry or someone recording their every move.”
CBS News anchor Katie Couric, from Poynter.org, 1/26/10

“The biggest problem I had..was the fact that too many of the questions were about process and very few about policy. I got very frustrated that for months into the [2008] campaign the only questions that were posed to me were how much money have you raised, how many staffers have you got in Iowa?..where were the questions on healthcare, education, transportation?”
Mike Huckabee on the role of media in politics,
from Christian Science Monitor, 11/15/09

“We have a far more sophisticated audience today than in the past, one that sees more clearly behind the manipulations and stagecraft of its political leaders.” Alissa Quart ([Source](#))

“Political commercials pretend to be like documentaries, but they use all the techniques of fiction filmmaking, including scripts, performances, and music,” David Schwartz, American Museum of the Moving Image ([Source](#))

“Most of the people who are watching ads online are political junkies who’ve already made up their minds,” says Tobe Berkowitz, a communications professor at Boston University. “The reason the candidates still buy a lot of TV ads is that it reaches people who don’t pay a lot of attention to the campaign.” ([Source](#))

“The unfortunate thing about political advertising,” says Dr. Carolyn Lin, a communications professor at the University of Connecticut., “is that when you tell lies, these lies often stick, and the liars never receive any penalties.”([source](#))

“Since you’re the ones who are selling the soap, I thought you’d like to see the bar,” Ronald Reagan, upon sticking his head into the room where the ad execs were creating the ad known as Morning In America ([source](#))

“Political candidates are products, and political advertising is advertising.” Elissa Moses, chief analytics officer for EmSense, quoted [here](#)

“Ads produced by ordinary folks (are) the future of the Internet. The handheld camera and producing it at no cost mean that people not tied to political structures can create content. The moment they get exposure...they have formed a political communication venue that can be very effective.” Kathleen Hall Jamison, quoted in [Adweek](#)

“We’re in a sound-bite world, and you have to work to get people’s attention.” Scott Howell, quoted in [The Nation](#)

“I can tell you that without a doubt there has been more misleading ads on television seen by more Americans for a longer period of time than in any presidential campaign ever,” Brooks Jackson, Annenberg Political FactCheck of the University of Pennsylvania, read story [here](#)

“Political commercials pretend to be like documentaries, but they use all the techniques of fiction filmmaking, including

scripts, performances, and music,” David Schwartz of the American Museum of the Moving Image in New York. (read more [here](#))

“Advertising is essentially truthful, except political advertising, which ... gets worse every year ... (It’s) just the artful assembling of nominal facts into hideous, outrageous lies.”

(Bob Garfield, AdAge columnist, quoted in PBS’ [THE PERSUADERS](#))
“When we study commercials and speeches, we talk about the issues and the quality of the message,... It’s not just about political ideology, it’s also about the art of creating a persuasive message.”

Kyle Marquette, Hersey High School, Arlington Heights, IL
from: [news story](#)

“We know from lots of good geeky political science research that ads that are able to stimulate emotions are more likely to be effective.”

Kenneth Goldstein, political advertising expert, from [news story](#)

“Research shows (voters) get more information on the issues from political ads on TV spots than they get from TV news or the debates,” said Lynda Lee Kaid, professor of telecommunications at the University of Florida. from [news story](#)

“The buzz about these (Swift Boat Veterans for Truth) ads creates more of a furor than do the actual ads themselves,” said Zachary White, professor of politics at Univ San Fran. story [here](#)

“The thing to remember about these ads is that they cost a fortune, not just these ads, but advertising in general, and it raises the cost of campaigns, and the money comes overwhelmingly from the wealthiest handful of Americans.”

Robert McChesney, University of Illinois, media scholar, from NPR “Travis Smiley” Program, Aug. 24, 2004

“Most of what TV viewers learn [about congressional candidates] is not from local news but from commercials,” says

Norman Solomon, author of *The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media: Decoding Spin and Lies in Mainstream News* Read the entire story [here](#)

“This presidential election is being concentrated on 19,20 battleground states. There’s 210 media markets in the US and we’re seeing advertising in only 93 of those media markets, and that translates into only 40% of Americans being potentially exposed to television advertising.”

Ken Goldstein, Wisconsin Advertising Project, as interviewed on [PBS Newshour](#) 7/19/04

“Candidates are pretty much sold like toothpaste today with marketing techniques taken from the business world,” Ken Warren, political communicator at St. Louis University. Read full story [here](#)

“It’s not a perfect world. Ads are about selectively using information.”

Ken Goldstein, political scientist and ad scholar, UW-Madison
Read story [here](#)

“If you want to learn about a candidate, a 30-second ad is not the best place to go!” Christian Grose, a campaign media expert at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin Read full story [here](#).

“Political advertising is now the major means by which candidates for the presidency communicate their messages to voters,” writes Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and Director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center. **“As a conduit of this advertising, television attracts both more candidate dollars and more audience attention than radio or print.”** Read more [here](#).

“Television is not a gimmick, and nobody will ever be elected to major office without presenting themselves well on it.”

Roger Ailes (media expert) to Richard Nixon, 1968

"I think the American people will be shocked by such contempt for their intelligence. This isn't Ivory Soap versus Palmolive."

Adlai Stevenson, 1952