



For Immediate Release
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New Sachs/Mason-Dixon Poll: Social Media Could Pave Path to Victory in 2012 Presidential Race

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. –The most significant poll to date on the impact of social media in the 2012 presidential race reveals that almost 70 percent of likely voters believe the race will be heavily shaped by social media platforms. The survey also finds that the Internet is deepening its role as a major factor in what promises to be a tight, hard-fought presidential race.

The latest **Sachs/Mason-Dixon Poll** finds presumptive Republican nominee [Mitt Romney](#) with a three-point lead nationally over Democratic incumbent [Barack Obama](#) – 47 percent to 44 percent. Obama is ahead among women (47-41 percent) and voters younger than 50 (49-42 percent), while Romney is supported by a majority of men (53-40 percent) and voters aged 50 or older (51-39 percent). Romney also has the edge with independent voters (47-41 percent).

The survey also demonstrates the growing impact of the Internet in electoral politics as a delivery source for news and information. While traditional media sources remain important, the Internet may be the key to reaching a growing number of voters who rely on their computers and smart phones to access information about the campaign.

“In today’s ever-changing media landscape, it’s essential that political campaigns, the media and the voters themselves have a clear understanding of how citizens receive their news and information,” said Ron Sachs, president and CEO of [Ron Sachs Communications, Inc.](#) “Modern political campaigns can no longer rely exclusively on traditional ways of reaching voters, and this is the first poll I’ve seen that takes the so-called ‘new’ media and matches it up to people’s voting preferences.”

Nationwide, television is the primary source of information for 38 percent of voters, but only when all types of television news – network (18 percent), cable (15 percent) and local (5 percent) – are combined. Otherwise, Internet news sites have emerged as the single largest source of information for likely voters (25 percent). Newspapers are the primary information source for 23 percent.

Digital news sources were significantly more important to voters under 35, suggesting that the battleground for young voters will be online. Five out of six voters said social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook will play a “very important” (69 percent) or “somewhat important” (15 percent) role in this race. By a 49 percent to 23 percent margin,

voters in the **Sachs/Mason-Dixon Poll** believe that the Obama campaign is making better use of social media than the Romney campaign.

By a margin of 37 percent to 33 percent, likely voters would most want Obama to be their Facebook friend. However, more voters think Romney "looks more presidential" (40 percent to 35 percent).

The **Sachs/Mason-Dixon Poll** reveals several important trends on the influence of the Internet and technology in shaping the presidential campaign. Among the poll results:

- Internet news sites are the leading primary source of presidential campaign news (25 percent), followed closely by newspapers/magazines (23 percent), network news (18 percent) and cable news (15 percent). However, when television network, cable and local news sources are combined, television leads with 38 percent.
- Using a computer or smart phone to access the Internet is the leading method utilized by voters to receive breaking presidential campaign news (35 percent computers, 9 percent smart phones). Another 29 percent access instant campaign news through television while 20 percent use a newspaper.
- An overwhelming 84 percent of voters believe social media (such as Facebook or Twitter) will be important for the presidential candidates to raise money and win votes. By a 49 percent to 23 percent margin, voters believe Obama is the candidate who makes better use of social media platforms.
- Obama voters are more likely to rely on Internet news sites and network news as their top two sources of presidential campaign news and information, while Romney voters are more likely to look to newspapers/magazines and cable news.
- A 56 percent majority of voters under the age of 35 rely primarily on Internet news sites for presidential campaign news and information, while voters 35 and older rely on a wider variety of news sources.
- One in 20 younger voters say entertainment shows – for example, the Daily Show, the Colbert Report, late-night talk shows and Saturday Night Live – are their primary source of presidential campaign news and information.

The **Sachs/Mason-Dixon Poll**, commissioned by Ron Sachs Communications of Tallahassee, was conducted from May 10-14 by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research of 1,000 likely November general election voters nationwide. It has a margin for error of $\pm 3\%$.

Ron Sachs Communications is Florida's leading public affairs communications firm, building public and opinion leader support for issues of local, state and regional importance. As an integrated communications firm, the firm combines public relations, marketing, advertising, grassroots and social media strategies, creating effective campaigns for corporate, non-profit and government clients. Ron Sachs Communications is ranked among the top public relations firms in Florida and the top 100 in the nation.

Sachs/Mason-Dixon Poll results follow:



SACHS/MASON-DIXON NATIONAL POLL - MAY 2012

1,000 likely 2012 general election voters were interviewed nationwide from May 10 through May 14, 2012 by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. of Washington, DC. The margin for error is $\pm 3\%$.

QUESTION: If the 2012 election for president were held today, would you vote for Barack Obama, the Democrat or Mitt Romney, the Republican?

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>DEMS</u>	<u>REPS</u>	<u>INDS</u>
ROMNEY	47%	53%	41%	11%	89%	47%
OBAMA	44%	40%	47%	80%	4%	41%
OTHER/UNDECIDED	9%	7%	12%	9%	7%	12%

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>35-49</u>	<u>50-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
ROMNEY	47%	39%	44%	50%	52%
OBAMA	44%	56%	46%	39%	40%
OTHER/UNDECIDED	9%	5%	10%	11%	8%

QUESTION: Which one of the following is your primary source of presidential campaign news and information? (ORDER ROTATED)

- Newspapers and Magazines
- The Network Television News - NBC, ABC & CBS
- Local Television News
- Cable News - Fox News, CNN & MSNBC
- Talk Radio
- Internet/online news outlets - Huffington Post, Drudge Report, Politico, Breitbart and other blogs and web sites.
- Entertainment Shows -- Daily Show, Colbert Report, Late Night Talk Shows & Saturday Night Live
- Television Commercials & Information Directly From the Campaigns and Their Supporting Groups

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>OBAMA VOTERS</u>	<u>ROMNEY VOTERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED VOTERS</u>
Internet News Sites	25%	31%	20%	17%
Newspapers & Magazines	23%	19%	27%	22%
Network News *	18%	27%	11%	19%
Cable News *	15%	9%	21%	15%
Talk Radio	6%	2%	9%	9%
Local TV News *	5%	4%	5%	7%
Campaign Info	4%	5%	4%	1%
Entertainment TV	1%	1%	-	2%
Other/DK (NOT READ)	3%	2%	3%	8%

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>35-49</u>	<u>50-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
Internet News Sites	25%	56%	23%	19%	16%
Newspapers	23%	7%	25%	25%	29%
Network News *	18%	10%	20%	19%	18%
Cable News *	15%	12%	15%	16%	15%
Talk Radio	6%	4%	4%	8%	7%
Local TV News *	5%	2%	5%	6%	6%
Campaign Info	4%	3%	4%	4%	5%
Entertainment TV	1%	5%	1%	-	-
Other/DK (NOT READ)	3%	1%	3%	3%	4%

*** Total television news adds to 38%**

QUESTION: How important do you think social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, will be for the major presidential candidates to raise money and win votes?

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>OBAMA VOTERS</u>	<u>ROMNEY VOTERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED VOTERS</u>
Very Important	69%	71%	69%	59%
Somewhat Important	15%	16%	14%	12%
Not Too Important	9%	8%	10%	11%
Not Important At All	2%	1%	2%	5%
Not Sure (NOT READ)	5%	4%	5%	13%

QUESTION: Thinking about how you receive information, which device/medium do you primarily use to access presidential campaign news? (ORDER ROTATED)

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>OBAMA VOTERS</u>	<u>ROMNEY VOTERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED VOTERS</u>
Internet using a Personal or Tablet Computer	35%	38%	33%	29%
Television	29%	30%	28%	31%
Newspaper	20%	15%	24%	22%
Internet using a Smart phone	9%	12%	7%	6%
Radio	3%	2%	4%	5%
Other/Not Sure (NOT READ)	4%	3%	4%	7%

QUESTION: Which of the following campaign fundraising tools would be most effective in getting you to contribute to one of the major presidential campaigns? (ORDER ROTATED)

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>OBAMA VOTERS</u>	<u>ROMNEY VOTERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED VOTERS</u>
Direct Mail	17%	14%	20%	12%
Internet Website	16%	17%	16%	11%
A Phone Call	12%	11%	14%	9%
E-mail	6%	8%	5%	2%
Facebook	5%	6%	5%	3%
A Text Message	3%	5%	2%	1%
None/DK (NOT READ)	41%	39%	38%	62%

QUESTION: Which major presidential candidate do you feel makes better use of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter?

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>OBAMA VOTERS</u>	<u>ROMNEY VOTERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED VOTERS</u>
Barack Obama	49%	80%	21%	45%
Mitt Romney	23%	1%	46%	15%
Same (NOT READ)	20%	14%	24%	27%
Not Sure (NOT READ)	8%	5%	9%	13%

QUESTION: Regardless of how you intend to vote, in your opinion, which candidate looks more presidential?

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>OBAMA VOTERS</u>	<u>ROMNEY VOTERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED VOTERS</u>
Mitt Romney	40%	10%	70%	33%
Barack Obama	35%	68%	7%	19%
Neither/Same (NOT READ)	23%	21%	21%	41%
Not Sure (NOT READ)	2%	1%	2%	7%

QUESTION: Regardless of how you intend to vote, which presidential candidate would you most want to be your Facebook friend?

	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>OBAMA</u> <u>VOTERS</u>	<u>ROMNEY</u> <u>VOTERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u> <u>VOTERS</u>
Barack Obama	37%	74%	3%	38%
Mitt Romney	33%	2%	66%	17%
Both (NOT READ)	14%	7%	19%	26%
Neither (NOT READ)	10%	11%	7%	17%
Not Sure (NOT READ)	6%	6%	5%	2%

DEMOGRAPHICS:

QUESTION: In terms of political party, do you generally consider yourself a:

Democrat	367 (37%)
Republican	321 (32%)
Independent or Unaffiliated	301 (30%)
Other/Refused (NOT READ)	11 (1%)

RACE:

White/Caucasian	712 (71%)
Black/African American	127 (13%)
Hispanic/Latino	107 (11%)
Other/Refused	54 (5%)

AGE:

18-34	149 (15%)
35-49	296 (30%)
50-64	320 (32%)
65+	222 (22%)
Refused	13 (1%)

SEX:

Male	479 (48%)
Female	521 (52%)