12. What preliminary critiques can you offer regarding the use of new media and television by the current presidential candidates? Are they advancing the use of new media, or have they reached a Web 2.0 plateau? What are the implications of television and new media on politics and political discourse in this era?

Intro | Part 1 | Part 2 | Part 3 | Part 4 | Part 5 | Part 6 | Part 7 | Part 8 | Part 9 | Part 10 | Part 11 | **Part 12**

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Nichols: It's gotta be paid for, except the web, and there you pay at the front end for the technical expertise to get it out. When media are compelled to provide air time to serious candidates without selling the same time to sponsors or "giving" it away when all else generates revenue, the media can play a valuable role. Now they promote the Swift Boat style attacks and lies because the first strike gets all the attention and the same media that carry the attacks bury the rebuttals, even if they're true. Unless the rebuttal is another "paid for" ad and then the cycle starts all over again.

Miller: The 2008 Presidential campaign thus far has confirmed the dominance of Democrats on line, both numerically and creatively. It's too early to know how low the Republican Party will stoop over the remaining 8 weeks. In any event, the real weight in elections remains on TV—that's where the money and the ordinary people are. Most major web electoral politics remains the province of white, male, wealthy, young people in terms of both creation and visits.

Tryon: Ever since Phil de Vellis launched "Vote Different," the mashup of Hillary Clinton's announcement that she was running for president with the Apple "1984" advertisement:

I've been fascinated by the role of web video in mediating the election. For the most, the videos that have been produced by the campaigns themselves have done little to depart from common themes or frames, although online ads allow the candidates slightly more license to push themes they might not use in television advertising, such as John McCain's "The One," which snidely compared Barack Obama to Moses:

But few campaign videos proved to be terribly memorable, except those that genuinely sought to disrupt the normal political narratives (one interesting exception might be Mike Gravel's "Rock," which I regard as a fascinating piece of political performance art).

But for the most part, these videos are designed not merely for web consumption but for pushing narratives within the cable news outlets, suggesting that they are essentially broadcast texts on a different channel. Instead, I have become more interested in how web video has become an important tool in enabling bloggers and web journalists to fact-check the speeches and advertisements of the two major candidates. Websites such as [Talking Points Memo](), [Brave New Films](), and [Crooks and Liars]() have become invaluable resources for documenting the tactics of the major presidential candidates. These reports have in some cases been picked up by major media, leading a number of political pundits to question some of their underlying assumptions about the two candidates. There is some risk that the tendency to focus on unearthing the controversy du jour will distract from debates over issues that concern voters, reinforcing a more generalized cynicism towards electoral politics ("they're all corrupt"), that it's all just a game.

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