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Cyber-campaigns in Southern Europe:

Only for a dissatisfied, yet very active, minority

Abstract

The article qualifies the application of the concept of 'cyber-campaign' in Southern Europe in the light of data from two surveys on the political use of the Internet in Spain during the 2008 general elections. The first survey was conducted among general Internet users, and the second among those who go online with higher frequency, whom we call 'intensive Internet users'. Our survey results are compared with the patterns of political use of the Web in the Spanish population and abroad. Findings reveal a low use of the political resources available online (not related to a slower degree of Internet adoption), and a multi-media consumption of political information in which the most interactive devices have the lesser importance, even among intensive Internet users. These results are explained by the imbalance between the citizens' demand for online political action during elections and the kind of technology and content offered by political actors through the Internet.

Keywords: Web campaigning, Internet use, political engagement, Spain, Southern Europe.

Word count (including notes, tables, and references): 6,758.

The Web in Southern Europe: A hypothesis on the offer and demand of technopolitics

According to the United Nations (UNCTAD 2007), seven countries have a percentage of Internet users above 70% of their population: The Netherlands and Luxembourg (with 89% and 72% respectively), the Nordic countries of Norway (88%) and Sweden (77%), the Oceanic countries of New Zealand and Australia (79% and 75% respectively), and South Korea (70%). The USA are close that figure (69%)[1], whereas in Southern Europe countries like France, Spain and Italy do not reach 50% (49,6%, 49,6%, and 41%, respectively).

Actually, and according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2008), those three Mediterranean countries have a similar level of Internet penetration. In 2007 the percentage of households with access to the Internet was 49% in France, 45% in Spain, and 43% in Italy, figures below the average of EU 25 (56%) and the USA (62%), and far behind the Nordic countries which, along with South Korea and The Netherlands, enjoy the highest penetration rates[2]. These differences explain the speedier rate of Internet adoption in Southern Europe: Between 2006 and 2007, Internet penetration grew 20% in France, 14% in Spain and 8% in Italy, this latter the only country of the three that grew less than the average of EU 25 (10%).

The degree of Internet adoption is therefore similar in France, Spain, or Italy. It is lower than the American, and even lower than those of the Nordic or Oceanic countries. Taking these data into account we suggest a first hypothesis, concerned with the public or with the demand end of 'electoral cyber-campaigns':

H1: A lower Internet penetration accounts for a lesser citizen use of digital technopolical resources.

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The validity of this hypothesis seems obvious. But other constraints or limitations on the side of the offer could exist: The technological devices displayed by political actors during the electoral fight could be less attractive for their potential users than in other countries.

H2: In those more participatory, deliberative and less partitocratic countries, digital devices are more interesting for the general population, and for Internet users in particular.

In order to test these hypothesis we resort to secondary data on the USA, France, and Italy. For the Spanish case we introduce two online surveys conducted among Internet users during the 2008 general elections. Our goal is to qualify the empirical validity of the term 'electoral cyber-democracy' which, in itself, would assemble the notions of 'cyber-campaign', 'cyber-journalism', and 'digital deliberation'. We deem these concepts are usually applied without any nuances, taking for granted a generalized use of the Web or, at least, connoting relevant differences with traditional campaigns. Were that to be the case, we should find a political use and a positive evaluation of the available resources during the candidates' cyber-campaign, along with a relevant citizen participation in blogs and digital journalism and/or in forums or chats of electoral nature. We would find, then, the three poles of political communication –contending parties, journalists and citizens-- connected with each other through the Web.

Method and sample

The first survey was conducted among general Internet users (from now on referred as GIU; with 1,205 cases) and the second among those who went online at least twice a day, whom we call intensive Internet users (IIU from now on, with 1,005 cases). Survey results show that general (GIU) and intensive (IIU) Internet users are quite similar. Survey subjects were selected by stratified sampling by gender, age, education level and autonomous community of residence, according to a panel by the Asociación para la Investigación de Medios de Comunicación-Estudio General de Medios (AIMC-EGM), the benchmark institution in Spain for the study of media audiences, which calculates the advertising value of the different media outlets. Our universe is not that of the general population, but that of Internet users, which explains the differences with other previous surveys (INE 2008a; INE 2008b; CIS 2008c).

The Spanish Internet users (GIU and IIU) surveyed in our study differ from the general population in terms of gender (our sample contains a higher presence of males), age (our respondents were considerably younger)[3], and education level (notably superior among our participants)[4]. As regards to political leanings, we hardly appreciate differences that could not be attributed to the geographical bias of our sample, in which some regions with nationalist parties (e.g. Catalonia), are over-represented[5].

A complete and definitive empirical testing of the hypotheses stated above is beyond the scope of this article, given the methodological differences of the surveys under comparison. However, we will proceed proceed with the following steps. First, we describe the use of the Internet as a source of political information, specifying the following of the several sociopolitical actors involved in the campaign. We focus on the use of political parties' websites, civil associations' websites, blogs authored by cyber-journalists, and on the cyber-deliberations in Internet forums and chats. We then provide a detailed account of the Internet users' media diet, and the relative weight of

the Web in their political information menu. Lastly, we deal with the variables that influence the political use of the Internet and with the users' evaluation of technopolitical resources.

Internet as a source of political information during the campaign

Despite the small percentage of Internet users who engage in advanced online political interaction, their interest in the campaign and their participation in campaign activities is above that of the general population. Our data, however, do not support the acritical use of the term 'cyber-campaign', which in the light of our findings should be employed with caveats.

The technolopolitical devices which are specific of the Internet, that is, those Web-based resources that would allow for a more horizontal (or at least bi-directional) communication between electors and candidates, are found to be scarcely used. Almost one fifth of Internet users, 17% (we refer to GIU unless otherwise noted), rarely or never visited a website from the public administration. During the campaign, two thirds did not visit any of the websites by candidates or political parties and 70% did not search for alternative information in webs by civic groups or in counter-information websites.

The most frequent activity during the campaign was the sending of political jokes via e-mail; only 48% of Internet users said they had never done it. On the contrary, more than half (53%) did not even search for information on the candidates' position on topics of interest. More than two thirds of the Spanish Internet users (68%) did not sign any petition, and three fourths (76%) did not participate in blogs, forums or political chats. A great majority (84%) did not send e-mails to the political parties to express their opinion.

Therefore, the expression 'cyber-campaign', when referred to the use of the Internet by Spanish citizens and voters in 2008, is far-fetched. It does not describe with accuracy the most common habits displayed by the majority of Internet users, who themselves represent a fraction of the general population. Table 1 compares the percentages of the electoral body and Internet users who sought political information on the Internet and the sort of socio-political actors they were interested in: Parties, social movements, journalists, and citizens at large.

More than 10% of those citizens who are eligible to vote used the Internet as a source of electoral information. Among these, less than one fourth accessed webs of political parties or blogs, forums or chats. The percentage of those who sought alternative information in webs of citizen organizations is smaller (5%). Nevertheless, proportions increase considerably if we take into account the population of Internet users we surveyed. A full 68% used the Web to get information on the campaign; almost half visited candidate websites, 41% checked pages of citizen organization, and 31% accessed forums, chats, or blogs.

[Table 1 about here]

These data show two groups of voters who differ in their political use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Internet was barely used with a political purpose by most citizens, but those who were active Internet users did go online for political pursuits. The percentage of Internet users who visited political party websites and blogs authored by digital journalists, or the deliberative platforms offered by forums and chats, was twice as big as that of the rest of citizens. Those Internet users who were attentive to social or civic cyber-activism multiplied by eight the percentage

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of the population interested in the online activism of citizen organizations and social movements.

If we pay attention on the most traditional patterns of Internet consumption – visits to the digital versions of mainstream media—the topics and news sought are very similar. National and international politics was the most interesting topic. More than half of visitors to digital mainstream media (57%) focused on that section; although a very similar percentage were attracted to sections like living (54%) and sports (52%). Those looking for cultural topics accounted for less than half of digital media visitors (47%). Sought for by almost a third were sections like accident and crime reports, business, TV schedule, weather forecast, and classified advertisement.

The consumption of news online (by far, the most common habit among Internet users) revealed that it does not follow motivations arising from entertainment or instrumental and private uses. Half of visitors were attracted to sports and politics news, whereas less than a third were driven to other more 'instrumental' news, such as stock quotes, TV schedules, weather reports, and classifieds. The relevance of political news is confirmed by the figure that 61% of those surveyed followed campaign news with interest, and 20% followed them with a lot of interest, nearly doubling the percentage of general population showing such a trait[6]. Those who went online for campaign news also displayed more pro-active features: 19% sent e-mails to political parties, 42% signed petitions and 64% sought information on their topics of concern. But a majority (73%) put the exchange of political humor e-mails in the first place.

Overall, the consumption of information online is is scarce among citizens as a whole, but during elections is intensive and with a clear political orientation among Internet users. These latter show a classic pattern: Consumption of information takes precedence over the creation of own content and the forwarding of the content created

by others, which in any case are outside 'serious' political communication. On the one hand, this more intense participation in electoral cyber-activities is related to the higher educational and socio-economic profile of Internet users. On the other, the pre-eminence of the forwarding of political humor e-mails speaks of a citizenry that uses irony to distance itself from the discourses found the platforms of serious electoral debate, such as the digital versions of the mainstream media and those news sites already born for the Web.

Cyber-campaigns also include the activities displayed by cyber-journalists and their audiences. Electoral cyber-democracy seems to be intrinsically linked to digital journalism, which purports itself to be a formidable way for the citizen interaction and participation. However, not even a fifth (18%) of those visiting digital mainstream media accessed their blogs. Therefore, Internet users reproduced, to a great extent and almost automatically, traditional media consumption patterns: They did not seize the pro-active and interactive features in offer. Just as we have questioned the application of the term 'cyber-campaign' to the Spanish case, we must now say the same as regards to expressions like 'cyber-journalism' or '2.0 journalism', which usually refer to immediate two-way communication between professional journalists and their public through blogs and comments.

The under-utilization of Web-specific communicative resources is a reality: Almost a third (32%) did not visit blogs and almost half (44%) did not ever use social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook, which oddly enough was one of the key websites for the Conservative candidate, Mariano Rajoy.

The data from the Spanish case must now be considered in international perspective. In Spain Internet adoption has been slower than in other countries, so its political use is expected to be lower as well. In the USA, for instance, the percentage of

adults who sought political information during an electoral campaign went from 16% in the Spring of 2000 to 23% in the Fall of the same year, to 31% in the 2004 primaries, to 34% in the Presidential elections of that year, and to 40% or 42% in the 2008 primaries (Smith and Rainie, 2008; Winneg, Kenski, and Jamieson, 2008). This percentage is four times the Spanish figure. It seems clear that Internet adoption notably influences its political use and, in relation to this, it must be recalled that in the USA 71% of the population had access to the Internet in 2007, whereas in Spain this figure did not reach 50%. Notwithstanding this, the degree of Internet adoption is not the only possible explanation.

We can talk about common trends in Southern Europe. As noted, Spain and France have a similar degree of Internet penetration. A similar proportion of French and Spanish Internet users followed their respective national campaigns with interest (64% in France and 61% in our GIU sample) and visited forums or blogs during the campaign (26% in France and 21% in our GIU sample). But coincidences go beyond the statistical data on Internet users. As a matter of fact, the analysis of the use of the Internet by political parties in Spain, France and Italy shows they tend to give preference to managerial features, rather than other more participatory or bi-directional uses (Casero 2007). Southern European political parties replicate on the Web the kind of information they provide offline (Padró-Solanet and Cardenal 2008), and upload on the Internet contents that are identical to those prepared for other media (Vaccari 2008a).

The result is an underutilization of the Internet's potential, specially of its most participatory tools (Vedel and Michalska 2007; Vaccari 2008b), and an standardization of information contents that, according to Sudulich, is common to Southern European countries (along with Ireland and Great Britain; Sudulich 2009: 15). There seem to exist differences between Spain (and other Southern European countries like Italy and

France) and the USA as regards to Internet users' technopolitical habits. The different degree of Internet adoption is a relevant explanatory factor, but the extant literature also gives evidence on the quality of the offer (Vaccari 2008c).

This said, most recent studies in France and Spain about the politically active Internet users allow for some optimism. In France, the cyber-citoyens enjoy above-average levels of education and income, are highly active in politics, and support 'governmental' political parties (Ifop 2006: 6 and 29-30). This profile closely resembles the Spanish case, according to our surveys.

Intensive multi-media consumption and digital disappointment

Internet users, except for their special preference for digital media, profess a media diet that is very similar to that of the general population. It was television, with its newscasts (74%) and other shows (56%), the hegemonic medium during the campaign, followed by the newspapers' online versions (44%), which among GIU was slightly more important than the regional and local printed press (42%) and the country-wide press (41%). Regarding traditional media, radio newscasts and debates, at 40%, are 15 points below the newspapers' digital versions. According to a post-electoral survey conducted by the CIS, the most popular media during the campaign were television (followed by 87% of Spaniards), the printed press (by 54%), and radio (by 39%). Internet users offer similar, though slightly lower, percentages.

The technolopolitical devices like the webs of political parties served as a campaign information source for one in every five Internet users (20%), whereas social movement websites and blogs were trusted by 16% of our sample. A key variable to explain a more intensive use of these resources was the interest in the campaign. The generally restricted use of these new forms of electoral communication drastically

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increases –it actually doubles—when we talk about those Internet users who reported having paid a lot of attention to the campaign. Among those most interested, 40% followed the websites of political parties and candidates and about 35% followed social movement websites and blogs.

In their media diet, the most politically engaged Internet users do not differ greatly from the rest of the population, except for their more intensive consumption of digital news media. Their raking of media preference is not different from other Internet users (television is put first) and they do not replace traditional media with digital media either. In fact, their pattern of media consumption is just a more intense multi-media consumption. A bigger interest in the campaign is followed by a more frequent use of the Web, but also by an increased following of traditional media[7].

Those who declared more interested in the campaign intensified their consumption of all sorts of media. Table 2 shows that those GIU interested in the campaign consumed 60% more of non-news TV shows than other non-interested GIU. A similar percent difference is observed regarding consumption of electronic newspapers, TV newscasts and country-wide newspapers.

With the goal of allowing Internet users to reveal their sources of political information without the constraint imposed by closed questionnaires, we asked them two open questions, aimed at knowing their offline and online consumption habits: "Which was your favorite newspaper, radio or TV channel during the campaign?" and "Which was your favorite online media outlet during the campaign?" Responses to the first question repeated the trends discussed above. First came TV channels (twice as many Internet users preferred private TV channels over the public ones), then country-wide newspapers, and radio came last; slightly more than 7% did not mention any media. But far more relevant is the fact that less than 1% of respondents cited any

online media outlet. Surprisingly, no online-based media has managed to become a reference for campaign information among Internet users.

The second question compelled Internet users to name their favorite online media outlet, but with an open response format. One in every four respondents cited the digital versions of country-wide newspapers. Within this category two newspapers almost monopolized their preferences: ElPaís.com was chosen by 12% of respondents, closely followed by ElMundo.es (10%). Interestingly, the digital versions of the regional and local press is tied with search engines and portals (9%), of which the most popular was Google (3%). Search engines and regional press were almost three times as relevant as e-mail, forums and blogs (which, considered together, barely go beyond 3.5%). Google was far more popular than any of the political party websites (cited by 1% of respondents in this open-ended question) or social movement websites (negligible, named only by 0.1% of respondents).

[Table 2 about here]

The pre-eminence of search engines and portals over websites with campaign-related content is a common phenomenon in other countries with higher Internet penetration. In the USA, 46% of Internet users used websites like Yahoo, MSN, AOL, Google or YouTube to search for most of the campaign-related information (Winneg, Kenski and Jamieson 2008: 6). It could be that Internet portals are used to search for news published by mainstream media outlets. On this point, as in other issues highlighted in our research, more detailed surveys are needed. Surprisingly, the most common answer to the open-ended question on the favorite online media outlet to follow the campaign was "None" (18%). This could be a consequence of this 'organic'

consumption of political information on the Web, with search engines diluting the brand recognition of individual news outlets.

Intensive Internet users, multi-media consumers without political motivation

Two key questions are yet to be addressed: Whether Internet use is related to a higher consumption of campaign information online; and whether the consumption of political information on the Internet complements or replaces the consumption of political information on traditional media.

Our data does not show evidence of a correlation between increased Internet use and the consumption of new online technolopolitical channels like political party websites or blogs. There are no significant differences between GIU and IIU regarding their favorite media outlets for campaign information. Both groups place the Internet as their second most important medium during the campaign after television.

Two features stand out. First, the relevance of primary groups (friends, acquaintances, relatives) when it comes to getting political information (a feature present in 38% of general Internet users and in 34% of intensive Web surfers). Second, the relative weakness of formal political organizations at channeling political information through their own websites. Although their attention to these resources is relevant --among GIU, 20% followed political party websites and 17% visited social movement websites; among IIU, percentages were 22% and 19% respectively-- few in both groups regarded social movement websites as a favorite source for campaign information (0.1% in both groups), and the same went for political party websites (favored by 1% among GIU; and by 1.5% among IIU).

Figure 1 compares the media preferences of the two groups. General Internet users exceeded intensive surfers in the consumption of TV, country-wide newspapers,

and radio, as well as in contacts with friends and acquaintances. As expected, although with minimal percent differences[8], intensive Web surfers were found to be more frequent users of online technolopolitical devices.

[Figure 1 about here]

Does the Internet use replace traditional media consumption, or does it complement it? Are there any differences between general and intensive Internet users? To answer this questions we compare the figures on consumption of digital newspapers –the most important category of online media use-- and the consumption of other media.

The data regarding the compatibility of digital newspapers consumption and other media use is reported on Table 3. The most common pattern is the complementary consumption of digital newspapers and other media, be them online-based or not. The frequencies of consumption of digital newspapers as a complement to other media are higher than those of its consumption as alternative to other media. For instance, the proportion of GIU who deemed online newspapers as a complement for TV viewing (50%) doubled that of those who deemed them as an alternative (25%). The percent of GIU and IIU who see digital newspapers as a complement to other media exceeds 50% in most cases. The single only exception is TV shows other than newscasts (47% among GIU).

A more frequent use of the Internet (represented by the IIU group), and in particular a more frequent reading of digital newspapers, does not diminish or increase the consumption of other media, be them traditional or digital. All media outlets considered, Intensive Web surfers reported higher frequencies of use, either as

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complement or as alternative. Perhaps we could talk about a small substitution effect among IIU. Summing up the percent differences with the GIU, this is of 63 points in the category of alternative consumption, a figure above the 53 points for complementary consumption with other media. Increased time online seems to reduce, inevitably, the time devoted to the consumption of other media.

[Table 3 about here]

As it can be observed on Table 3, on the column of digital newspapers as alternative, the higher percentages among GIU belong to those who reported reading digital newspapers but did not follow social movement websites, nor the TV and radio shows other than newscasts, or the political party websites (all of them with percentages close to 40%). Digital newspapers are not replacing their original print versions, as both categories enjoy some of the lowest scores of non-complementarity. Instead, our data would support the hypothesis that print newspaper reading is complementary to digital newspaper reading.

Among intensive Internet users, the greatest complementarity with digital newspaper reading is blog following: Three out of every four online newspapers also checked blogs. This would be a coherent transit from factual information to more personal commentaries. In fact, the percentage of those who visited blogs and got campaign information via online newspapers is 8 points above the figure of those who only visited blogs. The next most complementary outlets were political party and social movement websites, indicating that there's some exchange in readership between online mainstream media and the technolopolitical devices from electoral and social forces. Most probably, news on politicians and social organizations were found first in

mainstream online newspapers, and subsequently the pages of the actors cited in the news would be visited in order to access their own versions or to search for topics ignored by the conventional media.

[Table 4 about here]

Table 4 reports statistics on visits to journalists' blogs, political party websites, and social movement websites, showing whether they are a complement or an alternative to other media. There is little difference again between GIU and IIU on those three categories. Neither blogs nor political party or social movement websites were considered as a relevant alternative source by intensive and general Internet surfers. The journalistic blogs and the websites of political parties and social movements were nevertheless complementary to each other, perhaps because of the ease of mutual linkage among the three, which would be much more limited in the case of traditional (offline) media.

Conclusion

Overall, among the general population, only a minority gets campaign information from the Internet and participates in politics through the use of new technopolitical devices associated to the Web. Therefore, the term 'electoral cyber-democracy' (defined as campaigns conducted, debated, and followed online) should be qualified, delimited, and applied with caution. Otherwise, the talk about net-campaigns becomes an acritical legitimation of the incorporation of ICTs to the system of political communication. It conveys the idea of citizens being more relevant and influential than ever before in the course of elections, as if politicians and citizens could put aside communication

business and professionals as the unavoidable mediators during the most important process of public opinion formation.

Despite the small percentage of Internet users who take part in the 'cyber-campaign', their level of interest and participation in campaign activities exceeds that of the general population as a whole. However, they don't seem to find in the Web satisfactory resources for political information, participation, and action. Once a minimum level of access is guaranteed, a higher frequency of Internet use is not related to an increased interest in the campaign, nor with a more enthusiastic engagement with technopolitical devices. Well-known media outlets still rule in the offline and online worlds, and the use of more interactive online features --those that would allow for a more horizontal communication between political parties and voters-- is still rare. Political parties, at least in Southern European countries, have little incentives to open up their campaigns to more spontaneous participation (Almirón and Jarque 2008).

This notwithstanding, the minority who goes online to get campaign information and uses the Internet's most interactive features reveals itself very active. Political parties might find this minority useful for electoral purposes. Cyber-campaigns would not try to impact on the whole population, but to 'influence the influentials'. What we find dubious is the common resort to the term 'electoral cyber-democracy' (and of its components, cyber-campaigning and cyber-journalism), because it implies a democratization and popularization of campaigns that is not found in our data.

There is no evidence of any pattern of replacement from old to new media --not even from print to online newspapers--. Rather, there is evidence of a high complementarity. Watching TV and then going online to check online newspapers seems the most common habit among Internet users. Search engines like Google were

found to be as relevant as blogs, political party or social movement websites, when it comes to accessing political information online.

Increased Internet penetration does not seem to equate with more online political participation, as a comparison between the USA and Spain shows. The United States has only 18% more Internet users than Spain, but 30% more Americans than Spaniards went online to follow their national campaign. More access to the Internet does not increase the demand for political information and participation online, so the explanation to those percent differences must be found on the offer side. Our two hypotheses are complementary. Obviously, Internet penetration in households and the speed of connections influences the level of online political participation. But intensive Internet users do not show a significant increased following of the campaign, nor a more enthusiastic engagement with online political resources.

Internet users reveal themselves as more interested in politics than the population at large: 61% of GIU followed the campaign with great interest, compared with 49% among the general population (CIS 2008). However, 'none' was the most relevant category when Internet users were asked to name their favorite online media outlet for political information. There is evidence enough to suggest that Internet users have not found a satisfactory online offer yet. In any case, there is a minority of Internet uses –especially those who visit social movement websites-- who are politically active, both online and offline. Therefore, it makes sense for Spanish political parties (and for those in other Southern European countries) to keep on developing cyber-campaigns. In the short term, they can mobilize a highly active minority, inside and outside the Web. In the medium and long term, they can ensure the loyalty of those who contact them, while obtaining valuable data that might be valuable for future campaigns.

Table 1: Comparison between the CIS post-electoral survey (general population) and our survey on Internet users (GIU) on common items, along with an estimation of population size.

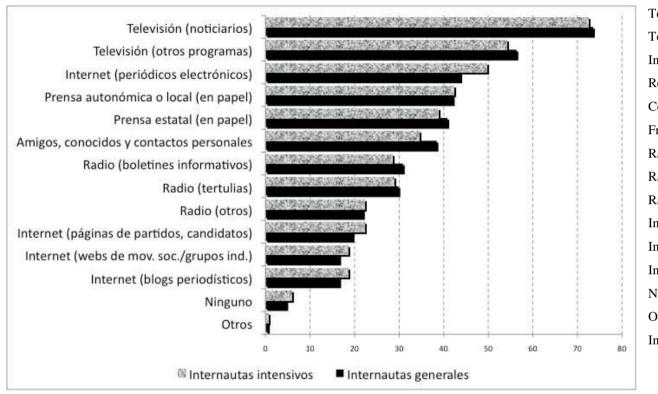|	CIS		Internet users
	%	Population size (estimate)[1]	%
Used the Internet to get campaign information[2]	9,9% (599)	3.324.878	68,1% (821)
Visited webs of[3]:			
Political parties/candidates	23,4%	778.021	45%
Citizen organizations/Social movements	5,4%	179.543	41%
Blogs, forums, chats	22,2%	738.123	31%

Sources: CIS (Post-electoral survey 2008), INE (Electoral Census 2008) and GIU survey 2008 (n=1,205)

(1) The estimation of population size was done using data from the CIS post-electoral survey (Study No. 2757) and, according to its technical data, from the 2008 electoral census excluding the census of non-residents (known as CERA), and the populations of the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla. Quantities are drawn from the average values of confidence intervals, calculated according to sample error and confidence levels.

(2) Percentage calculated from the 6,083 cases in the CIS post-electoral survey and the 1,205 in the GIU survey.

(3) In the following three categories, the percentages are calculated from the total number of those who reported getting political information from the Internet on the CIS post-electoral survey, 599 cases, and from the total number of those who checked some sort of political information on the Web during the campaign with a frequency above once per month (which allows for a comparison with the CIS survey) in the GIU survey, 821 cases. The percentages calculated from the total number of Internet users interviewed in the GIU survey would be 20% (visited political party or candidate websites), 17% (citizen organizations or civic movement websites) and 17% (visited blogs, forums, and chats).

Table 2: Media use in relation to interest in campaign news, differences between GIU and IIU (percentages).

	General Internet Users (GIU)			Intensive Internet Users (IIU)			
	Not interested at all	Very interested	Diff.	Not interested at all	Very interested	Diff.	
None	53	0	-53	44	1	-43	None
Other	0	2	2	3	1	-2	Other
Internet (Social movement and independent group websites)	5	33	28	4	34	30	Radio (Other)
Internet (Journalistic blogs)	3	35	32	4	38	34	Internet (Social movement and independent group websites)
Radio (Other)	1	39	38	1	38	37	Internet (Journalistic blogs)
Internet (Political parties and candidate websites)	3	42	39	8	45	37	Radio (Newscasts)
Friends, acquaintances, and personal contacts	13	58	45	13	50	37	Friends, acquaintances, and personal contacts
Radio (Talk radio)	4	51	47	5	50	45	Internet (Political parties and candidate websites)
Radio (Newscasts)	3	51	48	4	52	48	Radio (Talk radio)
Newspapers (Regional or local)	8	60	52	11	59	50	Newspapers (Regional or local)
Newspapers (Country-wide)	5	62	57	10	63	53	Newspapers (Country-wide)
Television (newscasts)	28	88	60	16	71	54	Television (Other shows)
Internet (Online newspapers)	5	67	62	28	84	56	Television (newscasts)
Television (Other shows)	13	75	62	12	75	63	Internet (Online newspapers)

Source: GIU and IIU surveys, 2008.

Figure 1: Most popular media sources of campaign information.

Chart labels (right side)
Television (newscasts)
Television (other shows)
Internet (online newspapers)
Regional or local newspapers (print)
Country-wide newspapers (print)
Friends, acquaintances, and personal contacts
Radio (newscasts)
Radio (talk radio)
Radio (other)
Internet (political parties, candidate websites)
Internet (social movement websites)
Internet (journalistic blogs)
None
Other
Intensive Internet users/ General Internet users

Source: GIU and IIU surveys, 2008.

Table 3[1]: Online newspapers as an alternative or complementary information source for GIU and IIU (percentages).

	Online newspapers as alternative (%)		Online newspapers as complement (%)	
	General users	**Intensive users**	**General users**	**Intensive users**
Television (Newscasts)	25	35	50	55
Television (Other shows)	39	42	47	56
Newspapers (Country-wide)	33	40	60	65
Newspapers (Regional or local)	33	42	58	60
Radio (Newscasts)	36	44	60	64
Radio (Talk radio)	37	43	60	67
Radio (Other)	39	45	59	67
Journalistic blogs	38	44	73	74
Political party and candidate websites	39	44	64	69
Social movement websites	40	46	65	67
Friends, acquaintances, and personal contacts	36	42	56	64

Source: GIU and IIU surveys, 2008.

(1) 'Online newspapers as alternative' is calculated from the percentage of online newspaper readers who did not consume other media (therefore, online newspapers would be an alternative to other media). 'Online newspapers as complement' is calculated from the percentage of online newspapers who did consume other media (online newspapers would be a complementary source of campaign information in this case).

Table 4: Journalistic blogs, political parties/candidate websites and social movement websites as a source of alternative or complementary information for GIU and IIU (percentages).

	Journalist. blogs		Political party webs		SSMM webs		Journalist. blogs		Political party webs		SSMM webs	
	As alternative						As complement					
	GIU	IIU	GIU	IIU	GIU	IIU	GIU	IIU	GIU	IIU	GIU	IIU
Television (Newscasts)	9	12	11	18	10	16	19	21	23	24	19	19
Television (Other shows)	13	16	13	15	11	14	19	21	25	28	21	22
Newspapers (Country-wide)	10	13	13	16	12	14	26	26	29	32	24	26
Newspapers (Regional or local)	12	14	14	16	11	15	22	25	27	31	24	23
Radio (Newscasts)	13	15	16	18	14	14	25	28	28	33	23	29
Radio (Talk radio)	12	15	14	17	13	16	26	28	33	34	24	26
Radio (Other)	14	15	16	19	14	15	27	30	34	32	26	30
Online newspapers	8	9	12	14	10	12	28	28	29	31	25	25
Journalistic blogs	-	-	16	17	12	13	-	-	39	44	40	42
Political party and candidate websites	13	13	-	-	10	13	33	36	-	-	42	39
Social movement (SSMM) websites	12	13	14	16	-	-	40	42	50	47	-	-
Friends, acquaintances, and personal contacts	11	13	13	17	11	13	25	29	31	33	26	29

Source: GIU and IIU surveys, 2008.

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Endnotes:

[1] The data reported here comes from the NCTAD and refer to the year 2006. In 2007 the USA had already reached 71% of Internet users (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2008).

[2] South Korea: 94%; Iceland: 84%; The Netherlands: 83%); Sweden: 79%; Denmark and Norway: 78%.

[3] 86% of those surveyed was younger than 44 years of age, whereas the CIS Barometer (CIS, 2008c), that age range comprises 51% of the sample. The relative weight of the oldest group, those older than 55 years, represents 4% of our sample, whereas in the cited CIS survey this group equals to 33% of those interviewed.

[4] Almost half the Internet users surveyed (49%) had completed some university education (as compared to only 19% in the CIS Barometer, 2008c), which is more than those who only completed secondary education, 43% (48% in the CIS Barometer). The relative weight of those who just finished primary school is marginal, nearly 8% (44% in the CIS Barometer).

[5] Catalonia represents 23% of our sample (it represents 16% of Spanish population), Madrid 18% (14% of the Spanish population), and Andalucia 13% (18% of the Spanish population).

[6] The CIS post-electoral survey (2008b) reports that 12% was very interested in the campaign, and 37% was quite interested.

[7] Something similar happens in France. When French Internet users were asked to name those media outlets they trusted the most, 42% said TV, 33% print newspapers, 32% radio, and 21% Internet. Regional newspapers were named by 10% of respondents, free newspapers by 4% (Ifop, 2006).

[8] Differences do not usually exceed 2%, except for the category of search engines and Internet portals, in which IIU exceed GIU by 4%.