

Now: The 24-Hour News Cycle

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will focus on the current way most Americans get most of their information. With the rise of cable news and the internet, most Americans have access to news information whenever and wherever they want it. The constant availability of news has changed how political campaigns spread their message, raise money, and encourage people to vote. With the rise of social media in particular, we have seen the quantity and quality of information change as well. Despite all the information that is available, perhaps the most important change has been that it is easier now than ever to limit what we expose ourselves to. It has become easier to filter out news we don't want to hear. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. The 24-Hour News Cycle
2. Modern Political Campaigns
3. Social Media and Politics
4. The Tech Advantage

"Extra! Extra! Click All About It!"

Jonah Hahn, Writer



BEFORE YOU START

How has 24/7 access to information made an impact on your daily life?

1. The 24-Hour News Cycle

Political leaders in the United States face the challenge of communicating their ideas and opinions to millions of voters in geographically and culturally diverse parts of the country. They have to connect with people and gain their support in order to win elections and be successful in office. Not only this, but in today's era of 24-hour news, there is a demand for politicians to respond immediately to current events, which requires them to be agile and able to communicate the right message in a short period of time.



Today's politicians and leaders are expected to respond quickly to breaking news.

In order to regularly deliver carefully crafted messages, political leaders and their teams of advisors must have a highly developed **communication skill**. For this reason, the world of politics is a great place to look for examples of communication in action.

In today's politics, everything from campaign ads to photo opportunities to social media posts is thoughtfully developed by a team of advisors who are highly skilled communicators. The politicians themselves must have excellent oral communication skills in order to deliver clear and compelling public speeches. Political leaders have a much broader reach today than in the past, making it all the more important for their messaging to be on point. Many speeches are broadcast live, politicians' tweets instantly reach their followers, and the internet rapidly spreads information to all who want it.

2. Modern Political Campaigns

As the United States moved into the Information Age in the 1990s and early 2000s, the internet and eventually social media became critical for political campaigns. In today's political environment, communication is essential and powerful, often targeted directly toward voters based on their political affiliation or location. It is meant to motivate voters and to inspire them.

In 2008, Barack Obama's presidential campaign forged the path for campaigning in the digital era, registering nearly 1.5 million supporters on its website and organizing thousands of grassroots fundraising events. The Obama campaign's website became a digital hub for organizing volunteers and helped the presidential candidate break many fundraising records, thanks largely to online donations (Stirland, 2008). Since President Obama's success in 2008, many politicians have followed his lead, becoming increasingly agile with new

technology and especially social media, which lets them immediately communicate with and respond to constituents in a direct and informal way.

3. Social Media and Politics

One of the most notable ways communication technology has changed how politicians interact with citizens is through the use of social media. Barack Obama wrote the very first presidential tweet in 2010 during his time in office, and over the following decade it became common for politicians to maintain official social media accounts to communicate with constituents and voters. President Donald Trump is known for his regular use of Twitter as a political tool.

As you know, social media content must be short and to the point—especially on Twitter, which limits posts to only 280 characters. How do you think this changes the kind of information we are getting from our politicians? Do you think it's a good thing that politicians use social media as a communication tool?

4. The Tech Advantage

In this *Sophia Real Talk*, we'll check back in with Rod Hicks from The Society of Professional Journalists to learn the critical role that technology plays in modern politics. Rod will demonstrate how the skill of technology is giving groups like politicians the upper hand.

Video Transcription

[MUSIC PLAYING] In his 35 years as a journalist, Rod Hicks has learned that there's a critical skill politicians must master to get our votes.

Technology-- learning and understanding it. Being really good at it can be the thing that makes one politician successful over another. They use technology to help build their brand, to shape their image. They keep up on the various platforms and many tools that are available.

They may have videos showing them doing things in their community, giving speeches, showing all the work that they do for their constituents, all the legislation they get passed. Social media can help extend the reach. They can have a much larger following. Their message gets out to a much larger group of people.

Pretty much all of us can use technology to do the same thing. If you are looking for a job, you want to present the best image of you. And so it becomes very important to use the latest technology to build your own brand and to craft the image that you want people to see. You can harness technology and make it work for you.



THINK ABOUT IT

How will your technology skill do the same in your own career?

American history is filled with great orators. We can find examples spanning from revolutionary thinkers to the Founding Fathers to the many activists who spoke passionately for civil rights. With that in mind, let's now

explore the role of communication in politics of the past.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned how **the 24-hour news cycle** and the rise of social media have affected political communication. **Modern political campaigns**, beginning with the 2008 presidential campaign of Barack Obama, have increasingly harnessed the potential of digital technology to reach voters. The use of **social media** in particular has changed the relationship between voters and politicians and the quality of political communication overall. Finally, you watched a video about how politicians are adapting to and benefitting from **the tech advantage**.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: Strategic Education, Inc. 2020. Learn from the Past, Prepare for the Future.

REFERENCES

Stirland, Sarah Lai . (2008, November 4). *Propelled by Internet, Barack Obama Wins Presidency* Wired. www.wired.com/2008/11/propelled-by-in