

Media and Governance

Reasons for open government:

- Government controls many aspects of lives.
- Government taxes us.
- Citizens (voters) need to make a difference.

Media's responsibility

The news media need to provide information that is

- > useful
- > sufficient
- > trustworthy
- > aware of their audiences

Bruce Williams's 4 criteria for political communication:

- > Transparency
- > Pluralism
- > Verisimilitude
- > Practice

Media's responsibility

Public needs to know about workings of government

Public needs to know about candidates' positions and character

Media's responsibility

Public needs useful election coverage

Discussions of candidates' policies are often crowded out by discussions of the "horse race"

- > latest poll results
- > how voters will react to off-the-statement or confused answer
- > how ads will affect voters

Media's responsibility

Public needs useful election coverage

Public needs to know when candidates stray from the truth

- > at political rallies and during debates
- > in news releases
- > in political advertising

Types of candidate's ads

- > biography ads
- > position (comparison) ads
- > attack ads

Jim Gibbons for Nevada governor ad

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJv5SYY2MB0&feature=Playlist&p=4B1516DA2A493975&playnext_from=PL&playnext=1&index=7

Carly Fiorina ad

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mMnPrUh23I&feature=related>

Total Spending by Presidential Candidates

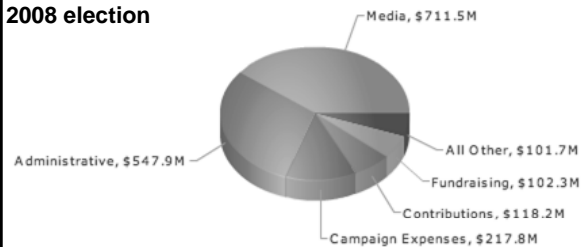
Year	Total*	
2008	\$1,799.4	Obama-McCain
2004	717.9	Bush-Kerry
2000	343.1	Bush-Gore
1996	239.9	Clinton-Dole
1992	192.2	Clinton-Bush
1988	210.7	Bush-Dukakis
1984	103.6	Reagan-Mondale
1980	92.3	Reagan-Carter
1976	66.9	Carter-Ford

* in millions

source: OpenSecrets.org

Center for Responsible Politics

2008 election



data released July 2009 by Federal Elections Commission
Source: opensecrets.org

Media's responsibility

Public needs to know why the military is sent into action

Voters need accurate information on the reasons the government wants to send Americans in harm's way

Media's responsibility

Public needs to know what its military is doing

It needs accurate information on:

- Why we put Americans in harm's way
- The outcome of a military confrontation
- Casualties on both sides

Journalist's responsibility

Social Justice,
or civic journalism (aka public journalism)

Encourages journalists and media to help solve society's problems rather than just report about them

Advocates letting the general public help determine the news content of the paper

Proponents say it help reporters connect with audience.

Attempts to control the media

● **Spin doctors**

- people who try to interpret the politician's message for the media
- create right background images for the politician

● **News leaks**

- unattributed information
 - > used as trial balloons for policy changes
 - > used by whistle blowers
 - > used as informal communication

● **Sound bite**

- short statement just the right length for TV news clip
 - > has little substance

● **Terrorists**

- should news media give them voice to air their grievances and demands?

In looking at these case studies, think about the

- > Pluralistic Theory of Value
- > Principle of Utility
- > Potter's Box