

Using Technology, Building Democracy

Digital Campaigning and the Construction of Citizenship

The days of "revolutionary" campaign strategies are gone. The extraordinary has become ordinary, and campaigns at all levels, from the federal to the municipal, have realized the necessity of incorporating digital media technologies into their communications strategies. Still, little is understood about how these practices have been taken up and routinized on a wide scale, or the ways in which the use of these technologies is tied to new norms and understandings of political participation and citizenship in the digital age. The vocabulary that we do possess for speaking about what counts as citizenship in a digital age is limited. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in a federal-level election, interviews with communications and digital media consultants, and textual analysis of campaign materials, this book traces the emergence and solidification of campaign strategies that reflect what it means to be a citizen in the digital era. It identifies shifting norms and emerging trends to build new theories of citizenship in contemporary democracy. Baldwin-Philippi argues that these campaign practices foster engaged and skeptical citizens. But, rather than assess the quality or level of participation and citizenship due to the use of technologies, this book delves into the way that digital strategies depict what "good" citizenship ought to be and the goals and values behind the tactics.

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