

## **US Election 2008 Web Monitor: Trends in Political Online Coverage Shed Light on Super Tuesday Front-Runners**

(Vienna, 4 February 2008). The US Election 2008 Web Monitor analyzes 2,200 Web sites in weekly intervals, revealing candidate performance during the primary elections. Due to his South Carolina victory and the endorsement by Senator Ted Kennedy, Barack Obama now takes the lead in terms of media attention. Like Obama, Senator McCain has surpassed his strongest opponent, Mitt Romney. The upcoming primaries in 24 states will be a decisive factor in the race and significantly affect the coverage by news media, blogs, environmental organizations, and Fortune 1000 companies.

<http://www.ecoresearch.net/election2008>

Prof. Arno Scharl of MODUL University Vienna outlined how the US Election 2008 Web Monitor reflects the latest trends: "Since the beginning of the primaries, news media coverage became increasingly focused on the front-runners Clinton, Obama, McCain and Romney. Our system documents the exact sequence of events – from Senator Clinton's disappointing results in Iowa, which fell short of initial expectations, to her impressive comeback in New Hampshire. The most recent results show increased volatility. Due to his success in South Carolina and the endorsement by Senator Ted Kennedy, Barack Obama now takes the lead in terms of media attention."

In addition to media attention, the system also tracks positive versus negative sentiment towards the presidential candidates. Sentiment towards the two remaining Democratic contenders shows a remarkable increase between January 21 and January 28, across all samples (news media, blogs, environmental organizations, Fortune 1000).

Users can also investigate the analyzed documents in detail and explore how the perceptions and interpretations of candidate performance differ by media type. In contrast to news media reports, for example, political weblogs tend to comment more spontaneously. Sometimes it is also interesting to follow developments off the beaten track – online media rapidly lose interest in candidates who have dropped out of the race.

The project is jointly pursued by a team of researchers of MODUL University Vienna, Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Graz University of Technology and three industry partners (Gentics, Prisma Solutions, Austrian National Tourist Office).

Web Site: [\*\*www.ecoresearch.net/election2008\*\*](http://www.ecoresearch.net/election2008)  
Media Watch: [\*\*www.ecoresearch.net/election2008/mediawatch\*\*](http://www.ecoresearch.net/election2008/mediawatch)  
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