



# THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**Tuesday, September 28, 2004**

## **US Election 2004 Web Monitor**

**Five weeks prior to the US Presidential Election 2004, researchers at the University of Western Australia (UWA) have launched a new Web analysis system to track the candidates' performance on the campaign trail. Weekly snapshots of Web coverage reveal regional differences and contrast the perceptions of media, companies and environmental organisations.**

Project spokesperson, Professor Arno Scharl of the UWA Business School, said the project's Web site at [www.ecoresearch.net/election2004](http://www.ecoresearch.net/election2004) afforded a unique view of the diverging perceptions of different interest groups. "There have been many attempts at monitoring the campaign performance of presidential candidates in real time, but most focus on public opinion rather than on media coverage," he said. "Our Web site provides this information at the touch of a button."

Launching the Web site, Prof Scharl outlined how it works and presented the latest results: The project analyses the Web sites of the Fortune 1000 (the largest US corporations ranked by revenue), environmental organisations and international media from the US, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Processing these sites yields more than 500,000 documents each week, comprising about 125 million words in 11 million sentences. An automated process then identifies attention by counting the number of references to a candidate. It measures attitude by associating these references with positive and negative terms. Keywords, grouped by political party and geographic region, reflect current events associated with the candidates.

From 25,000 candidate references on 23 Sep 2004, nearly two thirds reported on Bush/Cheney, and one third on Kerry/Edwards. Across all samples, the independent team of Ralph Nader received less than five percent of the attention. While Democratic contenders have been catching up over the last two weeks, media articles concerning the current US Administration still use a more positive language. The Fortune 1000 also present the Republican candidates in a favourable light and allocate them more than 90% of their mentions. Given his poor environmental track record, environmental organisations publish the most critical articles about George W. Bush.

Special reports complement the general statistics by relating media and candidates to environmental issues. The reports examine the data at a sentence level and provide diagrams to explore semantic relationships. Already available, an energy section investigates Web coverage on renewable energy, fossil fuels and nuclear power – a crucial aspect in light of recent geopolitical events and the global environmental impact of energy policy decisions.

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The ECOresearch Network with more than 170 members is a research initiative of the University of Western Australia. It investigates new technologies to manage the explosive growth and dwindling lifespan of environmental information. Addressing the transition to knowledge-based economies, the network analyses the role of information systems in advocating sustainability and ecosystem protection.

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**WEB SITE:** [www.ecoresearch.net/election2004](http://www.ecoresearch.net/election2004)  
**MEDIA RESOURCES:** [www.ecoresearch.net/election2004/download](http://www.ecoresearch.net/election2004/download)

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**John Edwards**  
Democrat (born June 10, 1953) Week 38 (Sep 20)

**John Edwards** is a senator from North Carolina and the Vice-Presidential running mate of John Kerry. Before entering politics, Edwards was a successful trial attorney. He received his law degree from the University of North Carolina. Edwards has shown environmental commitment by opposing drilling in the Arctic refuge and the Bush administration's proposed rollback of the Clean Air Act. [\[more\]](#)

Region	United States	Canada	United Kingdom	Australia & NZ
Attention (%)	5   1	3   0	3   -1	2   0
Attitude	6   -1	7   4	15   0	2   -4
Top 10 Keywords	mate carolina running gephardt dean nominee howard ticket iowa campaign	running wright pa boost ohio clinton carolina senators strikes republicans	mate carolina running challenger dean convention clark nomination optimism richardson	carolina economist nomination mate disturbing republican running fear populist north

**summary**

This project of the ECOresearch Network automatically provides a weekly snapshot of international media coverage. The results reflect media attention and attitude towards the US presidential candidates. Keywords grouped by political party and geographic region summarize the issues associated with each candidate. [\[more\]](#)

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**Energy Report** Week 38 (Sep 20)

Fossil Fuels **Pos Neg Random ?**

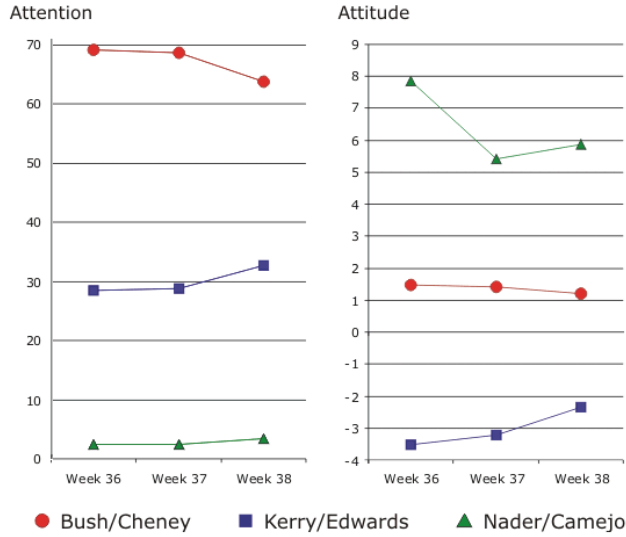
- where **george bush** has given the **oil industry** enormous **tax breaks** for drilling, i would be **pushing harder** for renewable and alternative energy, and i've **stood up** to them ([Public Broadcasting Service](#)).
- president bush** is urging congress to do something that americans overwhelmingly **oppose** -- surrender the nations largest and most pristine arctic wilderness **refuge** to exploitation by **oil companies** ([Defenders of Wildlife](#)).
- democrat **john kerry** would focus on demand, toughening fuel efficiency **standards** for cars, while investing more in new technologies and alternative fuels like wind power, **coal** and **natural gas** ([CBS News](#)).
- "for three years, **george bush** and **dick cheney** have bent over backwards to **help** their big contributors in the **oil industry** ([Christian Science Monitor](#)).
- many **opec** nations are **uneasy** about us president **george bush's** **attacks** on the governments of venezuela, iraq and iran, all important members of **opec** ([Green Left Weekly](#)).
- amid **concern** about rising **clout** for the **opec** cartel and tighter **supplies** looking forward, pressure could build on both **president bush** and **senator kerry** to define, and defend, their energy policies ([Christian Science Monitor](#)).
- halliburton, which was **headed** by us vice-president **dick cheney** until he took office in 2001, operates in both nigeria's oil and **natural gas** sectors ([BBC News](#)).

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## US Media Chart



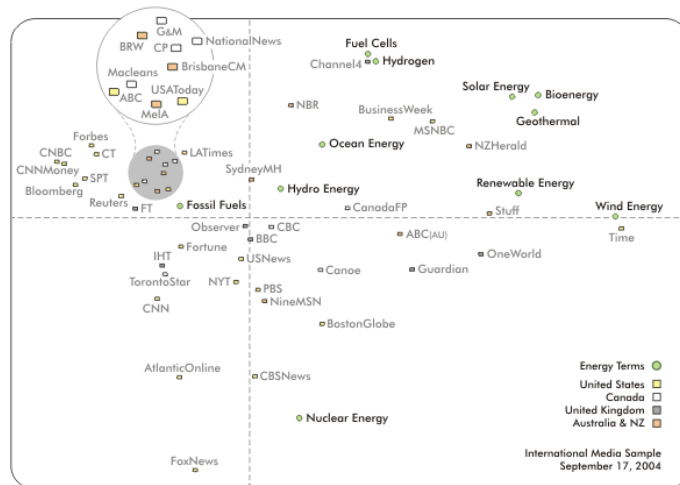
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## Media Map

The media map compares the prominence of energy terms among selected media sites. Related concepts and organizations appear close to each other. Please note that term frequencies and not the media's attitudes determine the exact position of the data points. [\[more\]](#) [\[enlarge\]](#) [\[pdf\]](#)



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