



**About Obama for America**

Obama for America (OFA) was the official re-election campaign for President Barack Obama

- Website: [www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com)
- Headquarters: Chicago, IL

**Goals**

- Engage supporters
- Reach and influence persuadable voters
- Activate supporters to vote

**Approach & Results**

- Used Google Analytics to make data accessible to all team members for rapid analysis, testing and improvement
- Used Real-Time data to get insight on messages and keywords that resonated with users during debates
- Used Advanced Segments and Flow Visualization to guide optimization and testing
- Leveraged the Google Analytics API to systematically deliver daily “Get Out the Vote” conversion reporting to all advertising team members

**Obama for America uses Google Analytics to democratize rapid, data-driven decision making**

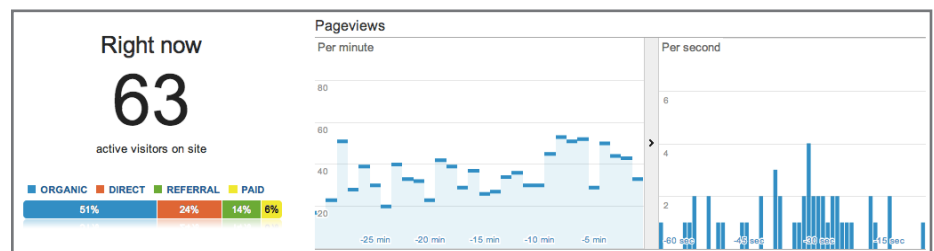
For political campaigns large and small alike, time is of the essence when decisions need to be made. Having quick and easy access to actionable data was essential for President Obama’s data-driven re-election campaign in 2012.

“To keep our digital teams agile, we needed to make consistent and comprehensive reporting available to everyone on a near real-time basis,” says Nate Lubin, Director of Digital Marketing for Obama for America. “Throughout the campaign, Google Analytics helped us democratize our web data, and enabled all of our teams to make key decisions quickly.”

**Winning big moments: responding to the debates in real time**

The ability to do rapid, real-time optimization was especially important during the Presidential and Vice Presidential debates. Recent research shows that 64% of voters use the internet to verify or “fact check” a claim made by a candidate, and the presidential debates were a prime opportunity for voters to research the issues being discussed in real time.<sup>1</sup>

“We knew that we needed to speak to our supporters and persuadable voters who were researching online during the debates,” says Lubin. “While we could anticipate some of the issue-related search terms that we would need to target, we couldn’t be prepared for every possibility.” Real-Time reports in Google Analytics provided the campaign a window into voters’ questions and concerns, and allowed them to deliver answers directly from the campaign through search ads.



Real-Time reports in Google Analytics provide instant feedback on site and campaign performance

Using Real-Time reports, the campaign quickly saw which debate-related organic search terms brought the most viewers to the campaign website. They then designed and placed search ads on these terms on Google to direct users to facts about the President’s position on key issues.

For example, when Governor Mitt Romney used the term “binders full of women” during the second Presidential Debate, the campaign team began showing ads on the phrase that linked to a fact-sheet outlining the President’s views on women’s equality. “Real-Time proved that we had an immediate uptick in both traffic and engagement from users searching that term, which affirmed this as a key rapid response strategy,” says Lubin.

<sup>1</sup> <http://globalstrategygroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Google-2012-Election-Research-Persuadable-Voters-Key-Findings-10-10-12-Google.pdf>

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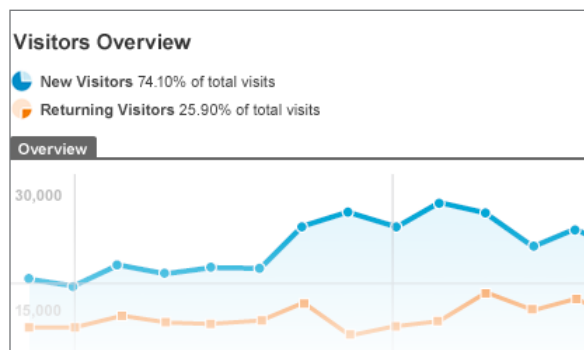
—Nate Lubin, Director of Digital Marketing, Obama for America

## Supporting a culture of analysis, testing and optimization

Well before debate time, a culture of analytical rigor and the focus on continual improvement had already been established as an essential part of the Obama campaign team's success. "Our campaign was effective because our teams had the discipline to relentlessly rely on data to assess performance, test changes and improve," says Amelia Showalter, Director of Digital Analytics.

The Digital Analytics group served as a center for driving analysis best practices across teams. Early on, they turned to Google Analytics to help the web, email, and ads teams understand what motivated new supporters to become more vocal advocates and regular donors over time. The team tested various secondary calls-to-action after a visitor's initial signup or donation to encourage further involvement with the campaign.

"We found it especially effective to follow an initial signup or donation with a secondary call-to-action to support the campaign in another way," says Brian Wonch, Digital Analytics Associate. "The flexibility of Google Analytics Advanced Segments and Flow Visualization reports was valuable in guiding our testing efforts to choose the sequence of engagements that best resonated with our audience."



*Advanced Segmentation in Google Analytics allows you to isolate and analyze subsets of your traffic*

Dozens of similar online experiments were happening with every web interaction, on every single day of the campaign. Whether it was testing various social sharing options, or testing which customized content to deliver to each supporter, the campaign depended on the measurement capabilities of Google Analytics and the deep integration of data systems across the organization to continuously drive performance improvement across the site.

## Empowering decision-making when it mattered the most

The real crunch time for the campaign began in the final month, when it was time to activate supporters to get out and vote as early as possible. Early voting began on different dates for each state, and the campaign placed extra priority on outreach to certain swing states. To help voters easily find their state's specific voter registration and polling location information, the Obama team developed an interactive, geo-targeted application, and drove users to it from all of their search, display, email and social channels.

Given the fast pace and complexity of the advertising campaigns they were running, the Digital Marketing team needed to use a reliable, consistent and centralized advertising and site reporting platform to collect and disseminate data on a daily basis. "Google Analytics stood out as a simple way to share understandable advertising and site performance data with an unlimited number of users for rapid decision-making," says Lubin.

While every team member had direct access to the Google Analytics reports, the team's reporting gurus also innovatively used the new Google Analytics API and Google Apps Script integration to automate, centralize and simplify reporting, which



provided an overview of all their marketing channels and geo-targeted efforts at a glance. "This dashboard allowed us to spend less time collecting and cleaning data, and more time optimizing our ads to get supporters to the polls," says Lubin.

Wonch adds, "As our Get Out the Vote operations launched, the Digital Analytics team needed to make sure that our voting lookup tools ran at as close to perfect efficiency as possible. The segmentation capabilities in Google Analytics helped us quickly identify any combinations of devices, traffic sources and geographic locations that were high priority, but had low rates of loading an accurate polling place." These insights helped the team target their efforts to test and improve the technical performance of the voting lookup tools so that they could deliver the most accurate and up-to-date information to voters - right through the final moments of Election Day.

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**- Nate Lubin, Director of Digital Marketing,  
Obama for America**

## The Results

The results from Election Day speak for themselves: a resounding victory, with nearly every battleground state falling into the President's column. Numerous publications, including Politico, the New York Times, and the Wall Street Journal, have credited the campaigns' Digital Marketing and Digital Analytics departments for providing much of the winning margin.

"Google Analytics was an essential tool that empowered our team to make informed decisions that influenced the course of our campaign strategy," says Lubin. "Having the data to understand how supporters and swing voters were engaging online was instrumental for doing our part to get President Obama re-elected."

