

Why a Wiki Voter Guide?

Tom Cross

We live in a Mass Media age.

The leaders of our civilization are
adept at using the mass media
system to persuade us.

Politicians have to run advertisements
in order to get elected.

Political advertisements are often
extremely misleading.

<http://www.factcheck.org/>

With ads like this, do voters really
know what they are voting for?

Advertisements are expensive.

Politicians have to raise a lot of money
in order to get elected.

Politicians owe allegiance to the people who finance their elections.

The system is supposed to be controlled by the people who vote, not the people who finance elections.

McCain-Feingold Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) forbade any company from using corporate funds to influence an election within 60 days of that election.

By 5 to 4 the Supreme Court found
that an unconstitutional
encroachment on first amendment
rights.

80% of Americans disagree with that
Supreme Court Ruling.

That's a high enough margin to
contemplate a Constitutional
Amendment.

Should we go down that road?

Many proposals seek to eliminate large campaign donations and require politicians to fund campaigns with large numbers of small donations from individual donors.

If political advertisements are funded
by a bunch of small donations
instead of a smaller number of large
donations will that be better?

Will politicians be freed from
allegiance to the people who fund
their elections?

No – elections will still be based on advertising, but the funding for that advertising will come from a different place.

Who are the individual donors likely to be?

Will we end up increasing the
influence of partisan activist groups?

Is it really possible to eliminate the influence of wealthy, determined groups on the political process?

The BCRA's limitations on direct campaign contributions led to the rise of well funded "527" groups who simply run similar ads in a slightly different way.

If 527 ads were eliminated where would the money go?

One place it could go is into influencing where all these small political donations are headed.

Can we actually win at this or are we playing a shell game, in which our first amendment rights hang in the balance?

The system is supposed to be controlled by the people who vote, not the people who finance elections.

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." - Thomas Jefferson

"In the absence of the governmental checks and balances present in other areas of our national life, the only effective restraint upon executive policy and power in the areas of national defense and international affairs may lie in an enlightened citizenry -- in an informed and critical public opinion which alone can here protect the values of democratic government."

- Justice Potter Stewart, 1971

The answer to bad speech is better
speech.

In California voters receive detailed Voter Information Guides with sample ballots, summaries of each candidates positions, pro and con positions on ballot referenda, pro's response to con and con's response to pro, and the complete text of ballot referenda legislation.

These guides level the political playing field to a certain extent, by providing each campaign with an opportunity to state its case to voters, regardless of the size of their advertising budget.

These guides can help voters research their votes and make objective, thoughtful political choices, instead of voting along party lines or relying on name recognition.

Only about half the states have voter information guides, and most of those only cover ballot referenda items.

In other states, media organizations and volunteer groups like Project Vote Smart and the League of Women Voters put guides together.

These guides are not comprehensive.

In order to avoid accusations of partisan bias, voter guides ask politicians to fill out questionnaires on their political positions in their own words. Many political campaigns never respond.

Why aren't we giving people the information they need to make intelligent, objective political choices?

With all the ink that has been spilled
regarding campaign finance why isn't
anyone writing about this?

Detailed profiles of politicians have started appearing in Wikipedia.

Wikipedia articles can explain things that other sources can't or don't want to explain.

Wikipedia can cover campaigns that refuse to respond to political questionnaires.

Wikipedia is also subject to vandalism.

Wikipedia obeys what Eric Raymond called Linus' Law – “given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow.”

Passages that survive in Wikipedia articles through a large number of edits are more likely to be reliable than passages that are new and have not been subjected to review.

When you view an article on Wikipedia
there is no way to tell which
passages are new and which ones
have survived a lot of scrutiny.

One approach is to color the passages
in articles based on their relative age.

In 2006, First Monday carried an academic paper I wrote describing this approach.

article discussion edit history reliability



Instatest

Glenn Reynolds (born August 27, 1960) is Beauchamp Brogan Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Tennessee, and is most widely known for his [[Instapundit]] [[weblog]]. Reynolds pursues news stories with a rigor virtually unmatched within the Blogosphere. Some of his fans jokingly attribute his endurance to a unique diet of blended puppy energy drinks which allow him to successfully juggle his professional and blogging responsibilities.

Reynolds was a finalist for the World Technology Network's 2004 Media and Journalism award. He comments:

Changes in technology are producing major changes in media and journalism. Journalism is becoming an activity, not simply a profession. In my InstaPundit.com weblog I have tried to foster the growth of amateurism in that field, by encouraging people to get involved and to make use of the new tools -- from Web publishing to inexpensive digital still and video cameras -- to bring news and perspectives to the world stage that were previously lacking.[1]

[edit]

Bibliography

- The Appearance of Impropriety: How the Ethics Wars Have Undermined American Government, Business and Society* (1997)

[edit]

External links

- Instapundit
- GlennReynolds.com
- World Technology Network Media and Journalism awards

Template:Bio-stub

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A similar project at UC Santa Cruz called WikiTrust explored the topic through several academic papers and developed an approach incorporating user reputation to make manipulation more difficult.

In 2010, the English language
Wikipedia became accessible
through the WikiTrust browser plugin
for Firefox.

Reaganomics - The UCSC Wikipedia Trust Project

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Reaganomics

Revision as of 00:00, 17 January 2007 by 69.177.232.85 ([Talk](#))
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Reaganomics (a **portmanteau** of "Devil" and "economics," coined by radio broadcaster [Paul Harvey](#)) is a term that has been used to both describe and decry the free market advocacy **economic** policies of U.S. President [Ronald Reagan](#), who served from **1981** to **1989**. It is comparable to [Thatcherism](#), the economic philosophy of [British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher](#) (1979–1990), who was Reagan's contemporary.

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Italian cuisine - The UCSC Wikipedia Trust Project

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Italian cuisine

Revision as of 04:20, 30 January 2007 by 69.210.149.199 ([Talk](#))
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Italian cuisine is extremely varied: the country of [Italy](#) was only unified in **1861**, and its cuisines reflect the cultural variety of its [regions](#) and its diverse history (with culinary influences from Greek, Roman, Norman and Arab civilizations). Italian cuisine is imitated all over the **world**. It also is way better then French food, the losers.

To a certain extent, there is really no such thing as

This article is part of the [Cuisine series](#)

Preparation techniques and cooking items

[Techniques - Utensils](#)

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Hank Johnson

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
(Redirected from Henry C. Johnson Jr.)

For the baseball player, see Hank Johnson (baseball).

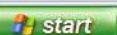
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr. (born October 2, 1954) is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Georgia's Fourth Congressional District. The district is based in DeKalb County, a largely suburban county east of Atlanta. It also includes portions of Gwinnett and Rockdale counties.^[1] A Democrat, Johnson was elected to the U.S. House in the November 7, 2006 general election. Johnson is—along with Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, also elected to Congress in 2006—one of the first two Buddhists in American history to serve in the United States Congress.^[2]

Johnson is a member of the House Democratic leadership, elected by the Democratic caucus to serve as whip for Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida.^[3] Johnson serves on the House Committees on Transportation & Infrastructure, Armed Services and the Judiciary. He is chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts and Competition Policy.

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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr.



Project Vote Smart is a non-profit that employs mostly unpaid volunteers to manually compile information about political candidates, campaigns, and ballot issues.

Using your Zip+4 code you can search
Project Vote Smart's website for
information about upcoming
elections in your district.

Prior to the 2008 election Project Vote
Smart made all of their data
accessible via a web services API.

This fall I wrote a bit of python code to glue Vote Smart's API to Wikipedia.

The resulting website lets you look up Wikipedia articles on politicians running for office in your district.

Wiki Voter Guide - Mozilla Firefox: IBM Edition

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http://www.wikivoterguide.com/

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"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." - Thomas Jefferson

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Wiki Voter Guide is a website that helps you research upcoming elections in the United States using Wikipedia. Why use Wikipedia for this purpose? On the one hand, Wikipedia can contain information that is incorrect or misleading, because it can be edited by anyone. However, we believe that Wikipedia can be a useful resource if it is used properly and read with a critical eye. Its openness and collaborative process enables people to work together to create objective documentation of a politician's positions and views, independent of any campaign or special interest. Also, the [WikiTrust Browser Plugin](#) makes it easier to identify and eliminate vandalism. You can read a detailed discussion of the philosophy and origins of this website by [clicking here](#).

Warning: This web site is an experiment! You may encounter information here that is **incorrect or misleading!** Please [read our guide](#) on how to properly use this website before you proceed. **Also, please consider installing the WikiTrust Browser Plugin.**

Wiki Voter Guide needs your help. You may notice as you use this site that most political campaigns are not covered in Wikipedia. Anyone can contribute to making Wikipedia a more comprehensive and accurate resource. [Click here](#) for more information on how to chip in.

To continue using this website please enter your Zip+4 code so that we can look up your upcoming races. The website will not work if you just enter your 5 digit Zip code - you must enter your Zip+4 in order to give us enough granularity to accurately pull up your voting districts. If you do not know your Zip+4 code, you can look it up at the U.S. Postal Service.

Your Zip+4: (Results may take a moment to retrieve, please be patient.)

We do not store your Zip+4 code, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) for more information.

Our search capability is powered by data and technology from [Project Vote Smart](#) and [Sunlight Labs](#).

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www.wikivoterguide.com

This is only the beginning...