

MEDILL  
at Northwestern University



# WE MEET AT THE AUDIENCE

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Shirley Ryan Learning for Life Lectures, 10.31.2012

# AN INTERSECTION OF DISCIPLINES

- **Journalism** is determined to understand, explain, and sometimes to change the world, even as
- **Economics** determines our salaries, our workload, and the existence of our jobs;
- **Marketing** determines whether our work reaches its intended audience with the desired impact; and
- **Technology** determines the ways our work reaches the audience, as well as who and where that audience is.

# SO WHERE IS THIS INTERSECTION?

- In **joint classes** across McCormick and Medill, both undergraduate and graduate level: “Collaborative Innovation in Journalism and Technology”
  - In-class creation of journalist tools and audience-facing applications
- Through the **Center for Innovation in Technology, Media and Journalism**, in association with the **Intelligent Information Laboratory**
  - Partially funded with \$200,000 over 2 years from McCormick Foundation
- Through the **Knight News Innovation Laboratory**
  - Funded with \$4.2 million over 4 years from Knight Foundation

# IN KEEPING WITH NU STRATEGIC PLAN

Define yourself.  
Transform the world.  
Creative and analytic.  
Whole brain.  
Whole person.

Complex challenges.  
Unexpected solutions.  
Unconventional collaboration.  
Pioneering spirit.  
Passion for discovery.

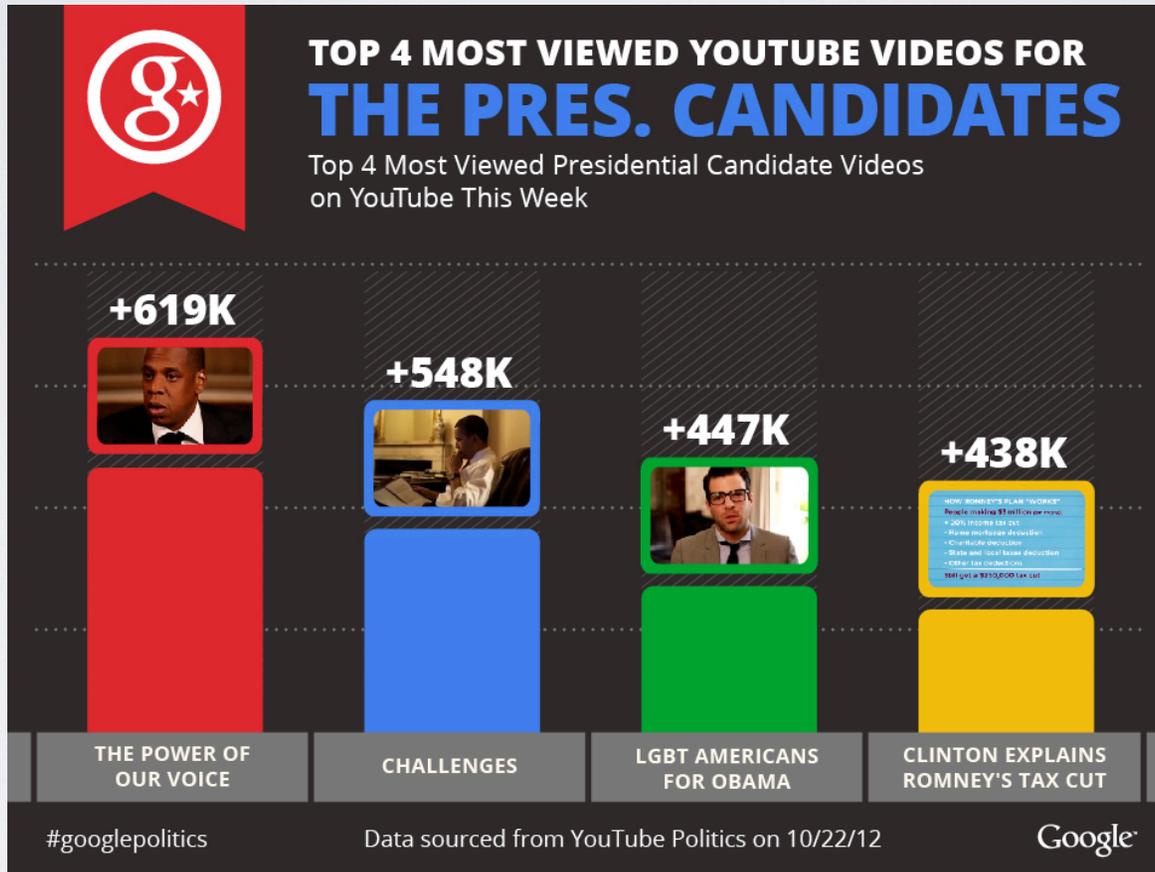
# TO DEFINE AN AUDIENCE

- **Understand** its interests and media habits
- **Learn** its “jobs to be done”
- **Create** products and services that do those jobs cheaply, conveniently, efficiently
- **Reinforce** its behaviors by delivering valuable experiences
- **Reward** ongoing participation in ways that match expectations

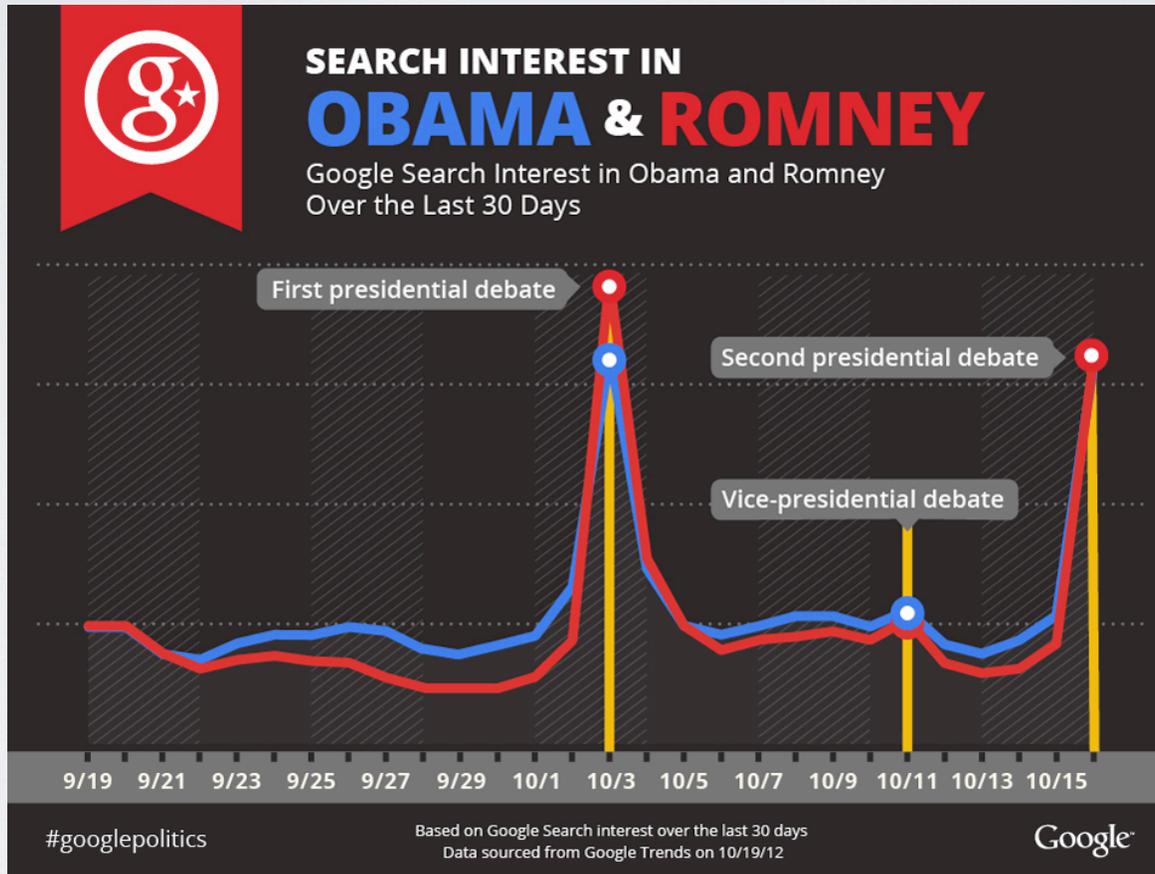
# THE CHICAGO OPPORTUNITY ...

- Around 476 news Web sites serving Chicago (Community Media Workshop, fall 2012), but only 191 produce as many as 12 items per month. In addition,
  - 8 in 10 receive no significant inbound links
  - 4 in 10 provide no outbound local links
- 87% of Chicagoans say they feel “adequately” or “well” informed (Chicago Community Trust, summer 2010), but:
  - 42% don’t know much about challenges facing the region
  - 51% don’t know enough about candidates to vote with certainty

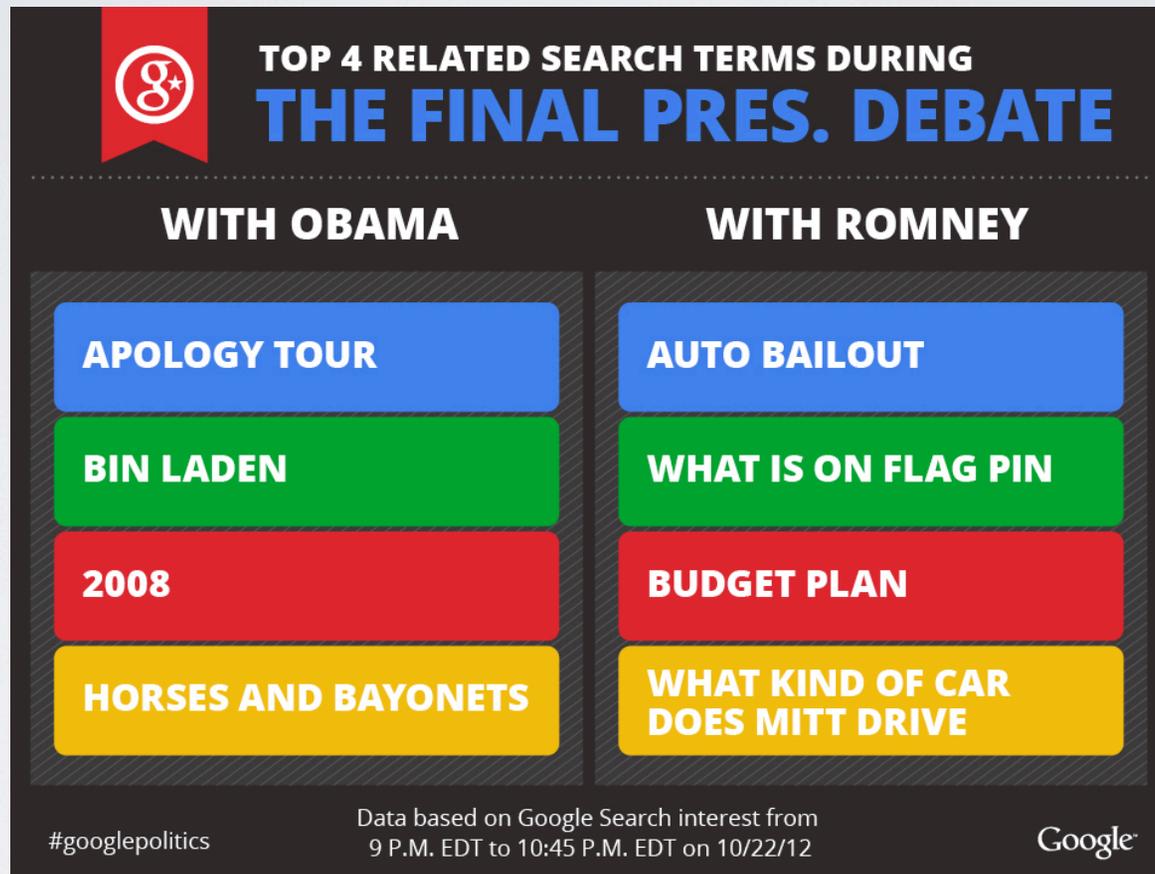
(EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE THE DATA)



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TRENDS FROM  
**GOOGLE POLITICS**

Insights, News, and Notes During the Final Presidential Debate  
on October 22 in Boca Raton, Florida

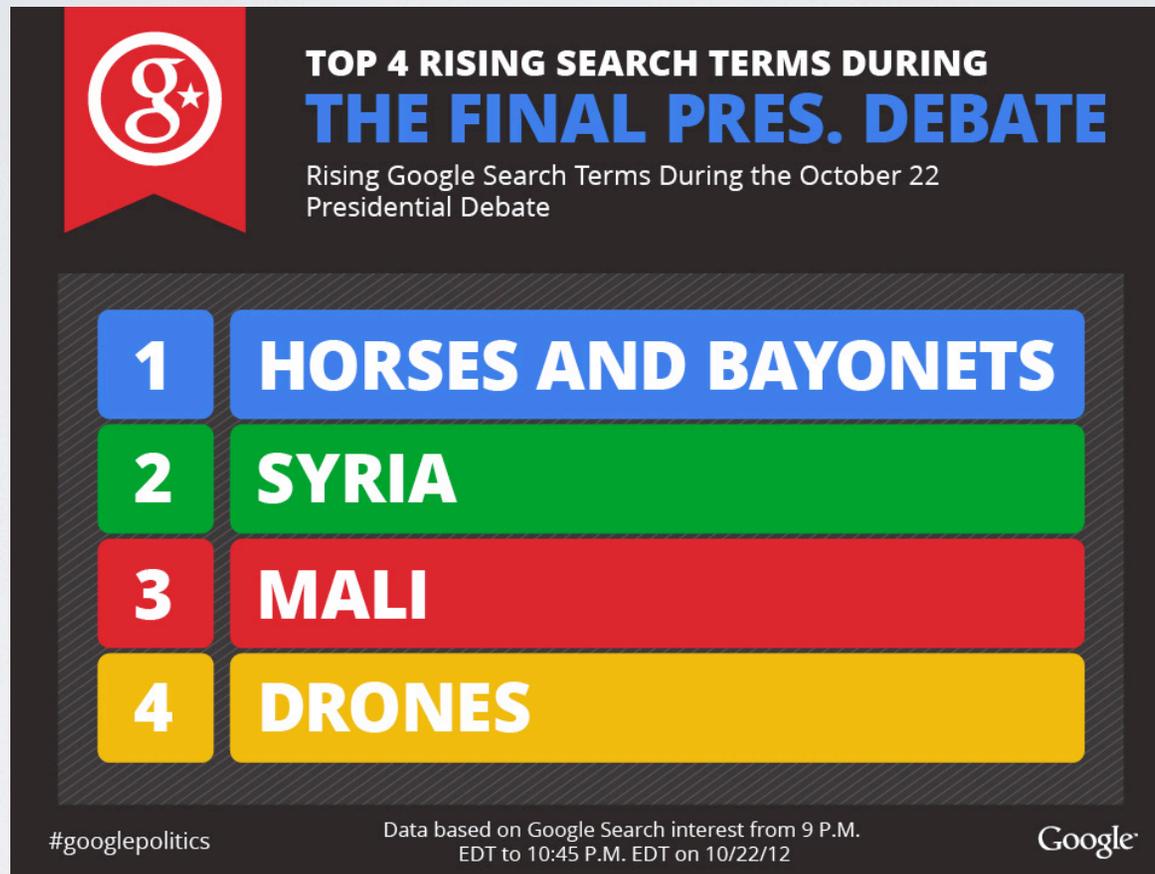
A sharp spike in Google Searches for **bayonets**  
during the debate: **+7215%**

#googlepolitics

Based on Google Search data on 10/22/2012

Google

(EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE THE DATA)



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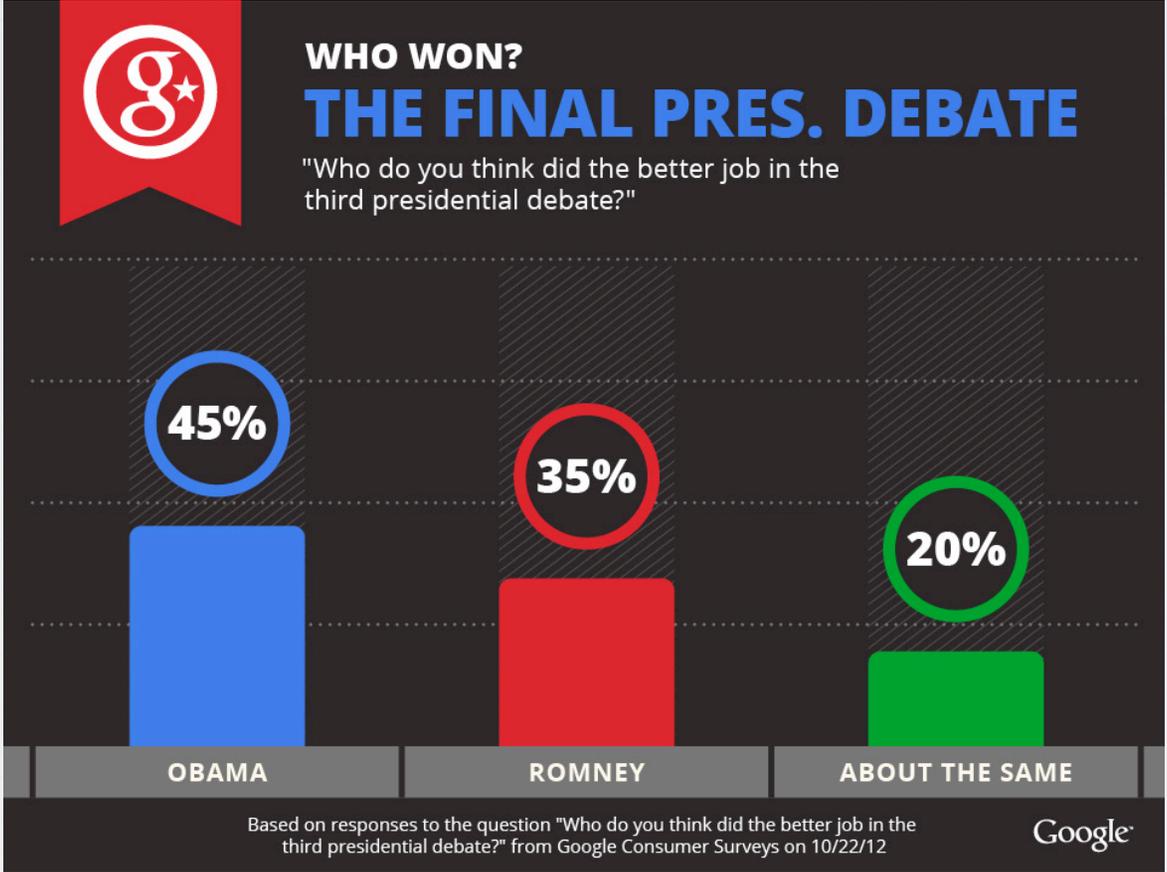
**"Horses and bayonets"** leapt to the top rising related Google Search **with Barack Obama** during the first 50 minutes of the debate.

#googlepolitics

Based on Google Search data on 10/22/2012

Google

(EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE THE DATA)



# WHAT WE SEEK

- To **lead** through these changes, not merely respond
- To **partner** inside and outside the academy
- To **focus** on innovation and best practices
- To **craft the future** of technology and journalism with the audience at the center ... recognizing that the center is increasingly **on the move**

# COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

## **Inputs**

Cross-functional teams of journalists, computer scientists, and industry advisers

### **Journalists' strengths**

- Editorial judgment
- Narrative design
- Understanding of audience

### **Technologists' strengths**

- Feasibility judgment
- System design

## **Results**

Through collaboration, increased knowledge of both disciplines and their impact; a common language of understanding; and scalable innovation

# THOUGHT LEADERSHIP NEEDED

Audiences today are being assembled “just in time, in real time, completely divorced from content and context., bought and sold as commodities by companies who often don’t know each other” (Kurt Fliegel, Yahoo!)

Media entities are asking for:

- New ways to solve old problems
- Any way to solve new problems
- New products to serve old markets better
- New products to serve emerging markets for the first time
- Tools to improve or re-invent products
- Tools to improve, or eliminate, processes
- Ideas for increasing revenue

# AND THUS THE KNIGHT LAB

- Charged with transforming the way news is
  - Discovered
  - Analyzed
  - Delivered / distributed
- Focus on smart, practical, scalable technology innovation
- Deployment through a broad spectrum of media partners as well as Lab sites



# PARTNER EXAMPLES

- Newspapers: Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Daily Herald, Northwest Herald
- Public radio: Chicago Public Media
- Magazines: Crain's Chicago Business
- Nonprofit startups: (the late lamented) Chicago News Cooperative
- Others: Chicago Reporter, Evanston Now,, many others

# LOCAL ELECTIONS EXAMPLE

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the website [www.congressionalprimaries.org/race/8/D](http://www.congressionalprimaries.org/race/8/D). The page title is "Illinois 8th District Democrats | Illinois Congressional Primaries 2012". The website features a blue header with the logo "CongressionalPrimaries.org" and the tagline "Helping you dig into Illinois' 2012 elections". A "BETA" badge is visible next to the logo. The Knight News Innovation Lab logo from Northwestern University is in the top right corner. Navigation tabs include "Races", "Candidates", "Blog", and "About the Project".

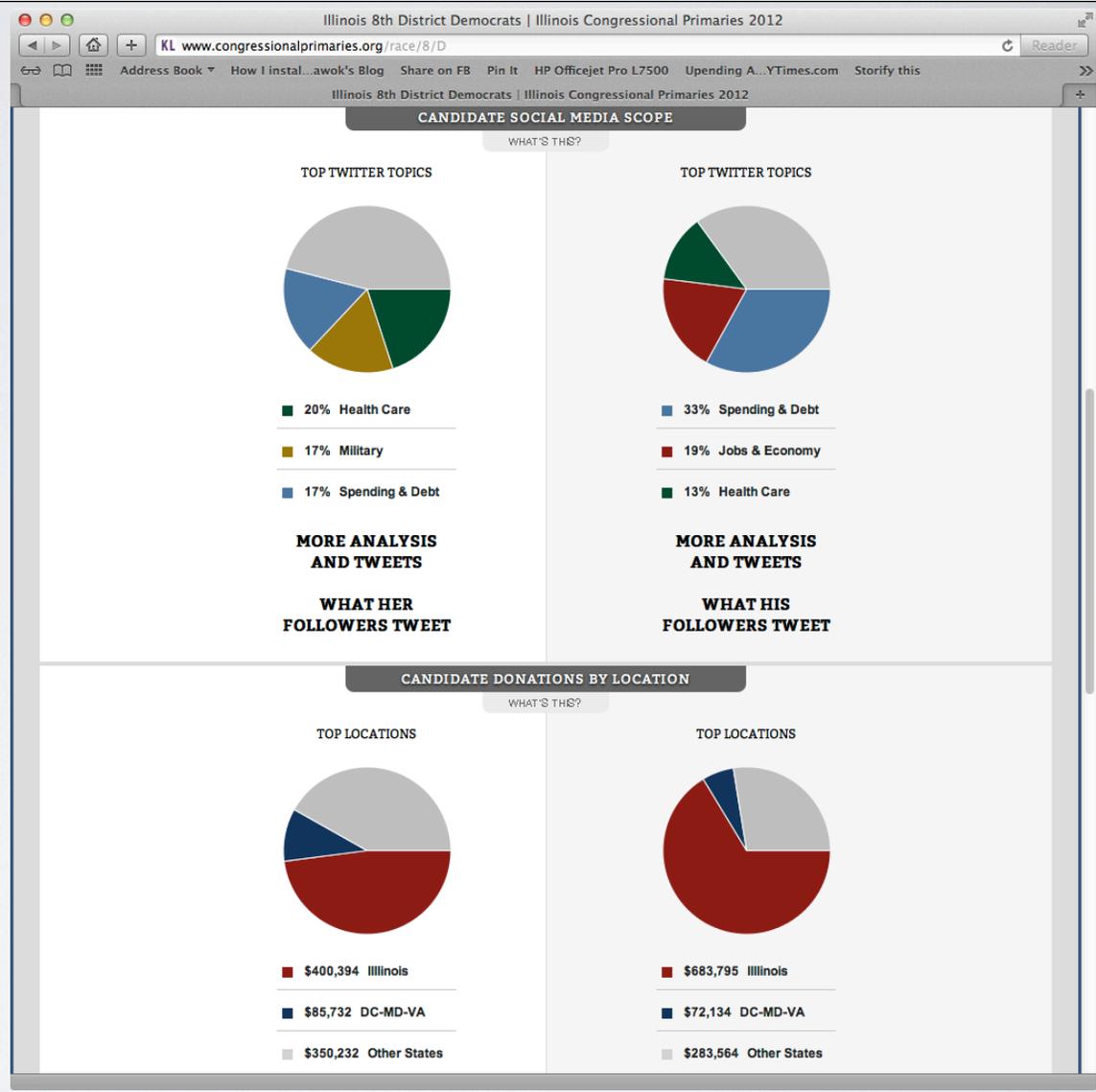
Below the navigation, there are links for "DEMOCRATIC DISTRICT" and "REPUBLICAN DISTRICT", each with a list of districts from 1st to 18th. The "8th" district is highlighted. The breadcrumb trail reads "Illinois > 8th District > Democrats".

The main content area is titled "CANDIDATE PROFILES" and includes a "WHAT'S THIS?" link. It displays two candidate profiles side-by-side:

- TAMMY DUCKWORTH**  
Duckworth's Website  
Facebook: **Duckworth's page** 11142 Facebook likes  
Twitter: **@Tammy4Congress** 5343 Twitter followers  
**FULL PROFILE**
- RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY**  
Krishnamoorthi's Website  
Facebook: **Krishnamoorthi's page** 2352 Facebook likes  
Twitter: **@RajaforCongress** 1000 Twitter followers  
**FULL PROFILE**

At the bottom, there is a section titled "CANDIDATE SOCIAL MEDIA SCOPE" with a "WHAT'S THIS?" link and two columns for "TOP TWITTER TOPICS".

# LOCAL ELECTIONS EXAMPLE



# CURRENT TASK LIST

- Develop a pipeline of innovative software that publishers are eager to adopt, but were unlikely to have conceptualized or developed on their own
- Foster a community of news software innovators
- As appropriate, create opportunities for commercial technology transfer while supporting Northwestern's profile in the Chicago tech community
- Empower citizens with more information, better tailored to their needs and interests

# DISCUSSION

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