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Building Trust - From Television to the Internet:
Crowds, Trust, and Digital Engagement

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Abstract

Building Trust - From Television to the Internet:
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In the late 1960s, American democracy entered a crisis of trust and declining civic engagement. Policy makers interested in rebuilding trust with the people have often resorted to new communication technologies, but the impact of these technologies is sometimes unclear. The research presented here found that the impact of novel communication technologies is sometimes over-rated and that too much significance has been placed on leadership charisma. Sound strategic and tactical plans are critical to a successful outcome of any trust building activity, as trust is not necessarily created and sustained through the same means. Second, such plans must regularly be revised, and require competent expert support to execute strategic goals. This work concludes that – at all levels of public leadership – a change in thinking about digital technology is required, and that such technologies should be approached as opportunities rather than threats. Such an approach helps identify and deploy creative solutions, and speaks to younger generations who are more likely to embrace new technologies.

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Section 1: Introduction & The Public Policy Problem

The accepted model of participatory, representative democracy has recently entered a crisis of trust. Academics and policymakers had noted the decline in social capital since the 1970s when American society was rocked by a series of political scandals. The lost trust has not been regained, and public involvement in civic activity has been steadily declining. This is especially true with youth as traditional civic engagement with 18 to 29-year olds is at historic lows (Smith 2013). However, there is one area where this trend is reversed: millennial and post-millennial generations are more civically active online and are more likely to use digital tools to build social networks and to seek information (Smith 2013).

This shift to a digital society poses challenges and opportunities for policymakers. On the one hand, some policymakers and academics have pointed to the potential negative effects of a digital society, partly blaming it for declines in trust and civic engagement (Penard & Pausing 2006). Others, who have great faith in technology, have been eager to exploit the emerging medium of the Internet as a means of addressing social problems (Wallman et al. 2001). The reality is likely somewhere in between; technology is not a panacea for the challenges facing modern democracies nor is it a force of social degeneration. Communication technology is a tool, and the efficacy of its application to a problem depends greatly on how it is applied.

Understanding the "how" can create powerful outcomes with new technology. This was demonstrated in the 1960 presidential election by Senator Kennedy and later by his administration in the White House. The successful use of television not only helped Kennedy during the election process but also played a role in winning public support for various programs from the creation of the Peace Corps to the extensive - and expansive - space exploration program carried out by NASA. The use of television to build trust with the public by Kennedy was not an accident, but part of a carefully planned and executed strategy which yielded tangible results. The internet presents similar opportunities for policymakers and was successfully applied by President Obama's election teams in the 2008 and 2012 elections. The ability to organize and communicate with volunteers online allowed President Obama's team to reach out to followers at a lower cost and faster pace than traditional means. The impact of this social media strategy

paid large dividends with some commentators attributing some of his election victories to this strategy (Dillon 2012).

The impact of social media has been extensively studied, but it is only one of many available digital tools. One of these tools, which is not yet well understood in the context of trust building, is the concept of crowdsourcing: the process of obtaining ideas and resources from groups of people for a common goal through communities typically outside of the traditional employee-employer relationship. An example of crowdsourcing includes crowdfunding – the raising of funds through crowds – and include popular platforms like *Kickstarter* and *GoFundMe*. Other, non-financial focused tools, try to leverage crowds to solve problems or develop products. The statistical program "R" and *Wikipedia* are examples of products developed by crowds. There have been few successful implementations of crowdsourcing in policy, but there are some notable successes in politics including President Obama's first presidential campaign. While a presidential race can demonstrate how crowdsourced resources can be applied toward a political goal, it would be a mistake to link a campaign success only to crowdsourcing. There are many variables involved in a voting decision and linking the outcome solely (or primarily) to a single medium of communication can be misleading.

There are, however, some successful examples of the application of crowdsourcing in the private sector especially with companies with a naturally strong digital presence. An example is Cloud Imperium Games (CIG), a company designing a new video game called *Star Citizen*. CIG's complete project, was designed from conception as a community-driven effort where future customers are transformed into current stakeholders. One reason for this deliberate approach was to overcome the challenges of independent game development (including funding and marketing) by relying on crowdsourcing. This strategy required significant, long-term support from backers (supporters who have given time and/or money to the project). Cloud Imperium Games' extremely effective use of crowdsourcing to translate networks into trust - an indicator of social capital - could offer useful lessons for the public sector, especially in the strategic use of celebrity and stakeholder empowerment through different stages of a project.

The application of crowdsourcing in the policy area, beyond political campaigns, is not easy and cannot simply be copied wholesale from the private sector. However, some public organizations are experimenting with crowdsourcing to build and sustain trust with their communities. The City of Austin has explored using a platform *CivicSourcing*, a virtual portal for crowdsourcing networks to share ideas, organize action and communicate concerns directly to policymakers. The goal of such projects is to build networks to create and sustain trust which can increase civic engagement. There have been other experiments with crowdsourcing in the public space and there is still some debate whether it is a fad or if it presents a true change in the way leaders and followers interact (Taeihagh 2017). In this project I will argue that new technologies can be used to address public trust, and present a case study, with a theoretical explanation, of how crowdsourcing can be used to build trust.

The Public Policy Problem

Participatory democratic theory tells us that civic participation is critical for a healthy democratic society (de Tocqueville 1835, Dewey 1927). It is therefore alarming that the past four decades have seen a decline in political participation in the United States and other developed democracies (Albrasom & Aldricht 1987, Putmam 1995, Putnam 2001, Ferrini 2012). The very nature of our social contract is under strain: trust in public leadership steadily eroded – and with this erosion, we see a decline in civic participation. Participation in various civic activities has even been declining in Central and Eastern European countries where populations were eager for greater civic involvement and freedom of choice after decades under Communist rule (Fidrmuc & Gerxhani 2007). As public trust in government decreased so has the number of civically engaged citizens, increasing the distance between the public and their government. This phenomenon is at odds with the principles of modern, participatory democracy.

Declining Trust in Government

In 1958, when the Pew Research Center began tracking public trust in government, more than 70% of Americans trusted their government. This trust was seriously eroded in the 1970s, and it

has been steadily declining since.[1] Today, only about a fifth of the American public trust their government (PEW 2017). This distrust has created a widening gap between leaders and the general public. The approval ratings of executive and legislative bodies have continued a downward trend, leaving policymakers looking for new ways to connect to the public, rebuild trust and stimulate civic engagement in their policy agenda.

Some policymakers have turned to digital technology for solutions to this problem. This is a "natural" choice as digital technology is pervasive in everyday life. All spheres of modern life have been profoundly impacted by digital technology, specifically by mobile communications and the internet. President Obama highlighted the importance of digital technology in the economy, national security, and government accountability in his first term in the White House (The White House web). In an era of near-constant wireless connectivity with decreasing barriers to entry (Gallup 2013) many of our interactions have moved from the physical world to the virtual one. Popular media is full of spectacular technological successes from social media billionaires to medical breakthroughs. While such examples highlight the potential of technology, they also foster the false impression that technology is the panacea to all modern social problems from unemployment to declining civic participation.

However, there are historical precedents for the use of technology to bridge the gap between policymakers and the public. Television presented several unique opportunities in the 1960s not only to reach out to the public through informative programming but also to directly appeal to the public for a civic or political cause. The 1960 presidential debates between Kennedy and Nixon were a clear demonstration of the potential power of new communication technologies. Kennedy's political advisors understood that television represented a unique opportunity to enter the households of millions, not only through written or spoken words, but for the first time as a "virtual" person.[2] This new medium proved very successful in building networks and creating trust, although not necessarily for the reasons highlighted by popular culture (as discussed in Paper 3). It was the importance of this final point that Nixon's team did not fully understand at

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[1] There was a slight spike following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, but the downward trend continued after the shock of the attacks began to wane.

[2] Kennedy's support of the television as a policy tool is not surprising as he grew up during the era of the President Roosevelt's radio "Fireside Chats."

the first debate: it was no longer sufficient to have a relatable message, but it now had to be complemented with a carefully managed performance to build trust.

Television and the Internet may share some similarities, but they are inherently very different mediums of communication. First, television, much like the printed book and radio before it, are examples of one-way communication mediums. This is not necessarily the case with the internet where instantaneous two-way communication is often possible. Second, a message transmitted by television takes times to modify and produce, while on the internet such barriers are significantly lower primarily due to the accessibility of self-publishing tools. Setting up a web page is easier than ever due to user-friendly and hosting costs can be as low as $10 a year (WhoIsHostingThis 2014) while social media accounts are generally free. Third, when combined with mobile communication technology, information can be accessed and retrieved almost anywhere and at any time. These differences make the internet a much more interactive technology with unique opportunities for discourse.

Despite such differences, there are important lessons from the application of new information technologies which do carry over from television to the internet. For example, as a technology is exploited by one successful candidate, it can no longer be ignored by others. Learning from the Kennedy-Nixon debates, future candidates placed much more consideration into their use of television to build networks and trust with the public. In fact, in the first televised debates, Kennedy only won the first televised debate as Nixon, and his team was quick to address their failings (see Paper 3).

We have witnessed a similar process with the Internet. President Obama's first presidential campaign skillfully used the internet to reach out to voters and raise funds, setting a new precedent for the use of the internet and mobile communications. For example, a Pew study found that one positive outcome for then-Senator Obama was a 10% higher likelihood of online activism than for Senator McCain (Smith 2009). What the Kennedy and Obama campaigns demonstrated is that it is possible to use an emerging medium to build networks and trust between policymakers and the public with tangible results *if* it is strategically planned and well executed. As with television, later candidates learned from experience to harness the internet

during the election process (Lilleker & Jackson 2011). This has been especially true of public officials reaching out to younger constituents (Herrnson et al. 2007).

Technology, however, is not the proverbial silver bullet. It cannot be, because technology is a tool and a tool's usefulness is often determined by its application. Television may have played a role in Kennedy's election and promotion of social programs, but it undermined public trust through visceral images of the Vietnam War (Lowe 2011). Likewise, the internet can be a useful tool in building trust, but only if it is strategically applied and implemented, and this may require a new way of thinking about technology (Zavestoski et al. 2006).

To harness the power of the internet efficiently and equitably address the problems with trust we must first understand how technology facilitates interaction within society to build trust. While there have been several good studies exploring the role of social media in a variety of social causes, we have yet to explore the nature of trust in digital society fully. It is not clear how digital social capital is created and sustained through networks, nor how or if it can be translated to practical applications outside of the digital world. The factors that drive participation in digital initiatives, and the trust these initiatives generate, are still poorly understood. We do have evidence, however, that the internet is becoming more "normalized as it is incorporated" into daily life and that it has effects on networks and trust (Wellman et al. 2001).

Digital Society: Challenges & Opportunities
The declines in civic engagement indices cannot be attributed solely to political scandal. Technology, education, world events and even the weather can play a role in our ability and willingness to civically engage (Pateman 1970) - there is an intrinsic link between our political and social lives. In fact, in a democracy, it might not be possible to untangle the political and apolitical completely. Franklin D. Roosevelt summed up the modern American social contract by reminding us that: "[the] government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country" (Roosevelt 1938).

This is one of the keys to participatory democratic theory: it is not possible to completely separate the political and the apolitical. Therefore the health of one is related to other (Dewey 1927). In other words, the participation of citizens in civic activity is a necessary condition for a healthy democratic system. If this is the case, then declining public trust in the American government should be mirrored in society in general. We would expect to see less trust in all areas of the social contract, not just the political process.

It was within this context that academics began to ask questions about the overall health of society. The modern manifestation of this is Robert Putnam's book *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* in which he set to define, identify and measure social capital. Putnam observed that it was not only political "tragedies and scandals" which led to a decrease in civic engagement, but also a set of social trends which, when combined with political issues, lead to erosion of trust. For example, the increased popularity of television can undermine social networks through declining interpersonal interaction. This negative impact on social capital was one of the culprits Putnam and others initially identified for deteriorating trust (Putnam 1995, Quan-Hasse & Wellman 2002).

As with television in the last century, some concerns exist regarding the application of the internet: its social effects are not yet well understood, nor are they uniform for all users (Shah et al. 2001). There were some who feared that television would destroy modern society and today there are severe critics of the internet and the emerging digital society (Olken 2009). Putnam observed and wrote about technological influences in much of his work pointing to television and video games to make his analogy to "bowling alone." Putnam argues that bowling leagues, a social event, were replaced by solitary activity (Putnam 1995). He is not the first the raise the question of a new communication medium's influence on trust and his criticism is not unique. In their study of the effect of radio on society, Lynd & Lynd pointed to a decline in social capital due to radio in the 1920s (Lynd & Lynd 1929), raising similar criticism to those Putnam and others later brought against television and the internet (*People* 1981). Despite these concerns, there is little to suggest that radio initiatives – such as President Roosevelt's "fireside chats" – undermined trust; rather, they promoted transparency and increased public trust (Ryfe 1999).

The role of the internet in the creation, sustaining or erosion of trust is poorly understood. In an increasingly digital society where constant connectivity is the norm, it is no surprise that policymakers turn to technology to (re)build social capital with the public (Feeney 2014). For example, the use of social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to build trust has significantly increased in the past decade, not always with successful outcomes (Oliveira & Welch 2013). Few of these initiatives succeed, even in regions synonymous with a technologically minded populace. The City of Austin, for example, has been keen to exploit the power of the internet to reach out to the public and build social capital with the hope of increasing civic participation. Austin attempted this with the *SpeakUpAustin* initiative. The idea behind the venture was simple: build a portal through which the city's policymakers and the public can communicate, discuss and create & share policy ideas (Speakupasutin!). The results have not been promising: participation is low and the discussion often unhelpful (Why Bother? 2014).

The City of Austin is not alone in this struggle. Policymakers across the United States, and much of the world are attempting to use the internet to build trust. From the current range of academic work, it is not clear how the internet affects trust and civic engagement, and there are competing theories which guide policy efforts. A great deal of research to-date has focused on social media, which is a significant social force. However social media has had limited success in building a bridge between policymakers and the public. For example, it is not clear to what extent a Facebook or Twitter presence builds trust or creates an impetus for action (Saeri et al. 2014). I propose to turn to a different kind of technology: crowdsourcing. While there are few examples of crowdsourcing initiatives in the public sector outside of election campaigns, there are plenty in the private sector, especially the growing digital economy (Cancialosi 2015). I will examine one such project in detail (Paper 2) and make recommendations, not only regarding their applications in the public space but also in the way such tools can change the way we think about trust and engagement. Finally, I will conclude with recommendations on how to think differently about digital technology and the generation which has embraced it, and the benefits of approaching digital society in general as an opportunity.

Paper 1: Behind the Scenes: The Making of the Television Presidency

In the 1950s there was considerable excitement about television. This "Golden Age" of the medium saw television penetrate deeper into society both as an art form and as a means of communication (Press 2009; Reifova 2008). Through movies, television shows, animated series and news programming television gained popularity, and when coupled with falling prices (Early Television Foundation 2013, TVHistory 2013), the television set slowly became a part of modern households. Television personalities became stars and television slowly eclipsed the radio, leading to massive growth of the major television studios (Morton 1999).

However, not everyone saw television as a positive social force. In the 1950s there were fears that television would displace the newspaper with sensationalism instead of news. There were also concerns about the long-term effects of television similar to the fears raised by the popularity of the radio in the 1920s (Hooghe & Oser, 2015). The long-term effects of television on social capital and as a means of building trust was tackled as late as the 1990s by Robert Putnam who placed part of the blame for America's declining social capital on television and blamed the declines in civic engagement on the medium (Putnam 1995, Brehm and Rhan 1995). Specifically, there was a fear that television viewing would decrease the need for human interaction thereby eroding social trust (Putnam 1995).

These fears do not acknowledge perhaps the most significant successes of television to create trust and civic engagement. In 1960, during the first televised presidential debate, the then Senator Kennedy was able to use television to build a substantial connection with the American public. The first televised debate was generally regarded as one-sided which gave Kennedy an edge over Nixon in the election (Druckman 2003). The election was only the beginning for the Kennedy administration as they strategically used television to introduce the American public to the White House and presidential life in ways not done before. From Jacqueline Kennedy's televised White House tours to lengthy presidential press conferences, the Kennedy administration reached out to the public through this new medium in unprecedented ways. This use of this new medium was deliberate as Kennedy understood the potential of television broadcasts to build trust. In a 1959 essay for the *Reader's Digest* Kennedy wrote:

*Nothing compares to the revolutionary impact of the television... The
slick or bombastic orator, pounding the table and ringing the rafters, is
not as welcome in the family living room as he was in the town square or
party hail. In the old days, many a seasoned politician counted among his
most highly developed and useful talents his ability to dodge a reporter's
question, evade a "hot" Issue and avoid a definite stand. But today a vast
viewing public is able to detect such deception and, in my opinion,
willing to respect political honesty. (Kennedy 1959).*

The Kennedy administration understood the opportunity television presented to policymakers to change the political landscape in America. They demonstrated that a new communications medium can be used effectively to build trust and encourage civic activity if it is systematically and strategically integrated into the policy-making process. Academics have overlooked the role which careful strategic planning and execution played in the trust-building process in favor of Kennedy's charisma and oratory skills (Selverstone). Particularly, the role of Kennedy's communication adviser and press secretary, Pierre Salinger, has not been studied in significant detail. In the first paper, I examine the role Salinger and his team played in crafting the strategic and tactical implementation of television, how they overcame doubts about television's role as a new element of the fourth estate and the role Salinger's strategic approach played in creating the "television presidency." I will argue that the "television presidency" was not an accidental outcome and that Kennedy's much-vaunted success with television was not only due to his personal charm but largely an outcome of a careful strategic planning and careful execution.

*Paper 2: The Role of Source Credibility and Self-Determination in Digital Crowdsourcing:
A Case Study of Cloud Imperium Games' Star Citizen Project*
There exists some research on the use of the internet as a tool to build trust with, but it is not yet a well-understood phenomenon. This lack of understanding is one major reason why many internet initiatives fail. For example, Gartner estimates that over 80% of all gamification efforts (the use of digital games to solve non-game problems) will fail because the social impacts are "poorly understood" (Gartner 2012). Research has also found that most online petitions fail (Graham & Dutton 2014) and that most internet campaigns fail to get any viral spread (Goel et al

2012). Despite the poor track record of digital technology-inspired attempts to build networks and trust, there have been some successful private sector initiatives. These demonstrate that through careful planning and skillful application of technology, digital tools can build trust between an organization and its stakeholders. This has been especially true with the video game industry which has pioneered the development of new internet-based business thinking from free-to-play models with embedded microtransactions to crowdfunding campaigns (Kong & Theodore 2011).

The idea of these initiatives is simple: offer a free product and find ways to keep the customer engaged so that they will be more likely to purchase digital goods through microtransactions.[3] This kind of business model can only be sustainable if customers are convinced to stay with the company and their product, which requires a sustained degree of trust (wrapped up in the concept of "customer retention"). While many companies have tried such funding models, most have failed (Crowdfunding Academy 2014). Nevertheless, there have been some successes with well over 1000 projects reaching their *Kickstarter* financial targets (Kickstarter 2015). In the second paper I examine the means which Cloud Imperium Games used to build and sustain trust using a digital medium.[4]

Cloud Imperium Games (CIG) is developing a game called *Star Citizen* with a unique approach: constantly connect with their future customers during the product design process. For example, backers are continually engaged and asked to participate not only in funding but in actual product development, story ideas, content moderation, community management and even design of virtual "spaceships" which will be featured in the game. The company has built a substantial amount of trust with stakeholders and raised well over $150 million from over a million people – all for a product which does not yet exist and will likely not be available for some time (Kickstarter 2016, *The Economist* 2015, Robert Space Industries 2016). Cloud Imperium Games' novel approach to their project is to view their customers as stakeholders (the "citizen" in the name was deliberate) with whom the company is building social capital to generate and sustain trust.

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[4] As measured by amount of money raised and number of supporters.

In this paper, I will argue that of Cloud Imperium Games' experience with crowdsourcing can provide valuable lessons on how trust can be built through digital initiatives. My findings suggest there is a different explanation for the generation of trust (through the mechanisms of *source credibility theory*) and the long-term sustaining of this trust (as explained by the *self-determination theory*). These findings suggest that personal charisma and expertise are not sufficient to maintain trust in the long run. I will conclude that CIG's successful use of digital technology has much to with careful strategic planning, creative thinking and execution, just as was the case with the Kennedy Administration and television more than 50 years prior.

Paper 3: Revisiting the First Presidential Debate: Messengers, Messages and Media
It is not yet clear to what extent a digital communication medium, such as the Internet, is different from television or radio. The role of the messenger and their message is an important element of building trust, but there is not a yet a consensus on how those compare across mediums. The popular explanation of the first televised presidential debate is that the medium (television) had a significant impact and that it helped Kennedy beat Nixon (Druckamn 2003). However, there is empirical evidence which suggests that it was not Kennedy's charisma on television which helped him win the debate, but rather the strategic choice of debated topics and better preparation for the debate. In this paper I find that television and radio both have similar results: Kennedy likely won with both audiences.

For policymakers today, however, the question is not only about the role of print, television, and radio but also digital communication. There is not yet a consensus in which ways - and to what extent - the digital medium differs from television or radio as a tool to build trust (Mitchell et al. 2016). While the Internet does offer a unique ability for instantaneous interaction between users, most people do not choose to directly interact with authors of blogs, forums or social media messages (Gabielkov et al. 2016). In fact, most people only read the headlines of an article or post, and do not actually read the entire work irrespective of the medium (American Press 2014). It is simply not clear to what extent or under which circumstances information is consumed differently online in a digital setting from conventional television or radio; the evidence suggests that most people similarly approach all mediums.

However, potential differences between mediums – regarding trust generation - is critical information for policymakers, since conveying a message in the right manner and to the right audience is required. Commentators often point to the 1960 election as a case-in-point, since the popular interpretation is that television heavily influenced the outcome. This argument suggests that Kennedy's physical charisma allowed him to fundamentally change the discussion into one where style is more important than substance (Schudson 1995, Self 2005). If Kennedy was able to use the visual element of television in such a way, then it might possible to use the direct communication and interactivity of digital tools to reshape the discussion into a different form: one where personal style and substance are relegated in favor of flashy graphics and virtual reality.

In this paper I tested for such medium effects by revisiting the Kennedy-Nixon debates. Using a random experiment and the first televised debate, I find that the choice of medium - television, radio or digital forums - does *not* explain the variation in trust between Kennedy and Nixon. As a handful of scholars have pointed out: the conclusions from the first televised debate - primarily that Kennedy won with television audience and Nixon with radio - is *not* correct (Vancil & Pendell 1987, Bruschke & Divine 2017). Poor methodology and lack of control for important variables such as party affiliation explain these differences. In this paper I will suggest that party affiliation, not the choice of medium, is a better predictor of trust in political candidates and offer new arguments why the impact of television has likely been misinterpreted.

Introductory Conclusions

In an era where trust in government and politicians is at historic lows, and where social media seems to have exacerbated, rather than helped address, issues of trust, it is easy to become skeptical both in the digital tools which have become such significant parts of our lives and the political process and its participants. However, the Internet and the digital tools it offers can be used to build trust, much like television was used by Kennedy to reach out to the American public. The Internet, like any technology, is merely a tool and the effect it will have on the world will depend on how we apply it. As with any new technology, there will be difficulties and early attempts might be prone to mistakes and ultimately embarrassing failures. From social media

scandals and frequent failures of digital campaigns, organizations are learning from their mistakes, and youth who grew up with these technologies are more likely to use them effectively.

Researchers have found that this group of Internet-savvy citizens are more proficient with digital tools not only due to familiarity with this technology but because this technology is also shaping their brain chemistry in ways that can lead to more efficient use of technologies which inherently support multi-tasking (Yuan et al 2011). This feedback loop is not necessarily negative as such expertise can lead to a better application of digital technology, a view held by most Americans (Anderson & Rainie 2012). While much of this learning has come from practical experience in the field, our theoretical explanation of how trust is built and sustained has lagged. A better understanding through rigorous empirical methods can help fine-tune digital initiatives used to build or sustain trust, and this study found several important lessons which can be useful to any leader or organization whose goals include or require trust.

The *summa* of all three papers has several important findings and implications for building trust using novel technologies. First, there has been a significant overemphasis on the role of the medium in building trust. In the first paper I find that there was considerable effort placed on strategic and tactical considerations in the use of television by Kennedy and his team, both before and during his time in the White House. From careful event planning and exposure timing to the choice of movie reels and recruitment of top television talent, Kennedy's successful use of television was not accidental nor purely the result Kennedy's charisma. It took considerable planning and preparation, and every appearance – inside and outside the White House – was carefully executed to present Kennedy and his policies in the best possible light. In the center, behind the curtains, was Kennedy's press secretary, Pierre Salinger, who was heavily involved in the strategic discussions regarding media appearances.

Like Kennedy, Salinger understood the potential power of television as a medium but also understood its limitations. The television set would not necessarily give the advantage to the best looking or the smartest suit: rather, like any medium, it required careful orchestration and preparation for those qualities to shine and at the same time not impede Kennedy's ability to

deliver his message effectively. The message, as I will argue in the third paper, was critical for Kennedy's success and continues to be so for leaders today. Salinger also had a keen understanding of the limitations of his immediate team and helped bring marketing and television experts from both Hollywood and Madison Avenue. These experts would help create a strategy which could be consistently applied and helped create a sense of transparency during the Kennedy Administration – sometimes to the frustration of the White House. Despite some setbacks, Kennedy did not significantly deviate from the strategies devised by Salinger and his team, and he continued to expand the role of television in his Presidency, with the goal to foster a relationship with viewers and improve his ability to deliver policy messages.

The second finding from the papers presented in this dissertation is that there is that there may be differences in how trust is won and sustained at the initial phase of a project and later stages. Specifically, I will conclude that celebrity status can be used to create initial interest (if the celebrities are deemed trustworthy), but that a sustained initiative which empowers followers is key for long-term trust and engagement. In all manner of promotional events, there is often heavy reliance on celebrities as their association with a product or cause can generate interest (Wheeler 2009). However, this trust is not necessarily sustainable, and there is some evidence that user-generated material (such as testimonials on social media) have a stronger effect than traditional celebrity-centered campaigns (Lee et al 2016). In other words, when the current or future stakeholders are involved in product or initiative development, they are more likely to generate trust for themselves and others. While the effects of digital crowds on trust generation is still understudied, I will argue that there is some evidence that while celebrity can be a powerful "hook" to garner initial trust, it is not sufficient to sustain trust. Under the right circumstances with strategically planned and executed empowerment, the crowd itself can be a powerful tool to support project development and build trust within a community. As increasing numbers of leaders and organizations turn to digital tools for outreach, this finding is encouraging as it provides a potential blueprint for digital trust and engagement: use celebrity to build connections and interest and use empowerment to sustain trust and engagement.

The third major finding from this work is that the messenger, the message and the medium, all matter, but in different ways and to different degrees. The application of television during the

first televised presidential debates left many commentators with the impression that television was responsible for Kennedy's election victory and ushered an era where "style trumps substance" (Schudson 1995, Self 2005). However, this interpretation is primarily based on a poll which relied on questionable methodology and a handful of anecdotal stories. As explained in the final paper, this conclusion could lead to too much trust in new media technologies and overlook the importance of the message. The reality is that all three - the messaging, the message and the medium - play an important role in trust building, but for different reasons. The messenger is important for building initial trust (as discussed in paper 2), but the long-term support will depend on the message as party or political affiliation is a much better predictor of trust in the long-run. I found that conservatives will favor Republican messengers, and liberals will favor Democratic messengers. This is probably the case as the message is more likely to conform to an individual's established worldview. The medium's role in this process is as a mechanism to target an audience. If a leader's goal is to target rural and older voters, then using the radio, for example, will yield better results than using the using the newest, viral social media tools. This is important because different messengers, even within the same political party, could appeal to a different audience and the same is often true of their message.

Policy Implications

The outcome of all three papers have several implications for policymakers whose goal is to increase trust in government and the political process. The most important is that a new communications medium, despite its potential novelty and early adoption by youth or celebrities, is not necessarily the most efficient or effective tool for building trust. Overreliance on technology can lead to overestimating its benefits leaving leaders blind to some of its challenges and complexities (Cheshire 2011). This can create serious issues as illustrated by the interference of third-party actors in the 2016 US election on social media platforms - a danger which even the creators of these tools underestimated. However, with a proper understanding of new technology, it is possible to use them as a strength to gain an advantage over competitors. This was well demonstrated by President Kennedy and his team who built a careful set of strategies around the implementation of television in their trust-building process. The success of Kennedy, Salinger and their teams is a clear indication of how powerful a novel communications technology can be *if* its complexities are carefully considered, and a real strategy is developed for various tactical

implementations. We saw a similar outcome in the 2008 and 2012 elections, where Obama and his team carefully used the internet to manage a grassroots campaign at a significantly lower cost and more effective outreach.

The success of Kennedy's White House team, especially Salinger and his staff, in applying television as a tool to reach out to voters is a largely due to careful planning and strategic thought. It was not Kennedy's *coup d'oeil* that led to the successful implementation of the television in the political process, but rather meticulous research and execution. The same is true of any of the communication tools available via the Internet: the ability to use a tool effectively is not the same as applying it, and experience with tactical execution could require a revaluation of strategy. Just as Kennedy's team carefully considered the pro's and con's of television in the White House, and adapted their strategy as the complexity of live, video communication was discovered, leaders today must do the same with social media, blogs, or online videos. In other words: a strategy cannot be rigid and must be built on a philosophy "that contains the seeds of its constant rejuvenation.... in an unstable environment" (Clausewitz 1832).

To achieve such flexibility a policymaker will need the right people since the messenger alone is not sufficient to sustain trust. Just as the medium must be well understood, so too must the message. Different stakeholders are likely not only to have a preferred medium for news consumption but also a preferred level and means of engagement. Policymakers whose aim is to build trust with a diverse group of stakeholders must identify their followers' preferred method of involvement and the degree to which they wish to be engaged on a particular topic. Followers who feel empowered because their ideas are heard and who are given the ability to apply their natural strengths to the policymakers' cause will be much more likely to remain engaged and retain a higher degree of trust. They are also more likely to feel a personal stake in the policymaker's agenda which can help win dedicated champions more likely to promote the agenda within their social circles. This is important because many of the new digital tools rely on the power of crowds where word-of-mouth and personal support carries a great deal more trust than official advertisements, speeches or announcements (Powell et al. 2017). The most powerful messages to followers are therefore those in which they, or their peers, have the ability to influence the decision-making process.

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Section 2: Behind the Scenes: The Making of the Television Presidency

> *The wonders of science and technology have revolutionized the modern American political campaign. Giant electronic brains project results on the basis of carefully conducted polls. Automatic typewriters prepare thousands of personally addressed letters, individually signed by automatic pens. Jet planes make possible a coast-to-coast speaking schedule no observation-car back platform could ever meet...*

> *But nothing compares with the revolutionary impact of television. TV has altered drastically the nature of our political campaigns, conventions, constituents, candidates and costs. Some politicians regard it with suspicion, others with pleasure. Some candidates have benefited by using it-others have been advised to avoid it. To the voter and vote-getter alike, TV offers new opportunities, new challenges and new problems.*
> (Kennedy 1959)

Modern communication technology is fundamentally changing the relationship between policymakers and the public. While the Internet is different from television in important ways - it is a two-way medium with very lower barriers to entry - it finds itself in a similar situation as the television did in the 1950s and 1960s. It is not yet clear if the sum influence of the Internet will play a mostly positive or negative role in the relationship between the government and the people, but there can be no doubt that it is changing that relationship. The early application of the television, particularly the role of the first "television presidency," can offer some insights into the possible future implications and applications of the Internet in politics. Specifically, it can shed some light on the role that a clear vision, strategic thinking, and tactically acute staff play in the adoption of a novel communication technology. Kennedy's charisma alone did not create the television presidency; rather it was supplemented by tactical applications by his press secretary, Pierre Salinger, and a carefully executed implementation plan.

Much has been written about the role television plays in society and the changes it is driving in our political and economic systems. The medium has developed significantly since its introduction en mass to the public in the early 1950s. Television sets have become cheaper,

lighter, smaller and are more prevalent in American homes today than any other appliance. As television was shaping our world, it has also been shaped by the world. Not only by producers and directors behind the scenes, and actors and news anchors on screen, but also by the very people who consume the information. It influenced generations of leaders and facilitated the introduction of previously unprecedented levels of transparency and familiarity with political processes.

The television did not immediately challenge traditional sources of political news. Over the course of about two decades (1950s and 1960s) the television increasingly complemented the newspaper and radio as a source of news for most Americans. It was during this latter part of this transition that politicians were able to fully exploit the medium in ways that not been possible with the radio or printed news. For the first time, the politician could be *heard and seen* in the American home and build trust in ways that previous generations could not. Arguably, it proved to be a more effective proxy for an actual in-person visit than any combination of newspapers or radio. John F. Kennedy understood that power of the television very early in his political career and his team - under the guidance of Pierre Salinger - would help create the first "television presidency." However, Kennedy was not the first "television candidate," and there can be no doubt that the television appearances of his predecessors influenced he and his team.

A Brief History of Television & Politics Before 1960

Early adoption of the television in politics had a slow start. While Kennedy may have been the first "television president" he was not the first to use the medium for political gain. In fact, it was Harry Truman's team which first experimented with television by broadcasting his nomination (acceptance) speech in 1948 (DNC Archives 1948) some 10 years after the television was first commercially produced in the United States. However, this was not followed by any meaningful television engagement once the administration took office. The television was still too new a medium and its proliferation in households not yet significant enough. In fact, statistics on television ownership and viewing habits were not collected until the 1950s (UNESCO 1963) when the television set become more common in American households.

The early 1950s were still very much the age of the radio and newspaper. It was not until the 1960s that the television began to seriously challenge the dominance of newspapers and radio as a source of news. Such shifts in information consumption preference always take time and attitudes towards the usefulness of such technologies will also evolve (Karahanna et al. 1999, Selamat 2013) and this was no different for television. In the 1950s the television was still viewed as a source of entertainment, and most television news programs were "short... and crudely assembled" (Baughman 1993). Despite making inroads in the 1950s, most American adults at the time were used to reading the news in the newspaper during evenings, but their children were developing different habits (Davies 1998, Doherty 2003).

This habit, or dominance of the newspaper, was finally challenged with the introduction live coverage. In 1952 after the successful broadcast of the Republican convention, Jack Gould, a prominent New York Times television critic commented, "The spectacular medium of TV last week won its spurs as an original and creative reporter willing to stand on its own feet and not be pushed around," Gould wrote. "As such, it is a vital and welcome addition to the ranks of the Fourth Estate" (Gould 1952). More than 100 million watched some part of the Republican and Democratic conventions on television, and it became clear that the public had found an appetite for a new kind of "pictorial journalism" (Mickleson 1956). For the first time in history, the news consumers could get live, unedited coverage with sound and pictures. However, this was still viewed as "novelty" and newspapers remained the primary source of news for most Americans (Baughman 1993).

When Dwight Eisenhower entered the White House, the presidential policymaking was partly revealed to the television watching public through political ads and interviews. President Eisenhower mixed politics and the television for campaign purposes in a way that had not been done before. A series of political advertisements under the catchphrase "I Like Ike" helped secure two landslide victories. These were managed by the watchful eye of the first presidential "media consultants" recruited from the marketing masters at Madison Avenue (Fastenberg 2010). The television was used to reach not only the American audience, but also foreign ones, and Eisenhower actively used it as a foreign policy tool (Stueck 1999). It was during his tenure as president that the television caught up to the radio in what is often called the "Golden Age of

Television." Eisenhower took advantage of this trend with appearances on programs such as *The Ed Sullivan Show* which, while not a news program, was a sign that the radio and newspapers no longer enjoyed a duopoly on presidential reporting (Stanley 2012).

There was one more important change would later be embraced by Kennedy and his press secretary Pierre Salinger: television camera access to the White House. In 1953 Eisenhower had suggested that television be allowed to join the presidential press corps and in 1955 they became a permanent addition. Newspaper editors were quick to condemn the move. The magazine Editor & Publisher commented that this would "disrupt and alter the institution as we know it" (*Editor & Publisher* 1953). In response, some journalists refused to attend conferences and one bragged he had "pulled many plug out of the wall" (*Newseek* 1957). Newspaper publishers, editors, and journalists all understood that competing with this disruptive technology was going to be increasingly challenging as the public's appetite for the new "pictorial journalism" was awakened. The ability to create live broadcasts without delay would cut out the middle-men[5] in publishing and offer a more direct link between policymakers the people; a debate which would be rekindled 50 years later with the diffusion of the Internet and mobile communication technology.

By 1961, when Kennedy took office, television sales had ballooned, and almost 90% of American households had a television set (TV History 2000), and television watching was becoming an American past time.[6] Television news programs were also becoming more complex and well developed. Shows began to feature interviews with political figures, broadcasts of conventions became the norm, and television began to tackle serious issues. Programs like *W5* in Canada and *60 Minutes* in the United States pioneered television investigative journalism and reinforced the notion that television could be a serious medium for news and political commentary (Frum 2000). Kennedy and his team, as I argue in this paper,

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[5] While there still are gate keepers in the television industry, once a live broadcast starts there is room for editing or proofing then with newspapers or magazines.

[6] A good indication of this trend is to look at advertising revenue. In 1949 TV advertising revenues were estimated at $57.8 million but by 1960 this had jumped to an estimated $1.6 billion (Waldman 2011) and are over $70 billion today (Statista 2017).

paid careful attention to these developments and understood that the television could prove to be a valuable tool for John F. Kennedy during his campaign and his time in office.

The Television Candidate

> *The searching eye of the television camera scrutinizes the candidates-and the way they are picked. Party leaders are less willing to run roughshod over the voters' wishes and hand-pick an unknown, unappealing or unpopular in the traditional "smoke-filled room" when millions of voters are watching, comparing and remembering.*

> *The slick or bombastic orator, pounding the table and ringing the rafters, is not as welcome in the family living room as he was in the town square or party hail. In the old days, many a seasoned politician counted among his most highly developed and useful talents his ability to dodge a reporter's question, evade a "hot" Issue and avoid a definite stand. But today a vast viewing public is able to detect such deception and, in my opinion, willing to respect political honesty.* (Kennedy 1959)

President Kennedy understood that television could bring a new kind of transparency to the political process. He also undoubtedly understood that he would need the medium to defeat certain negative stereotypes - his Catholic faith, Irish background, and youth. His election team believed that Kennedy's faith was a "PR problem" and that it could be mitigated through television (Louw 2010). Through carefully crafted television adverts and a 30-minute television discussion with Franklin Roosevelt Jr. this liability was turned into an asset as not voting for an Irish Catholic - on the basis of his ethnicity and faith - was successfully equated with intolerance. This may not be a revolutionary use of the television today, but in 1961 it was a creative application of the new medium. Kennedy himself believed that he was at his strongest when he was on stage and, against the advice of seasoned advisors, commented: "Nobody asked me if I was Catholic when I joined the United States Navy. And nobody asked my brother if he was Catholic or Protestant before he climbed in an American bomber plane to fly his last mission" (Freidenberg 2002).

Richard Nixon also made Kennedy's youth a campaign issue. If elected, Kennedy would become the second youngest president in American history.[7] This was linked to a lack of experience, a fact that Richard Nixon was keen to exploit. In fact, the very first question fielded to Kennedy during the first debate was about his age and lack experience.[8] Kennedy was quick to turn the question around. While defending himself by pointing out that Nixon and himself both "came to Congress together [in] 1946" and retorted by stating that "Mr. Nixon is an effective leader of his party. I hope he would grant me the same" (Kennedy 1960). In a letter to Kennedy after the second debate, Nixon lamented that while they have discussed many issues on television, they have "not been debates but merely interrogations on some of the issue of the day" (Nixon 1960). Nixon, who was keener to focus on issues, did not respond to Kennedy and was unprepared for this kind of personal challenge (Nixon 1978).

It was during these first presidential debates that Kennedy set the tone for what would eventually become the first television presidency.[9] Nixon approached the first debate without much preparation. He was well versed on the issue, but was not prepared for the physical scrutiny television would subject him to. He had been campaigning during the day, had not fully recovered from illness and refused makeup (Nixon 1978). Kennedy, on the other hand, was well rested and had spent the day preparing for the television appearance (Althaus 1988). It is difficult to say with complete certainty to what extent Kennedy's youthful and energetic appearance helped him win the television debate. Polling at the role of the debate was not well developed, and we do not have good surveys at the time. However, a very "limited survey" conducted at the time found that those who listened to the debate on the radio were more likely to say that Nixon won, while those who watched the debates on television were more likely to say that Kennedy won (Kraus 1996).[10]

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[7] At age 43, Kennedy would be only a year older than Theodore Roosevelt, who took office in 1901.

[8] The exact question from Bob Fleming from ABC News was, " Senator, the Vice President in his campaign has said that you were naive and at times immature. He has raised the question of leadership. On this issue, why do you think people should vote for you rather than the Vice President?" (Fleming 1960)

[9] And perhaps the reason why Richard Nixon declined to debate on television again (the next debated did not take place until Ford and Carter).

[10] The full methodology for this survey is not available. What is known is that the sample sizes used are likely not sufficiently large (Blumenthal 2007). However, later experiments with the Kennedy-Nixon debates among young voters in 2000 found similar results. While not definite proof, the evidence does seem to suggest that television images did (and still do) play an important role (Durckman 2003).

Kennedy and his team learned a great deal from these debates, especially from their own mistakes. For example, during the first debate, Kennedy had fielded the first question by Robert Lemming of ABC News on the topic of leadership and maturity - a topic Kennedy was keen to address. Kennedy forgot to move to the podium and began answering in his seat, prompting an exchange of glances between Howard Smith (the moderator) and Richard Nixon. Ironically, it is Nixon who motions to Smith that Kennedy should be standing who then interrupts Kennedy and asks him to move to the podium where the cameras could get a better close-up image (see the JFK Digital Archives, Nixon-Kennedy Debates, for a full video recording). While this was a minor issue, the Kennedy administration made sure to avoid such mistakes in the future with exceptionally carefully planning (discussed later in this paper).

Democratic Party officials also noted the importance of effective use of television, and they were keen to press the need for improved candidate choices. One election official from Ohio lamented that "the GOP were flooding the voting public with Madison Avenue techniques in TV... [which] we could not afford - we were derelict" (DNC Election Report 1960). Another official observed that the problem today is "obtaining supermen for candidates" and that political experience is "no longer enough." By the late 1950s it television was changing the relationship between the American people and their government - a change which Senator Kennedy was keen to exploit.

The Television President

But political success on television is not, unfortunately, limited only to those who deserve it. It is a medium which lends itself to manipulation, exploitation and gimmicks. It can be abused by demagogs, by appeals to emotion and prejudice and ignorance.

Political campaigns can be actually taken over by the "public relations" experts, who tell the candidate not only how to use TV but what to say, what to stand for and what "kind of person" to be. Political shows, like quiz shows, can be fixed-and sometimes are. (Kennedy 1959)

The Strategy: Kennedy's View of Television and Politics

The Kennedy administration was acutely aware of Kennedy's ability to use the television as means to build a rapport the public in their very homes. Kennedy's views on television were very clear and he insisted on a television presence in the White House. For example, by the end of 1963 Kennedy had held 64 news conferences or one every sixteen days with an average of 18 million viewers (JFK Library - "JFK and the Press"). Kennedy himself stated that "we could not do the job [governing] at all in a free society without a very, very active press" (Kennedy 1962b). He understood the importance of this medium while still a senator and remarked in 1959 that "nothing compares with the revolutionary impact of television…TV has altered drastically the nature of our political campaigns" (Kennedy 1959).

By the time of Kennedy's inauguration speech, a strategy was beginning to emerge, driven in large part by President Kennedy himself. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. would recount that the "President and the Attorney General had a particular interest in television" (Schlesinger 2002). This extended beyond simply using television as a tool. Rather, Kennedy felt that the path of television and politics were intertwined. As Senator, in March 1958, he explained to an audience of broadcasting executives that "serious links between broadcasting and politics are very real and meaningful" and stressed that the "broadcaster and the public servant... have a great deal more in common than we might at first realize" (Kennedy 1958b).

Kennedy also understood that television is a tool and how it is used will depend on the producers of television programs, the policymaker's presence, and the public. In Kennedy's view, this was not a simple matter and he was quite concerned that "Gresham's law [will] operate in the broadcasting and political worlds," which he wholeheartedly rejected in politics and broadcasting (Kennedy 1958b). These concerns would also drive Pierre Salinger and his approach to planning and execution of Kennedy's television appearances (which I discuss below at length). Politics and the television were to become intimately connected, and Kennedy was not willing to play the passive observer: he wanted to play a key role in shaping this relationship.

President Kennedy also had another concern: the diffusion of television technology and access to quality broadcasts by the broader public. While part of this policy might have been driven by a

desire to promote a medium he mastered, Kennedy was also motivated by the desire to make television, and its benefits, available to all Americans. By appointing Newton N. Minow as the Federal Communications Commission, Kennedy hoped to promote good television and expand access to more Americans. Minow proved to be relentless in the battle to improve Americans' access to quality television. In his first speech after taking on the chairmanship, he decried that "When television is good... nothing is better. But when television is bad, nothing is worse" and compared daytime programming to a "vast wasteland" (Newton 1961). Minow would also promote the use of federal aid for educational television and "that new television sets receive channels in the ultra-high frequency range" (Schlesinger 2002) which allowed for better image quality over long distances.

Kennedy's administration also reached out directly to their predecessors. James Hagerty, President Eisenhower's press secretary and then a senior executive at the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), was frequently consulted on the use of television for foreign trips. For example, ABC news had produced a piece on Kennedy's visit to Mexico and was willing to share them with the Kennedy administration early which "... he [Kennedy] watched... at Camp David" (Salinger 1962). Kennedy himself would acknowledge Hagerty's assistance in a personal letter writing that he "appreciated" Hagerty's help and would like to "call you [Hagerty] in the near future" as "I value your advice and counsel" (Kennedy 1961). Hagerty and Salinger, despite their political differences, would form a friendship - perhaps due to their unique experience as press secretaries to larger-than-life presidents and an interest in television as a medium for political discourse. Hagerty and ABC news would be tapped again.

In addition to experienced political actors, the Kennedy Administration also reached out to broadcasting professionals. President Kennedy held a number of luncheons with news media producers, including broadcasters. These luncheons were an opportunity for Kennedy to share his concerns about the television and politics, and garner feedback. Participants for these were carefully selected based on influence which Pierre Salinger carefully vetted (Salinger's method is discussed in the following section). These luncheons were very popular with broadcast executives one of whom wrote that "industry reaction has been most favorable" and understood that this growing relationship "will be of help in crucial periods" (Reinsch 1962). These

sentiments were echoed by most participants and Gene Autry, (a broadcast executive), wrote to Kennedy that "much was accomplished for a closer understanding between television and radio industry and yourself" (Autry 1963). Overall, these meetings played an important role in "exchange of ideas" and were "particularly enlightening to those broadcasters who have not been in Government life and could not appreciate many of the problems confronting you [the president] and those holding appointive positions" (Stuart 1963). Kennedy believed that only by understanding each other, could the president and the television broadcasters form a mutually beneficial relationship - which in Kennedy's view was to inform the public.[11]

However, Kennedy and his advisers also understood that the television presented unique challenges. With live television broadcasts, it was not possible to ask for material to be stricken from the record as it would be in newspaper interviews (although the same problem did exist for live radio). By opening the White House and the Presidency to television cameras, Kennedy had set a precedent which created higher expectations of transparency. This presented a problem as newspaper men felt the president could no longer be as open and voiced their concerns to Pierre Salinger. Mr. Salinger addressed these concerns in a 1962 interview explaining that this is "a very difficult problem" and one that "the Government and the press would have to work out" (Salinger 1962b). Kennedy called these "our common responsibilities" (Kennedy 1961b), and understood that a careful balance had to be found and was one reason he insisted on personally meeting executives from the television industry.

The Kennedy Administration, particularly Mr. Salinger, was challenged on this topic by the press - especially newspapers who already felt that they were losing out to television. These tensions would come to light during in press briefing rules during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. A "12 point memo strictly controlled information flow from the Pentagon." Kennedy, perhaps sensing that he had opened a Pandora's Box by inviting television crews to press briefings went on the defensive. In November 1962 he argued that information had to be curtailed as it contained "very sensitive intelligence, and the methods by which that intelligence is received" (Kennedy 1962). Mr. Salinger would echo those sentiments arguing that, during a state of crisis such as the one in

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[11] Kennedy understood that television is entertainment as well, but his focus with these meetings was on the political.

Cuba, "there should be absolute secrecy in the Government in order to permit him [the President] the freest hand" in dealing with "crisis and presenting our opponents with an accomplished fact" (Salinger 1962c).

As Kennedy, Salinger understood that television was changing the face of politics, but he was adamant that the introduction of television cameras would not cause "drastic change in format" of the "give and take press conferences" (Salinger 1962b). Clearly there would be challenges as television was a disruptive information technology, but this did not mean that is should be excluded from access to the president. "The press plays [a]... key role of questioning top government officials," Salinger wrote in a memo to Ted Sorenson, "... and the admittance of television to the press conference on its present basis is only simply justice" (Salinger 1962b).

The censure of some information was not a fundamental departure from Kennedy's general views on television and the press. In fact, the limitations on press communication from the Pentagon was lifted a few weeks after the Soviet Union agreed to remove missiles from Cuba. Kennedy highlighted that fact himself during a news conference in November 1962 (Kennedy 1962). Mr. Salinger also went on to explain that this was also supported by the American public, stating that based on mail to the White House, "there is a wide feeling through the country that if the Government feels that certain information should be withheld, that it knows best" (Salinger 1962c). These decisions on media access were not made rashly, but were part of a carefully considered strategy, which Mr. Salinger himself admitted: "we [the administration] worked together during this period, and I would say that we all played some role in these policies." These rules, including a clear stipulation not "to withhold unclassified information from the press or the public" (Dutton, 1961) demonstrate that Kennedy understood the complexity of live television interviews. This understanding of the complexity of television extended beyond crisis points. Kennedy's team understood how easily the carefully crafted image of Kennedy could easily be damaged and lead Schlesinger to issue a memorandum in 1962 pointed out that even just the use of Kennedy's voice could "confuse the listener into thinking that he was hearing the President himself," but that in principle the "White House has no objection to the imitation of the President's voice in circumstances where it is clearly and unmistakably identifiable as imitation" (Schlesinger 1962).

The televised image of President Kennedy and his administration[12] was thus carefully managed and guarded as those involved understood that the television had introduced opportunities and challenges. While Mr. Salinger drove television engagement policies forward, it was multiple people in the administration who took part in crafting this image, including President Kennedy himself. Feedback was sought from external experts. However, the circle of advisers who helped craft the television strategy was closely controlled. Unsolicited views were considered, but Kennedy's advisers had their "own ideas on how the President might appear on television, and we do not need or have any interest in [unsolicited] services "[13] (Clark 1963). This was not due to ignorance, but rather a desire to create the most favorable image which promoted Kennedy's image and policies and fit with the administration's television strategy.

Tactical Implementation: Creating a Television Presidency

While a team of advisers developed the greater vision of the role that television should play during a Kennedy Presidency, the specific actions that came from these strategies were often driven by Mr. Salinger. President Kennedy had full trust in Mr. Salinger as he would later recount in his biography *P.S. A Memoire*, that Kennedy immediately offered to him the post of press secretary (after the election) and gave him free reign to "pick your own second in command" (Salinger 1995, p 87). This vote of confidence was not misplaced as Mr. Salinger, and his team played an important role in creating the television presidency and set the standard for television appearances on which future administrations would build.

Mr. Salinger took an exceptionally diligent approach to organizing, planning, executing and reviewing television appearances. These detailed and well-laid plans became a model on which television appearances are still planned today. For example, vetting of television stations, owners and reporters was carefully managed and discussed at length below. Another tactic employed by

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[12] It should also be noted that the entire Kennedy family was part of this plan and deviations were challenged. For example, the President and the First Lady both felt that their family should not be used for commercial gain. When a toy company began making Caroline and Jacqueline dolls, they refused to endorse them and Jackie implored Mr. Salinger to "see what you can do" to make them back off (Salinger 1995, p 101).

[13] This memo was in response to a Miss Ruth Hagy, a media producer, who pitched a number of ideas for CBS shows which she hoped would feature President Kennedy. Blair Clark, an executive at CBS, commented that while they get "hundreds" of such ideas every year, most "die right here at my desk" (Clark 1963, letter to Mr. Salinger)

Mr. Salinger was too court a relationship with media executives which went into more specific broadcast details than the meetings President Kennedy held with similar groups. For example, R. Peter Strauss, who would later serve as the director of Voice of America under President Carter, was a prominent media executive and was pioneering the use of "editorials" on the radio, and was extensively tapped by Mr. Salinger. Mr. Strauss often sent details of the public's preference for television broadcasts sharing public opinion results and even addresses of those who responded to his polls (Straus 1963). These executives, who were given access to the President in new ways, were often willing to return the favor. When in 1962 there were questions about leaks and that Mr. Salinger's office was simply an "image builder" for the President, Lou Hiner, an executive for an Indianapolis station, was willing to privately and publicly support Mr. Salinger. Mr. Hiner shared a letter he sent in response to the chairman of the American Press Media Executive critics, prefacing it with "I sincerely think your office is doing a good job and I hope my reply makes this 100% clear to him" (Hiner 1962).

The recent election showcased many of these tools and approaches, which were innovative in the early 1960s, but are standard tools today. For example, the use of graphics in broadcasts which help highlight specific messages was prevalent in this election - and has been prevalent in local, state and federal elections since - yet this was a new tactic in the early 1960s and drew on expertise from entertainment programming. The creative use of any new media will require new rules, and Mr. Salinger helped pioneer the use of television in a way which was immediately picked up by his successors. In the 1964 presidential campaign, the Johnson team tapped Bill Bernbach – a veteran television advertising producer who had worked with Salinger – to help direct television advertisements for the Johnson campaign. The result was the controversial, but effective "Daisy" advertisement which had to run only once to have an impact. As Jack Valenti, longtime president of the Motion Picture Association of America would later account, the entire process was calculated and planned by "an advertising genius [Bernbach]." He continued explaining that "The impact had been made which was a spectacular and, in my judgment deep within the psyche of the American people and therefore it showed a certain gallantry on the part of the Johnson campaign to withdraw the commercial" (Valenti 1981). This advertisement was not an accident, but rather carefully planned and executed use of television.

It is unfortunate that so little has been written about Salinger's contribution to presidential television politics; press secretaries, despite their often center-stage role, are not usually celebrated administration officials. He played a key role in implementing the broader strategic plans Kennedy had for television in his presidency and had a role in developing the now normal approach to television and politics. Salinger's approach to television began with a careful study of almost all television stations in the country. He had compiled a very large (index card) database of almost every media outlet in the United States. While these lacked the sophistication of today's media tools, they did offer Mr. Salinger and his team the ability to reference a few important details about each broadcaster quickly.[14] The index cards held basic information about the television station's general political leaning (based on general reporting bias), influence (determined by number of viewers) and general tone towards JFK. In addition, they also included the main contact at the station, usually an editor or producer, and their disposition towards the White House press staff. For example, the entry for KUTV from Salt Lake City, Utah, had the following entry:

1. fairly friendly
2. independent
3. fairly influential
4. fairly friendly
5. Jack Goodman (TV Index Files)[15]

Stations with a specific audience demographic were also highlighted as were stations which had a strong educational component. While by today's standards this is fairly basic information, which many online sources have available, it was a new approach to television planning at the time. Mr. Salinger began this data collection very early and JFK Library archives hold a trove of these documents.

Collecting information on television station leadership and their basic approach to the news was just the first step. Once an event had been agreed, Mr. Salinger's team helped choreograph a

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[14] The full database that Mr. Salinger and his team collected is available at the JFK Memorial Library. White House Staff Files, Pierre Salinger #8.25, Series #3. Newspaper, Radio and TV Index.

[15] Mr. Salinger used the following coding for consistency: 1) disposition towards White House press staff, 2) political leaning, 3) influence, 4) tone towards JFK, and 5) main contact.

detailed plan which would accentuate the President and whatever message he was delivering. A good example of this is a draft memo of the plans for an appearance in Seattle at a DNC event during the 1960 campaign. Every small step was carefully planned to ensure the best possible use of the television: The plans first called for a specific set-up so that "aisle[s] will be well enough controlled so that the Senator can get down to the stage... in about one minute... and yet not so completely controlled that people... cannot get up and try to shake hands." At this time "the camera will have zoomed in on a medium shot of Kennedy" and Governor Rosellini will have a fixed time of "no longer than two and a half minutes" to introduce Kennedy since by then the "crowd has still not emotionally settled down." During this time cameras will be "panning the audience and cutting in on close-ups." As the first question is fielded "the camera zooms in on a tight close-up" giving Kennedy a fixed time to leave the stage (Papers of John F. Kennedy 1960).

The impact of tools used to supplement Kennedy's appearances was also carefully considered. For example, in a 1960 memo, Kennedy's team discussed how to use visuals of key graphics to supplement Kennedy's speeches. A screen was planned to have a "visual projection" to be "synchronized... to his speech." This effective technique is often used today, but in 1960 was seen as "original" and offered an "unlimited" supplement to a speech which can be "specifically related to the Senator's words" (Coe 1960). The potential impact of any visual tools was invaluable to Kennedy while preparing of television appearances, who was known to do "a considerable amount of work in preparation" (Salinger 1962b).

The efforts to identify the role of specific television stations were not limited to the American press. Cooperation with foreign television stations was also sought as Kennedy prepared to take on Soviet communism, which had an effective propaganda machine. During a speech in 1960, Kennedy reached out to foreign media as he believed that they "have a most important role to play in the coming election" (Kennedy 1960b). Kennedy intended to use foreign media for two specific goals. First, he understood that "those who are newly arrived in the United States... might find it difficult to move immediately into the mainstream of American life." Language and culture, Kennedy recognized, could be considerable barriers and he was eager that his message reaches as many Americans as possible. Second, Kennedy wanted to highlight the connection that Americans have "with the past" and use the opportunity to reach out to people living behind

the Iron Curtain. "When an American goes to Poland, he comes not as a stranger... he comes as a friend," Kennedy explained, as "nearly every Pole has a relative living in the United States... the same is true in Estonia and in Latvia... Czech Republic... Yugoslavia…" (Kennedy 1960b).

Most media events were followed up with a report on specific teams and tools to assess execution. A good example of this focus on debriefing was after President Kennedy's historic trip to Berlin in summer of 1963. James Hoofnagle, the public affairs officer at the US embassy in Bonn, wrote a summary memo to Mr. Salinger highlighting the tools used and also shared a pre-released copy of a segment prepared by local stations in Cologne and Frankfurt. The memo specifies exactly which reels were used (16mm), explains that the sound "is always recorded separately by German TV" and highlights the role that local television stations played in Kennedy's appearances, praising their "assistance and cooperation" (Hoofnagle 1963). As with the detailed planning of the event at the 1960 Democratic National Convention, this memo is one example of the lengths to which Mr. Salinger and his team were prepared to go to ensure that Kennedy's presentation on television was optimal; dealing with larger networks had clearer long-term benefits as future collaboration was likely. However, every appearance, no matter where or how small was understood to have a potential impact on Kennedy's image. Nothing was left to chance and the early mistakes – such as the first debate where Kennedy forgot to step up to the medium for the best exposure – would not be repeated.

While Salinger and his team carefully planned the tactical application of television, they lacked the technical expertise to execute some of their plans. To carry out the technical aspect of their tactical plans for television presentation, Salinger would tap those who did. During the 1960 election campaign, a memo drafted by the television producer and director Fred Coe, encouraged the campaign to reach out to "outstanding television directors" including Arthur Penn and Vincent Donahue (Coe 1960). It was these experienced television directors who would help orchestrate details ranging from camera angles and lighting to appropriate zoom to create "audience interest" (Coe 1960). These experts worked behind the scenes to execute Salinger's tactical applications of broadcast technology to help create the first television presidency. As with the broader strategy, this pool of experts was personally identified by Salinger and his inner circle: nothing would be left to chance, and everything was designed to help Kennedy use the

television to promote his policies and build a positive image and rapport with the millions of Americans who were tuning in to evening broadcasts.

The Next Shift: Internet Presidency

> *If all candidates and parties are to have equal access to this essential and decisive campaign medium, without becoming deeply obligated to the big financial contributors from the worlds of business, labor or other major lobbies, then the time has come when a solution must be found to this problem of TV costs.*

> *This is not the place to discuss alternative remedies. But the basic point is this: Whether TV improves or worsens our political system, whether it serves the purpose of political education or deception, whether it gives us better or poorer candidates, more intelligent or more prejudiced campaigns-the answers to all this are up to you, the viewing public.* - John F. Kennedy (Kennedy 1959)

Today, the Internet is facing similar challenges as television did in 1960s: it is an evolving medium with which many leaders and organizations are still struggling to understand. Many politicians are experimenting with various social media tools, crowdfunding, and online activist, but there are still many slip-ups from "retweeting" embarrassing information to a lack of understanding that once something is online it is never forgotten. Such missteps have recently led some people to skepticism about the Internet's ability to bring positive change and build trust in the civic process. Robert Putnam wrote in 2000 that Internet might lead to a decline in trust and therefore social capital (like the television) and "allows us to consume this hand-tailored entertainment in private, even utterly alone" (Putnam 2000, p. 217). Others have noted that the Internet may be helpful with bonding social capital but not necessarily with bridging social capital and that cultural factors may impact the Internet's effect on building social capital (Guo et al. 2014, Choi et al. 2011, Han & Choi 2011, Kittilson & Danton 2011). Bonding social capital is generated when we create bonds with those within our social circles, while bridging is generated with those outside and is preferable since it can generate trust between different groups or individuals (Rusch 2010). This is important for people seeking elected office in a democratic system since they rely on trust to win elections from people outside of their own networks.

There is some evidence to suggest that the Internet can foster such bridging social capital and therefore increase trust between heterogeneous communities. For example, researchers have found that the Internet may accelerate the trend of "moving community interaction out of public spaces, but it may also integrate society... [the Internet] architecture supports both weak and strong ties that cut across social milieus " (Wellman and Gulia 1999). This suggests that the Internet can facilitate building social ties outside of our usual social groups. Pew surveys have found similar conclusions, that while far more Americans are active online today and use their online time to learn about different political and civic activities (jump from 33% in 2008 to 69% in 2012), most "day-to-day political conversions... occur **off**line" (Pew 2013, highlight in original). On the other hand, a large, recent study confirmed that the Internet can "increase exposure... from less preferred side of the political spectrum" *but* at the same time found that "paradoxically" it can "increase... the mean ideological difference" between online news consumers (Flaxman et al. 2016). There is not yet a consensus on how the Internet has or will impact society, but neither is there one on television.[16]

Just as Roosevelt used his "fireside chats" to reach the people over the radio - a technology not without its critics in the 1930s - so did Kennedy use the television thirty years later. The lessons from the Kennedy Presidency, and especially from work carried out by Salinger and his team, is that a new communication medium can be used effectively to create trust and foster civic engagement, but only if properly understood and carefully planned. The television is just a communication tool, as is the Internet, and what impact it will have on our society, civics, and politics depends more on its users than its technical architecture or original intent. Careful, deliberate planning was an important element of Kennedy's television mastery, and so it could also be for the Internet. The 2016 presidential election seems more divisive than the one in 1960, but this is not because of the Internet, but because of the way that people *chose to use* the Internet. For example, unvetted articles and sometimes offensive *memes* were quickly and widely

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[16] The fears that a new communication medium is harming society and civic engagement was not unique to the television. In 1929, a then popular publican title *Middletown: A Study of Modern American Culture* raised concerns that the radio will lead to declines in trust, because of its "passive" nature which will lead to a decline in social activities (Lynd & Lynd 1929). And even earlier, in the 16th century, the respected Swiss scientist, Conrad Gessner, warned people about the social dangers of (printed) books (Tilghman 2011).

disseminated with specific political goals in mind: to promote a certain image of a political figure or idea. In the same vein, Kennedy did not win the election because of the television and the television did not make his the first "television presidency," rather he and his team used the television to create these outcomes.

However, the Internet offers a type of interaction that the television did not: the ability to interact with policymakers in real-time directly. This creates new avenues of information sharing and influence which can be used to increase transparency and strengthen democracy. However, this outcome is not guaranteed and, as researchers have found, the effects are likely to be mixed (Im et al. 2012). Policymakers will continue to use every media at their disposal to promote their goals, but - as Kennedy observed with television - the outcome is partly dependent on the public... at least in Western democracies. If voters elect candidates who intend to use the internet to promote transparency, it is more likely that we will see positive outcomes. At the same time, policymakers will continue to try to shape public opinion, and those with the best executed and most creative plans are more likely to reap the greatest benefits.

Conclusion

> *It is in your power to perceive deception, to shut off gimmickry, to reward honesty, to demand legislation where needed. Without your approval, no TV show is worthwhile and no politician can exist.*

> *That is the way it always has been and will continue to be-and that is the way it should be.* (Kennedy 1959)

All disruptive technologies have their detractors and proponents: this was true of the television and is also true of the Internet. Their views offer important insights into how we can get the most out of these technologies, but they do not necessarily impact the way they are used.[17] That is up

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[17] The most recent example of (originally) unintended use of technology is the Chinese "Sesame" credit system. The Chinese Community Party has developed, with the help of major video game developers, a massive China-wide online gamificaiton system which will reward "social points" (like points in a game) to Chinese citizens for acceptable behavior. This is a revolutionary and highly creative use of gamificaiton as a tool for social coercion. (Hatton 2015)

to individuals and organizations, and the morality of the application of the technology is a topic for ethics, law, and philosophy. Irrespective of the intent, however, technology can only be used effectively if it is well understood which often requires creative, forward-looking individuals willing to take a risk. Also, it required careful planning and execution of strategic plans and often requires the expertise of people from many different sectors of society.

President Kennedy and many on his team had a vision for how television could be used in political campaigns. They understood the power of the medium and President Eisenhower's effective use of television to send messages to supporters and enemies, both at home and abroad, offered a glimpse of what could be done with the new medium. Eisenhower was president during what was deemed the "Golden Age" of television, but his administration never embraced it the way that Kennedy went on to do. Kennedy's administration would open a Pandora's Box which even the absence of televised presidential debates could not close.[18] The emergence of news programs and political programs, coupled with America's appetite for television programming, ensured that no president could afford to ignore the camera. It was not the television that created the first television president, but rather it was a conscious collaboration of many talented pioneers in broadcasting and politics.

The Kennedy "television presidency" did not set a standard for the use of a media technology accidentally. Kennedy himself had a very clear idea of what the television represented: the opportunity to reach millions of Americans with sound and picture, to increase transparency and place another check on the office of the president. Kennedy surely understood that his charisma would be an asset on the screen, but he was also deeply committed to democracy[19] and believed that the television could increase the people's trust in government. Kennedy went further and argued that the new media on was a source of American and democratic power. When asked about his thoughts on critical reporting by NBC's Sander Vancour, he responded:

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[18] There were no debates from 1964 until 1976 when President Ford debated Governor Jimmy Carter.

[19] As all American presidents during the Cold War, there was often a difference in the appreciation of democratic forces at home and abroad. Kennedy was not as keen to support popularly elected government in countries which were perceived as likely to align with the Soviet Union.

No, no, I think it is invaluable... I would say that it is an invaluable arm of the presidency, as a check really on what is going on in the administration... So I would think that Mr. Khrushchev operating a totalitarian system, which has many advantages as far as being able to move in secret, and all the rest—there is a terrific disadvantage not having the abrasive quality of the press applied to you daily, to an administration, even though we never like it, and even though we wish they didn't write it, and even though we disapprove, there isn't any doubt that we could not do the job at all in a free society without a very, very active press. (Kennedy 1962d)

Salinger would later confirm that this was not only Kennedy's view: most of the administration felt that the scrutiny provided by television cameras strengthened American democracy. In an oral history interview, he explained that "... when President Kennedy started televised press conferences there were only three or four newspapers in the entire United States that carried a full transcript of a presidential press conference. Therefore, what people read was a distillation… We thought that they should have the opportunity to see it in full" (Salinger 1965). To Kennedy and Salinger alike, television was framed as more than just a new entertainment medium: it was a source of democratic power.

The Internet, while in many important ways different than the television, offers similar kinds of opportunities. Greater transparency and increased political discourse can further enhance democratic power, but as with television, the effort must be careful and deliberate. We have yet to see a true "Internet Presidency," but are moving in that direction. President Obama was the first to hold "Fireside Hangouts" on Google+, but there was not the kind of shift in transparency, openness or inclusiveness as occurred with television in the 1960s. Candidates today are likely to use the social media to share their thoughts, and President Trump has used Twitter very effectively to share his messages with the public. His campaign used the internet effectively to convince many voters that he will bring necessary change to the White House and, more broadly, the government as a whole. However, the 2016 campaign was full of "deception" and "gimmickry" of which Kennedy warned and it is too early to tell what this outcome means for American democracy... just as it was not clear in 1961 what impact the television would have. However, what is likely to remain true of the Internet as it was of that television, is that those with carefully planned and implemented strategic plans, as well as experts in their camp, are

more likely to use it effectively and more likely to successfully use it to achieve their political and policy goals.

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Section 3: The Role of Source Credibility and Self-Determination in Digital Crowdsourcing: A Case Study of Cloud Imeperium Games' Star Citizen Project

The accepted model of participatory, representative democracy has recently entered a crisis of trust in the United States and Europe. Academics and policymakers have noted the decline in social capital since the 1970s when a series of political scandals rocked American society. The lost trust has not been regained and public involvement in civic activity has been steadily declining. This is especially true with youth as traditional civic engagement with 18 to 29-year olds is at historic lows (Smith 2013). In fact, over the past four decades we have seen a decline in political participation in most mature democracies (Albrasom & Aldricht 1987, Putmam 1995, Ferrini 2012). However, there is one area where this trend is reversed: millennial and post-millennial generations are more civically active online and are more likely to rely on digital society to build social networks (Smith 2013, PEW 2013).

This shift to a digital society poses challenges and opportunities for policymakers. On the on hand, some policymakers and academics have pointed to the potential negative effects of a digital society, partly blaming it for decreases in social capital and civic engagement (Penard 2006). Others, who have great faith in technology, have been eager to exploit the emerging medium of the Internet as a means of addressing social problems (Wallman et al 2001). The reality is likely somewhere in between; technology is not a panacea for the challenges facing modern participatory democracies nor is it a force of social degeneration. Technology is a tool and the outcome of its application to a problem depends how, where, when and why it is applied.

It is understandable, however, why there is skepticism in the role our digital society can play in political and policy discussions. The news media is ripe with examples of unethical use of various digital tools. For example, the hashtag "fake news" – which is used to highlight untruthful information passed off as news – has been co-opted by a variety of users to discredit truthful news stories (Borchers 2017). It is not possible to simply take a social media post with that tag at face value. Other examples include online bullying or "trolling," which sometimes exhibit a mob-like mentality. There have been numerous tragic cases of suicide attributed to

online bullying, trolling, lost income, and even extortion, which have all correlated with increased internet use (Wingate et all 2013, Barlett & Chamberlin 2017). Such unethical uses of digital technology, therefore, create some doubt as to its ability to contribute positively to civic society.

However, I will argue in this paper that despite such negative behavior the digital space can be used to engage young people meaningfully, build trust, and create positive, productive outcomes. The private sector has capitalized on these opportunities, often in the pursuit of profit, but elements of this approach can be applied to the public sector. Specifically, I will look at the work of the independent game developer Cloud Imperium Games (CIG) - lead by veteran game designers Chris and Erin Roberts. I will empirically explore how their approach to digital public engagement has created an unlikely success story - surpassing industry expectations and setting records both in terms of funding and sheer number of involved backers. I will argue that their approach is successful because of deliberate planning and careful execution of public engagement, first leveraging celebrity (*source credibility*) and then through autonomous motivation (*self-determination theory*) of their "citizens."[20]

The Star Citizen Project

CIG is developing a space simulator game called *Star Citizen,* and the developers' goals are to create a game with a strong social component built with the help of their online community. The game will feature a vast universe which players can explore with their friends, engage in space combat, or build trading conglomerates with hundreds of fellow players. CIG regularly interacts with its citizens (the game has not been released[21]) through live casts, forums posts and newsletters to build networks with their backers and tap backer expertise. The developers have raised over $180 million dollars and have over 1.9 million backers (Roberts 2016, CIG Stretch Goals) which is far more than any comparable project (Economist 2015).[22] CIG has also turned to their community of citizens (future players) to participate in game design not just funding.

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[20] The term which CIG uses to describe their backers and future players.
[21] As of writing this paper.
[22] CIG has raised over $180 million to date making it one of the most successful crowdfunded projects in history and the most successful entertainment crowd funded project. (CIG Stretch Goals, Tassi 2017).

Everything from background stories to "spaceship" design and the in-game economics have incorporated some input from the community.

The overall success is not the only reason why the *Star Citizen* project stands out. The official crowdsourcing campaign for the *Star Citizen* project began on the CIG's site and moved to Kickstarter in October 2012 (it is still possible to pledge on either platform). The initial pledge goal on Kickstarter was set at $500,000, and 30% of that goal was reached in 24 hours while CIG's official page received millions of hits on the first few days and overloaded CIG's servers (Roberts 2012). Current research on crowdfunding campaigns has often focused on the role of networks (Ley and Weaven 2011, Mollick and Robb 2016, Hui et al. 2012), especially within the space of entrepreneurial activity (Durkan and McGowan 2013, Sigmund et al. 2015). This research suggests that the first round of funding comes from family and friends (Mollick 2014) and later targets a broader audience (Ordaini et al. 2011) however this was not the case with the *Star Citizen* as a much broader audience immediately supported the project. Many of these backers are still involved with the organization and their views will be discussed in this paper. The backer literature has also identified a "bystander effect" where a drop in backing follows an initial wave of excitement (Kuppuswamy and Bauys 2013), a trend which has also not been observed with the *Star Citizen* project. With millions of hits at launch and continued long-run interest in the *Star Citizen* project suggests that CIG leadership was able to buck both trends.

The inclusive and socially driven game design approach is a very deliberate effort by CIG to increase community participation and generate trust: from regular, live and unedited online interviews and updates to the choice of the name itself[23] and has been unusually successful (Roberts 2014)[24]. The game has been in development since 2011 yet still has a significant following and many of the almost two million people who supported the project are still involved. This is unusual in the gaming industry as gamers have short attention spans and are unlikely to support a released product for this long, much less one which is still in development (Snow 2011). The average life-cycle of a game is usually six months and gamers are very quick

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[23] As compared the major competing space exploration games including "Elite Dangerous" and "EVE Online" which both focus primarily on exploration and combat not social interaction.
[24] Such deliberately planned and executed strategy of digital tools is novel and is reminiscent of Kennedy's use of the television some 50 years prior.

to change products (Gazecki 2012), yet CIG is still able to attract new backers and is still actively selling virtual products for a game which is not yet live and has been in development for more than 5 years. This paper explores CIG's successful strategy from creating initial trust to sustaining it for an unusually long period through the application of concepts from *source credibility* and *self-determination theories.*

Literature Review

There is not yet a consensus on how trust is built in digital space as research on this topic still relatively scarce. In this paper, trust is defined as confidence an actor holds of another individual or an organization, to remain truthful and reliably deliver on a promise with an acceptable degree of ability (quality). Some academics doubt that trust is even possible in a digital space because the norms of usual community life, the presence of anonymity, and lack of direct, visual "contact" might prevent trust from forming at all (Nissenbaum 2001). However, these points have been refuted, and digital trust has been documented and studied in a variety of environments (Taddeo 2009, Taddeo & Floridi 2011). The most significant effort has been devoted to trust in e-commerce where there is ample proof that actors show confidence in others and believe some to be reliable and truthful (Jøsang 2014, Habibi & Hajati 2015, Gefen & Straub 2016). A ready manifestation of this trust is various vendor ranking systems on e-commerce platforms. For example, trust has been linked to the outcome of sales (auctions) on eBay where positive reviews can create an expectation of trust and translate to higher sales and revenue (Rabby & Shahriar 2014). Trust in the digital space, therefore, plays a similar role as it does in the physical space and can be seen as the "lubricant that makes running [a] group more efficient" (Fukuyama 1996), and the role it plays in the digital and physical space is comparable.

Research has predominantly focused on a number of different mechanisms which build trust, including celebrity status, technical website design elements, and communication. However, very little of this research has focused on crowdsourced digital projects and most of the focus has on been on e-commerce or virtual workspace; where the crowd element is considered, it is usually limited to fundraising rather than a broader involvement through crowdsourcing. A number of explanations have been suggested for successful crowdsourcing including the role of celebrity

and applying creative ways to engage backers; however, these effects are not yet well understood (Planells 2015, Dahlander and Piezunka 2016).

There is a recognition that past personal success has "positive effects" in crowdfunding projects as it creates trust among backers that the project is in good hands (Kim et al. 2008, Zheng et al. 2016). This study found support for these findings – that past success and celebrity can positively influence trust and create *legacy capital*[25] - but found that past success is not a key driver in sustaining trust in the long-term. However, this research will demonstrate that celebrity itself is **not** enough to sustain backers over a long period, but it does support the general idea that celebrity status is a mechanism through which trust can be built, especially at the early stage of a crowdsourced digital project.

There are many competing theories which aim to explain how such celebrity status and past success can create and project influence. For example, in the psychology literature researchers have explored the idea of "classical conditioning" which suggests that people can associate two stimuli, which can elicit the same response to a product as they do to a celebrity and that these relationships are "robust and enduring" (Till et al. 2008). However, in the findings presented below, interviewees made it clear that their attitudes towards the CIG project were – in the long run –impacted less by the *legacy capital* of Chris Roberts and more by the actual actions taken by CIG after they became involved with the *Star Citizen* project. There are also sociological explanations such as the idea of *commodification*, which is broadly the idea that people buy products related to celebrities to mimic a celebrity's "social capital" (Kurzman et al. 2007). In other words: we want to be like the celebrities we admire. In this research, however, I found no broad indication of a desire to emulate Chris Roberts' success as most of CIG backers are not interested in a career in the video gaming industry, crowdsourcing projects or becoming entrepreneurs.[26]

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[25] The term *legacy capital* refers to the social capital generated by celebrity status.
[26] I did not explicitly identify and target such a question as those who have ambitions in the gaming industry. It is possible that such an effect is exists within a group of backers who do wish to become game developers.

Researchers have also found data which suggest there are other – non-celebrity related - elements of trust building online. For example, Gefen (2002) proposed that a set of beliefs around vendor integrity, ability and benevolence impact trust. Integrity is the belief that a vendor will keep their promises and deliver products as agreed. Ability is the belief that the vendor has the skills and competence to deliver the agreed-upon product. And Benevolence is the belief that the online merchant wants to treat the customer fairly and has not entered the transaction purely for a profit motive. While Gefen's research focused on e-commerce transactions, this research found some similarities in the crowdsourcing space. Specifically, integrity played a role in generating initial trust (as *source credibility*) and a focus on skills and competence - of the volunteers and the CIG team – helped sustain that trust in the long term.

Other research has focused on the design of the interface between a seller and buyer in electronic transactions. A meta-analysis by Karimov, Brengman and Van Hove (2011) found that there is a link between trust generation and the technical and visual design of web-pages. They conclude that "Web interface applications can be effective tools in engendering consumer trust" but caution that further research – especially experimental – is needed as it is not clear how differences in content presentation and design can influence trust. This study found no indication that website design played a role in trust generation. However, participants did indicate that they appreciated different communication strategies suggesting that presentation (visuals) might play a role.

Finally, there is some research in this field which supports this paper's hypothesis that there are different explanations for trust at different stages of digital interaction. Kim, Song, Braynov, and Rao (2005) looked at various elements which could impact trust in digital transactions and found that there were different stages through which a consumer or client progresses during a digital transaction. The researchers went further and suggested that there were different determinants of trust at different stages. A more recent paper also supported this theory as Dahlander and Piezunka (2015) found that outcomes of attempts to build trust are "contingent upon the stage of the initiative." This paper adds to that research as findings suggest that in crowdsourcing, as in e-commerce, there are likely multiple stages of interaction with potentially different mechanisms for trust generation and trust sustainment.

Theoretical Framework: Stage-Dependent Trust

Based on in-depth interviews and a general survey (discussed below), this research found that there were two different, but related theories which explain the high-level of trust and participation in CIG's main project, *Star Citizen.* Building on the work of Kim, Song, Braynov, and Rao (2005), as well as Dahlander and Piezunka (2015), this research found that there are two theories which explain how trust was generated at the initial stage with the project and how it was later sustained. While the previous research looked only at crowdfunding, this paper expands the earlier work into crowdsourcing and a purely digital environment. The initial interest in the project was the outcome of the celebrity status of Chris Roberts (and to some extent his leadership team), whose fame and expertise brings a degree of *legacy capital* as predicted by *source credibility*. This was most important during a backer's first exposure to the project and influenced their "initial" trust that the project was authentic and worth supporting.

Sustained involvement, after the initial buy-in by the backers, was explained by motivational factors as defined by the *Self-Determination Theory* and the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness. Self-Determination is a theory of motivation which seeks to explain why "the type or quality of a person's motivation would be more important than the total amount of motivation" (Deci & Ryan 2008). It suggests that encouraging "feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness... the person's motivation toward a given task will be optimal" (Vellerand & Pelletier 2008) and thus increase the likelihood of sustained participation over time (taking some action). The concepts of competency, autonomy, and relatedness are key motivators for most backers involved in this project. However, the initial drive to become involved *cannot* be explained by this theory. Instead, I propose that there are two different mechanisms which explain the success of the CIG team to build trust with the backers: one which explains the initial motivation for involvement and second which explains sustained trust in the long-run.

Initial Stage: Source Credibility

When backers first chose to become involved with CIG and offered resources to the *Star Citizen* project the celebrity status of its developers primarily drove them to do so. There is significant

literature on the influence which a celebrity brings to a project (Hoffman & Tan 2015). In the marketing industry, a prominent theory which explains this role is *source credibility theory*. *Source credibility* theory suggests that the credibility of a celebrity is linked to their trustworthiness and expertise (Erdogan 1999). In this theory, the idea of trustworthiness is defined by how honest or believable a person appears to be (Goldman et al. 2000), and expertise is the overall validity of the source (i.e., does the person have an expert opinion). The idea of source credibility is also important with corporate leadership as higher trust in corporate leaders has been linked to better organizational performance (Lin et al. 2016, Garrett et al. 2014). In fact, there is some research to suggest that celebrity CEOs bring additional capital which may improve a firm's financial results (Solomon and Bendickson 2016). This is also supported by neuroscience which suggests that "experts (persuaders) modulate the activity in a set of brain regions involved in trustful behavior learning and declarative memory encoding that probably enables effective persuasion" (Klucharev et al. 2008).

In this paper I refer to the capital a celebrity brings to a project as "legacy capital," which is the sum of resources, influence, and reputation of an individual's past performance. However, the process through which hiring a celebrity leader translates to organizational success is not yet well understood. To date, most studies have focused on the "emergence of CEO celebrity, rather than the critical question of how CEOs translate their celebrity into personal and firm-related success" (Treadway 2009). In this paper, I will propose that this legacy capital, as predicted by *source credibility theory*, deteriorates over time, but can interact with components of the *self-determination theory* (competency, autonomy, and relatedness) and help build on trust generated by legacy capital.

Sustained Stage: Self-Determination Theory
Self-determination is a theory of motivation which suggests that reinforcing a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness will increase the likelihood of participation towards a goal (Deci & Ryan 1985, 2008). Broadly, the theory suggests that there are two different types of motivation which can lead to different outcomes. *Controlled motivation* which is "a function of external contingencies of reward or punishment," often leads to less favorable outcomes (Deci & Ryan 2008). *Controlled motivation* has been associated with outcomes such as impaired performance

(Koestner et all 1996) and inconsistency in pursuing long-term goals (Vallerand 1997). In contrast, *autonomous motivation* includes both "intrinsic motivation and the types of extrinsic motivation in which people have identified with an activity's value" and creates a sense of "volition." Research suggests that autonomous motivation is a more powerful approach towards building trust and is more likely to result in positive outcomes such as higher levels of motivation and improved job performance (Illardi et al. 1993, Sheldton & Elliot 1998, Baard et al. 2004).

Self-determination theory is built around three important motivational concepts - autonomy, competence, and relatedness - which can foster the more desired *autonomous motivation*. These concepts have been examined in numerous studies and in a verity of settings (STD Page). *Autonomy* is the idea that one's actions are freely determined without coercion. Research suggests that when people feel that they are acting out of their own volition, they are more likely to perceive their action and the goals in a positive light (Vensteenkiste et al. 2012). The concept of autonomy is closely related to the idea of empowerment (Cicolini et all 2014) as empowerment can create a sense of autonomy by encouraging free choice. Organizations which encourage empowerment (autonomy of action) have been identified with higher levels of job satisfaction, better on-job performance, lower turnover and overall higher amounts of trust leadership (Bradbury-Jones 2014, Laschinger et al. 2014, Dahinten et al. 2016). These positive outcomes have been directly linked to increased motivation which can stem from a sense of autonomy (Spreitzer 1995, Drake et all 2007, Gardner et al. 2011).

Competence refers to the idea that people prefer to engage in tasks in which they have (or perceive to have) expertise (Thompson 2006). This is similar to the idea of "mastery" (Austin & Vancouver 1996) which suggests that people are more motivated to engage in activity in which they have specific skills. The effects of competency on motivation have been observed in a wide range of activities from sports (Zou et al. 2012) and traditional office environments (Thompson 2006), to anti-smoking initiatives (Williams et al. 2006) and run-away children (Greene 2012). These studies found causal links between competence and the motivation to pursue a specific action as predicted by the STD theory.

The third element of the STD Theory, *relatedness,* is broadly the need to feel appreciated through a network of close relationships, either directly with another person or within a group (Deci & Ryan 2008, STD page). The theory suggests that close relationships help foster trust and appreciation, which in turn can be powerful motivational tools in a traditional, physical workplace (Fledderus & Honingh 2015, Walland & Pickering 2017) as well as in the digital space (Lin & Liu 2012, Lien & Cao 2014). The important role of relatedness is further developed in one of the six "mini-theories" of the *Self-Determination Theory* (STD page). *Relationship Motivation Theory* focuses on the relationships within a group and suggests that a close-relationship creates interactions which are "not only desirable for most people" but also "essential" for success (STD Page). To cultivate a high-quality relationship, which creates inter-personal trust, a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are needed. Specifically, a feeling of relatedness has been identified as an important variable in building trust in communities which encourage participation in an activity with well-defined goals (Rufin et al. 2013, Wang & Li 2014, Wang & Li 2015).

There is some further evidence that the interaction of these three concepts - autonomy, competence, and relatedness - encourages *autonomous motivation*, but research in this area is still limited (Gagne & Deci 2005, Moran et al. 2012, Howard et al. 2016). For example, one study considered 723 government employees and found that autonomous motivators led to better performance due to increases in the three elements of the STD theory: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Howard et al. 2016). Effects of *autonomous motivation* have also been linked to compensation systems in the workplace, by demonstrating a link between variable pay compensation systems and a higher feeling of autonomy and competence, and therefore higher motivation and trust in the workplace (Gagne & Forest 2008). Similar effects were also found in a study of managers from varied sectors of the economy, which found that the interaction of competence and relatedness resulted in higher autonomous motivation and was linked to "most favorable work attitudes" (Graves et al. 2014).

Research Hypothesis & Theoretical Application
The goal of this research was to identify the factors which have made CIG's *Star Citizen* project so successful in the crowdsourcing industry. Success is defined as prolonged engagement in the

development process as measured by the length-of-time backers have stayed involved, the amount and frequency of contributions (money and time), and the number of backers who have stayed engaged. This paper builds on the *source credibility* and *self-determination* literature already discussed and examines engagement in a digital context, by looking at initial and long-run motivations for support. Some studies have looked at factors for sustained engagement (Rufin et al. 2012, Lukkarinen et al. 2016, Josefy et al. 2017), but have not examined the interaction between *source credibility* and *self-determination theories* and only examined projects in the physical world. In addition, while one study did look at and find the importance of celebrity "management" in the role of *autonomous motivatio*n, the authors point out that most studies in the field have focused on "network size" relying on quantitative data but no in-depth case study analysis (Hobbs et al. 2016). This paper adds an outlier case to this body of research and examines trust in a digital setting.

There are three main hypotheses that this paper aims to test. First, is the idea of *source credibility* as a viable method to create trust and generate initial interest in a digital crowdsourcing project. This builds on a set of recent literature which concludes that the source credibility in online communication is important, but is not yet well understood (Callison 2001, Sundar et al. 2007). While this literature does not explicitly examine *source credibility* in wholly digital projects, it presents a close analog through an examination of online information consumption since a great deal of a crowdsourcing campaign is built around communication strategies (Corina 2010). However, these studies have focused on direct peer-to-peer interaction and not on the interactions between an organization and groups of backers (Willemsen et al. 2012, Liberman 2016). The research presented in this paper will show that *source credibility* can be an important tool in garnering initial, but not necessarily sustained, support between groups of backers and an organization.

Second, this study aims to examine the role of relationship management to create a sense of relatedness in a crowdsourced digital project. This builds directly on the work of Deci & Ryan's theory of *self-determination* and specifically *Relationship Motivation Theory* (Deci & Ryan

1985), and applies the theory to a crowdsourced digital project.[27] While the theory has recently been applied in the workplace (Howard et al. 2016), the relationship which volunteers have with an organization is somewhat different than employees due to the absence of traditional work-place motivators (Pearce 1983, Peterson 2004). Research has also found that there are some differences between the motivational drivers of "Millennials" and their predecessors, however, these differences have not been examined in detail (Ertas 2016)[28]. We know that Millennials are more likely to be civically active online and prone to use the digital space to exercise various civic activities including activism, debate and policy research (PEW 2008). This paper will make recommendations to harness that involvement and use their proficiency and affinity with digital technology to encourage more civic participation. This research found that careful relationship building can create a sense of relatedness with young adults – and to some extent can encourage autonomy and competence - which have all been linked to positive outcomes associated with *autonomous motivation*.

Third, this paper will highlight a possible transfer mechanism for moving trust from an individual (*source credibility*) to sustained long-term group motivation (through elements of *self-determination*). There is not yet literature that examines this transfer process, and I plan to highlight a potential mechanism. Specifically, this paper will suggest that *source credibility* in crowdsourced digital projects brings a limited amount of legacy capital which erodes over time. However, that *legacy capital* can be used to create a sense of relatedness, which in turn can re-energize *legacy capital*, even in a highly competitive environment and with a population that generally has a short attention span, little tolerance for delays, and is quick to switch products (Snow 2011).

Methodology & Samples

This study primarily relies on interviews with CIG staff and 32 interviews of CIG backers conducted in late 2016 and early 2017. The backer interviewee sample was drawn from a population of CIG backers who participated in a broad survey in 2016 and opted to participate in

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[27] To the author's best knowledge, this theory has not yet been applied to a digital project or a gaming environment.

[28] Generational differences were also reported by PEW and the American Life Project surveys of the broader American public (PEW 2008).

an interview. The survey was promoted by the lead investigator and by Cloud Imperium Games on their official forums[29], fan websites and newsletters. The official forums are frequented by several thousand dedicated (some critical) backers while the newsletter is sent to all who opted-in when signing up for the project (contribution, financial or otherwise, is not required to sign-up). This research was also promoted on *Star Citizen* "fan sites" and gaming-related web portals. There were no personal benefits for participation in the survey, but a $20 Amazon Gift Card was offered to interviewees. The goal of the survey was primarily to access a population from which a sample of interviewees could be drawn and to collect basic demographic and behavioral data.

In total 1380 backers took the survey (Mean and Median Age = 31; Male = 97%, Female 1%, 2% "don't know" or "other"). This gender difference was expected as research has shown that video games with violence and competitive elements are less attractive to a female audience (Hartman & Klimmt 2006)[30]. A little over half the responders were from North America (49% USA, 6% Canada, with no representation from Mexico) with the rest split between Europe (36%) and rest of the world (8%)[31]. The sample was also highly educated with over 68% reporting at least some college education and over 13% with advanced degrees. In addition to demographic data, the survey collected some information on general attitudes towards crowdsourced projects, civic activity, trust in CIG leadership, trust in the CIG development team, and participation habits for crowdsourced projects in general. Overall, 70% said that they had "full trust" in the CIG leadership team and 76% had "full trust" in the CIG development team, while 26% had "some trust" in the CIG leadership team and 21% had "some trust" in the CIG development team (see Table 1 for a full breakdown).

Table 3.1: Trust in CIG Leadership and Project Teams

	CIG Leadership Team	CIG Development Team
Full Trust	70.8%	76.0%
Some Trust	26.0%	21.0%
No Trust	0.6%	0.4%
Not sure/No Answer	2.7%	2.6%

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[29] www.robertsspaceindustries.com/spectrum/community/SC
[30] *Start Citizen* will be a somewhat violent video game with both space and first person combat.
[31] About 1% chose not to answer the question.

The survey offered the opportunity to opt into a 60-minute interview. Interviews were conducted online over a two month period in early 2017. In total 593 of survey participants opted to participate in the interviews, of which 80 were randomly selected in two rounds[32], 28 of whom chose to participate in an interview. However, only four disenfranchised "backers" opted to participate in the survey and all were deliberately invited to the interview as the initial random sample of interviewees only included those who had some degree of trust CIG leaderships and the CIG development team. The average age of all interviewed backers was 28, and only one was female. Also, most of the interviewees were in North America (24), one was in Singapore (1) and the rest in Europe (7). Interview participants were offered a $20 Amazon Gift Card to participate in the survey.[33] All interviews were conducted under strict Institutional Review Board protocols to ensure anonymity.

Table 3.2: CIG Interview Breakdown

Interviewee Number	Level of Trust	Number/%
1 - 16, 22-27	High	22 (69%)
17 - 21, 28	Medium	6 (19%)
29 - 32	Low/None	4 (13%)

Most of the interviewees had an equal amount of trust in both the CIG leadership and development team. Three interviewees had more trust in the leadership than development team (Number 1,2 and 8), while two had more trust in the development team (Number 17, 28). The rest all placed an equal amount of trust in the leadership team and the development team. While there were four interviewees with no trust in leadership, all still had some trust in the development team. However, all four chose to qualify their response, and any remaining trust was marginal. Detailed findings are discussed below.

The survey likely over-estimates the level of support for CIG since many backers who have lost trust in the project - a few have even requested refunds - are likely no longer following the project or might have been less motivated to participate in this study. CIG does offer refunds

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[32] In the first round only 9 of those who agreed to the interview chose to participate on the day of the interview.

[33] Independent funding source. While CIG did offer to help, this was turned down to avoid introducing potential or perceived bias in the results.

(CIG Refund Policy) but the total amount refunded to-date was not published by CIG.[34] In an interview, Chris Roberts explained that CIG's official policy is to offer refunds for "people [who] are really upset, or facing personal hardships," and such refunds are "significantly lower than what you get with e-transactions" (Campbell 2015). Likewise, interest in the interviews was overwhelmingly expressed by those who have some level of trust in CIG leaders and developers. This limitation was partially addressed by inviting all survey responders who have little or no trust in CIG leadership and/or the development team to participate in the interviews. These limitations are discussed further in the results section.

Discussion of Results

Research results support the hypothesis that there are different motivational drivers at different stages of a crowdsourced digital project. This is consistent with research in e-commerce (Kim et al. 2005) and crowd funding (Dahlander and Piezunka 2015), where similar results were already identified. In this case study, the initial stage was heavily influenced by the *legacy capital* which Chris Roberts, and to some extent, others on the senior leadership team, brought to the *Star Citizen* project. The findings are consistent with the predictions of *source credibility theory* and suggest that expertise and past success play an important role in creating trust (Erdogan 1999) - and in this case created an impetus for action. Sustained support after the initial stage, however, was not satisfactorily explained by *source credibility*, rather, this research found strong evidence for the *self-determination theory*. As predicted by this theory, the role of *autonomous motivation* was identified as a key variable in sustained trust and continued support of the *Star Citizen* project, well beyond the norm for this audience.

Initial Stage: Source Credibility

Results from the interviews suggest that *source credibility* played a significant role in backers' initial decision-making process. The role of past successes was deliberately highlighted by the CIG leadership team as the *Star Citizen* project was advertised as the next big game from "legendary game designer Chris Roberts" (Roberts 2012) who is the "acclaimed creator of Wing

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[34] While this data is tracked internally, it is not made available publicly. The same is true of many other crowdfunded projects in the gaming industry.

Commander and Freelancer"[35] (CIG Page). The intention was to present Chris Roberts as a credible game designer who has considerable expertise in the industry and considerable success. Survey results indicated that almost 60% of backers who supported the project had played games developed by Chris Roberts before and half (49%) of those who had not played his games do play sci-fi games which are in the same genre. Most of those who had not played a Roberts game before were aware of games Chris Roberts had created in the past and were familiar with their critically acclaimed success. The importance of expertise in building initial trust was highlighted by all interviewees as a critical factor in their decision to back the project:

> *I am not a gamer anymore, but I fondly remember playing Privateer with my brother. Chris[Roberts] knows how to make a good game.* (Interviewee 2)

> *I still play his early games, because they are brilliant. I mean, they are old now and the graphics suck, but the games are unbeatable.* (Interviewee 17)

> *I trust Chris Roberts... this isn't his first rodeo.* (Interviewee 27)

This link between expertise and trust was also echoed by backers who no longer support the project and have lost trust in CIG leadership:

> *I gave them my hard earned money, because I heard good things about his old games. I was too young to play them...* (Interviewee 32)

In the survey we found that of the earliest backers (those who joined the project in 2012) about 85% of those who contributed to the project at the initial stage had played his games before *Star Citizen* was announced. Over 98% of those early backers have also continued to support the project and about 95% contributed more – time and money - to *Star Citizen* than other crowdsourced projects (not limited to video games). The reasons for this support was highlighted in interviews. When asked about their initial involvement all early backers agreed that they

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[35] Freelancer was Chris Roberts' another significant game and was released in 2003.

initially became engaged - despite early signs of delays - because they believed any delay could be overcome by the team Chris Roberts had built:

> *They had problems. I mean, all projects have problems, but I trusted them in 2012 and I trust them today because Chris has a good team.* (Interviewee 2)

> *[CIG] had a good team and I thought they would fix all their issues.* (Interviewee 31)

When asked if expertise and past success were sufficient, the interviewees were divided. About half indicated that it was enough to initially get involved, while others pointed to another major factor: Chris Roberts and Erin Roberts are both open and transparent individuals. The Roberts' willingness to build relationships with their backers played an important role. This was highlighted by all the interviewees and was also echoed in the broader survey with comments such as:

> *Completely open game development.* (Survey)

> *Well they're very open with us. I don't think they have anything to hide.* (Interviewee 12)

> *They seem to be very transparent in what they're doing by releasing videos all the time related to development.* (Survey)

However, the trust which was generated by or perceived by expertise, past success or transparency, was not sufficient for most interviewees' continued engagement. Only one indicated that, no matter what happens, they will continue to stand by the project: *I don't care [about development issues]. Chris Roberts can do no wrong.* (Interviewee 27). For all others, the legacy capital which the Roberts name brought to the project was not sufficient to keep them engaged in the long run.

Sustained Involvement: Self-Determination

When asked which factors kept them engaged they pointed to two different ideas. The primary reason for continued engagement is the sense of a committed and close community - a sense of *relatedness*. From the start of the project, Chris Roberts has deliberately used the most direct means possible to engage with current and potential backers and his team has followed his lead. For example, when the project was announced, and technical difficulties forced the page off-line, he was honest about CIG's own shortcomings (Roberts 2012). In the same communication - one of the earliest videos he posted about the *Star Citizen* project - he also explained his vision: "I want to build it [the game] with you, the community." This has been reinforced in several further communications and was highlighted in the interviews as a major reason for continued support:

> *Yes, I contributed to the game with more than money, because I feel like this is our game not the project of EA [a very large gaming company].* (Interviewee 9)

> *I became fully vested in this game while on a business trip in the UK. I was in Manchester and visited [CIG] offices there. Chris Roberts was in and when I told the receptionist that I just wanted to say "hi" he made the time to meet me. It was very brief, but I am a nobody and he did that - he really wants to get to know us [the backer community.]* (Interviewee 18)

This sense of community is further strengthened by a sense of meaningful participation and recognition of backer *competence*. When asked if their contributions are valued by CIG almost 85% of those surveyed indicated that they feel that backer suggestions are valued. More than 75% also indicated that they contribute in non-financial ways from ship design and story ideas to translation and forum moderation. The role of *competence* in building motivation and building trust, and CIG's application of this approach, became clearer through the interviews. For example, one of the interviewees is a forum moderator who explained that he volunteered for the role because he had experience in forum moderation and was solicited to help. Another, who has experience with game "beta" testing, explained that:

Having incredible transparency with the developers, I have had correspondence with them and seeing my ideas implemented, whether collectively, individually or by chance... as well as been invited to the elite test group called "Evocati Test Flight" which is responsible for pre-testing and providing feedback for CIG before "limited" testing begins. (Interviewee 4)

When asked if he knew that there were "elite test groups" before he volunteered he said:

No, but I would have helped anyway. The fact [that] they see what I am good at and let me help makes me feel good about what they are doing. (Interviewee 4)

CIG has also reinforced a sense of *autonomy* by giving backers freedom to make suggestions and participate in ways which is most meaningful to the backers themselves (as long as it fits in the project goals). As one of the interviewees explained:

Look, no one tells you what to do or how to help. You do what you want to do and the developers seem interested in our ideas. I don't like testing bugs, but I do like talking story. As long as they don't force me to do something I don't want to I will stick around and help. (Interviewee 7)

Another frequently expressed reason for continued engagement with the project is the dedication to transparency and a team-based approach. Many backers pointed to the open communication and willingness to admit mistakes and reach out to the community for ideas as another key reason for continued support of the *Star Citizen* project, since building a close relationship requires a degree of honesty.

They are doing their best. Delays suck, but at least they tell us what is going [on]... If they didn't share neither would I [referencing monetary support] (Interviewee 14)

I don't like everything they are doing, but they share their reasons with us whether it is a technical limitation, story design or whatever. If they stop giving us [progress] updates then I might leave. (Interviewee 5)

While the majority feel that the CIG's communication strategy is transparent, and there is an honest attempt to build a game with the community, all of those who no longer trust and are not motivated to contribute to the project believed that current efforts were not sufficient. This was cited as a major reason for lost trust and disengagement and was articulated by one skeptical former backer:

I am not sure what went wrong or who is doing what, but their communication is bad. I can't trust a developer that misses all their deadlines and then weeks later tells us it's all ok... they just lie. Where is their game? (Interviewee 32).

This feedback is not surprising as gamers have short attention spans[36] (Gazecki 2012) and with a development cycle of over five years, it is not surprising that some backers no longer support the project. CIG leadership is aware that they cannot satisfy every backer and there is consensus in the gaming industry, as in any larger social project, that it is impossible to satisfy every stakeholder. A veteran developer at another major video game publisher explained in an interview that "we can't make them all happy and we don't want to anyway" (Anonymous 2015). The development team at CIG acknowledges this, but by keeping development highly transparent and using many different online communication mediums, their goal is to build a positive relationship with as many backers as possible and offer a variety of ways to stay involved.

Overall, these findings suggest that those who still have trust in CIG do so now because of the relationship which Chris Roberts, and the rest of the CIG leadership team, have systematically built with them.[37] The explicit strategy of consistent communication to build rapport with

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[36] In relation to video games.

[37] A close second reason was that the project was making progress. However, this is not the primary reason as all but one of the interviewees expressed some degree of concern regarding delays, shifts in development priorities and slow pace of new version releases (software).

backers, and offer multiple ways to stay involved, has paid off and differentiates CIG from many other game developers[38] and crowdsourced projects. While the necessity of a well-planned and executed engagement strategy is not a new idea in the crowdsourcing industry - it is often overlooked. Crowdfunding Academy, which has helped with hundreds of projects, found that top differentiator of successful and failed campaigns is "time devoted to planning and promotion" (Crowdfunding Academy 2017). Other experts have voiced similar views arguing that "it is pretty much impossible to make improvements or compensate for a lack of preparation" but point to the successful relationships CIG has built as a key element of their success (Holm 2016). However, there is still comparatively little literature which examines the relationship between online leaders and followers, and the means through which trust and engagement are built and sustained in an online setting is still poorly understood (Faraj et al. 2015, Johnson et al. 2015, Liang et al. 2016). These findings add to this literature and suggest that crowdsourced digital project can be successful through a deliberate and systematic strategy which relies on *source credibility* at the initial stage of a project and concepts of *self-determination* to sustain support in the long-run.

Limitations and Further Research

There are a few limitations to this study which need to be addressed. One, this study looks at a single outlier in the crowdsourcing space. This can be challenging as using a single case presents a few potential issues including case-selection criteria which can lead to selection bias (Bennett and Elman 2006) and limitations to external validity. This case (the *Star Citizen* project) was selected *because of* extreme values of the dependent variables (trust, engagement) which could be problematic since the outcome is known and was a key determinant in case selection (George and Bennett 2008). As King, Keohane, and Verba have pointed out, this type of selection can lead to an underestimation of the effects of the independent variable in statistical analysis (King et al. 1994). However, this study does not attempt to draw causality from methods of co-variation

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[38] The successful engagement of backers by CIG has been noticed other companies. Most recently a successful developer in Turkey launched a similar style of engagement of their new project and is seeking greater transparency and more deliberate communication with their own backers and fans (Chalk 2017).

and survey data is used descriptively.[39] The causal inference on which this study relies comes from process tracing, rather than a statistical analysis.

This case was not selected solely based on extreme values of the independent and dependent variables, but also on the ability to generalize from findings. The *Star Citizens* case was selected as it fits the criteria of "least likely" case logic (Levy 2008), which suggests that if a theory holds in a least-likely case (where we expect it not to), it could hold in other cases as well. Indeed, to produce "strong" results in such studies, it has been argued that cases *should be* selected by extreme values of the dependent and independent variables (Van Evera 1997). As already discussed in this paper, this case fits these descriptions: high levels of sustained engagement and trust combined with systematic, deliberate trust-building activity; and an audience which usually has low trust in developers, is unlikely to stay engaged past six months, and is generally intolerant of delays. If experience from other video game developers who rely on crowdsourcing is indicative of the industry, Cloud Imperium Games should not (still) have a large and dedicated following years after the project began. While this does alleviate some concern of external validity of a single-case study, further research of crowdsourced digital projects with a different methodological approach (especially quantitative large-n methods) is necessary as unique characteristics in this case could limit generalizability.

While the least-likely approach does lend some credibility to the external validity of this case, it does not assuage one sampling issue: self-selection bias. As already discussed, almost all of those who took the survey had at least some level of trust in CIG leadership. The survey was advertised on CIG official and related web portals which those who have lost all trust in the project - and are no longer involved - are unlikely to visit. This suggests that the survey likely *over-estimates* the level of trust in CIG and the near-consensus reported in the survey (less than 1% indicated no trust, and 3% were not sure) lacks input from disenfranchised former backers. Since the survey was used to recruit interviewees, this also means that a random selection of those who opted for the interview leads to over-representation of trusting backers.

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[39] Where a statistical analysis is made the outcome is not used for the purposes of generalization beyond the sample population.

This issue was partly addressed through two means. First, the survey was also shared with a disengaged community who have been very critical of CIG. While it is not possible to estimate the number of disenfranchised backers from participation in the survey, two detractors who were interviewed explained that they found the survey through sites critical of the project[40]. Second, all those who indicated they had no trust in CIG were invited to participate in interviews. The interviews, which are the key element of this study, thus presented a more "balanced" sample and proportionally included more skeptical voices than the survey (Table 3.2). There are no empirically driven studies which identify average levels of trust in digital crowdsourcing within the gaming industry, but in the broader crowdfunding community the trust levels of CIG *are* unique (Holm 2016). While the unusually high amount of financial contributions and sheer number of backers could be a demonstration of this trust, it is not definite proof that trust is the only key determinant in sustained support.[41] Further research is needed not only in the gaming industry but in digital crowdsourcing space in general, to test other potential explanations for sustained support.

Finally, there were no "undecided" backers involved in the interviews as none opted to participate. The views of those who are undecided could provide further insights into the role of *source credibility* and *self-determination* in building trust and engagement in digital projects. There is some empirical evidence that introducing the "undecided" or "don't know" options in a survey can bias answers and therefore their opinions could add a unique perspective (Dunnette et al. 1956, Bishop 1987). Since no one from the undecided group participated in an interview, it is now known what role *source credibility* or *self-determination* played in their decision-making process. It is possible that the undecided group has systematic differences from those who have decided (Friese et al. 2012), but these differences, in general, are not well understood and need further empirical study.

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[40] The author did not share the survey with one of those communities suggesting that word did spread with some of those who are no longer support CIG's *Star Citizen* project.

[41] For example, literature presents the concept of "sunk cost" suggests that some backers might continue to support CIG not because of inherent trust in their project, but rather because they had already invested a significant amount of resources (McAfee et al 2010, Haller and Schwabe 2014).

Despite these limitations, this paper adds an important case to the current literature by examining trust in a crowdsourced digital setting. While this research does not fully capture the reasons for lost trust and disengagement, it does identify what has kept those who are still engaged motivated and highlights the role of *source credibility* and *self-determination* in different stages of a crowdsourced digital project.

Discussion & Conclusion

The main objective of this paper was to identify key criteria for a successful digital crowdsourcing campaign by looking at Cloud Imperium Games' *Star Citizen* project – one of the most successful crowdsourced project to date.[42] Initial interviews with the CIG leadership team highlighted a carefully managed and executed campaign focusing on the founders' name recognition and a strategy of building close relationships with a virtual community. Through backer interviews, I found evidence for the *source credibility* theory as a useful way to explain initial support and evidence that *autonomous motivation* (*Self-Determination Theory*) can be a powerful tool for sustained motivation.

Specific Recommendations

First, the findings in this paper suggest that using a person with *source credibility* – with an 18-29-year-old audience – is an effective way to create *initial* support and interest in a digital project. This could be an important first step for policymakers, activists or social leaders who are eager to engage young adults in a variety of civic initiatives. The findings suggest that to create an initial "pull," which is strong enough to get young people involved, recruiting a person with sufficient trustworthiness and expertise can be an effective method of garnering such initial support; a celebrity brings with them a kind of *legacy capital* which can be effective in generating trust. This concept has been heavily used in marketing campaigns, where the use of celebrity endorsements is common. However, there is not yet a consensus on the benefits of such endorsements as results have been mixed (Knoll and Matthes 2016). Furthermore, famous performers are often used to promote social goals, such as Leonardo DiCaprio's support of biodiversity campaigns or Emma Watson's role in promoting gender equality through the United Nations' Women's programs. As in the marketing literature, there is not a consensus to what

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[42] As measured by number of backers and amount of money raised.

extent such promotions increase awareness or generate real action (Ding et al. 2010). The findings in this paper agree with the current literature that celebrity can create an interest in a project, but the case of CIG also suggests that celebrity may require *source credibility* to create trust and generate real action. The finding presented in this paper also suggest that this initial interest might not be sufficient for long-term engagement. Further research is needed in this area since this research focused on a digital project, while most civic engagement occurs in the physical space, and there is not yet a consensus to what extent *legacy capital* influences action (Keel and Nataraajan 2012).

Second, this paper found considerable support for the *Relationship Motivation Theory* (a *self-determination* sub-theory). The findings suggest that building a close relationship between organizational leadership and their followers, which creates *autonomous motivation* by encouraging autonomy and competence, can be an effective means of building trust and creating impetuous for action. In practical terms, this means that policymakers or their surrogates need to reach out to young people in ways and through mediums which youth understand (social media, gamification, crowdsourcing, etc.). Specifically, the findings suggest that applying the principles of *Relationship Motivational Theory* in digital crowdsourcing projects can be an effective way to build trust and motivate backers to stay engaged over an unusually long period.[43] This could be critical for civic leaders whose goal is to keep young people civically engaged rather than simply raise awareness or interest in an initiative (Kelly 2008). While raising issue awareness is important, it must be supplemented with tangible action for real social, economic or political change. This is important for policymakers who wish to attract young adults who are more likely to be civically engaged online through their virtual social networks (Chen 2016). It might be beneficial to target young adults through digital campaigns and leverage relationships already built with public leaders over such mediums. This is another area of potential future research as it is not yet clear to what extent, or through which mechanisms, digital trust and engagement can be translated into real-world civic engagement such as voting, volunteering or participating in debates (Chen 2016).

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[43] For their audience. As already discussed in this paper, the 18-29 year old gaming community typically has a much shorter attention span for such projects.

Third, the link between *source credibility* and *self-determination* has not yet been explored in the peer-reviewed literature. We know that celebrity itself is not always sufficient to create trust as organizational recognition and product brand play a mediating role. This suggests an interaction between the promoted organization and the celebrity (Spry et al. 2011). The nature of this relationship is not well understood (Biswas et al. 2009), but it is critical with a young audience who perceive celebrity participation as "a very important factor" in building trust and often look for these relationships in digital settings (Poturak and Kadric 2013). The findings from this research suggest that a leader with *source credibility* can enhance their perceived or actual trustworthiness and expertise by building a relationship using *autonomous motivation* through the concepts of relatedness, autonomy, and competence. I found that CIG leaderships' approach of empowering their backers and treating them as project stakeholders through various outreach methods was the key to achieving this. In other words, the credibility of the leadership was enhanced because they were willing to give backers an active voice in development and offer backers unique ways to stay involved. This seems to have increased the trust backers have in CIG leadership, thereby increasing their personal credibility. The exact mechanism of this transfer was not revealed in this study and needs to be examined in subsequent research. However, this research suggests that organizations which wish to keep a celebrity in a leadership role could use the *autonomous motivation* to enhance the leaders' *source credibility*.

Policy Implications

The social benefits of early involvement in civics are well documented (Putnam et al 2004, Duke et al 2009, Mithcell and Elwood 2012) but policymakers in Western Democracies have been unable to stop the decline of public trust in the political system (Putnam 2000, Rhan and Rudolph 2005, Stolle and Hoohe 2005). This problem is particularly acute amongst young adults who are typically least involved in real-world civics and often feel disenfranchised by current political and social leadership (PEW 2014). However, young adults are twice as likely to participate in civic activity online (PEW Survey) and there is some evidence that they are more susceptible to digital messaging (Loda et al. 2010, Smith 2012). While further research on this subject is necessary, this paper found that – at least in the context of crowdsourced digital projects – young people reacted well to CIG's digital attempts to built trust. This suggests that policymakers can consider a crowdsourced digital approach to campaigns to create action, and

move beyond relying heavily on digital technology primarily for messaging (Hendricks et al. 2016).

The findings in this paper also present a strong case for careful planning and execution of digital engagement strategies. It can be tempting for policymakers to create a presence for their initiatives on as many platforms as possible, perhaps with the hope that some of them will resonate. For example, many policymakers have many active social media accounts but often resort to others to manage their messaging. This can lead to over-extension of available resources and seriously hamper the ability to conduct a systematic digital campaign. The experience of CIG suggests that a highly focused strategy can be successful if senior leadership acts as a model for behavior and focuses on building a presence on a narrower range of platforms. For example, Chris Roberts' attempt to reach out to their backers is also mirrored by forum moderators, promotional staff, and others who interact with backers. Building these relationships can help foster a sense of a community and enhance what self-determination theory calls *relatedness*.

While management in the public sector is often different than that of the private sector (Arlbjørn and Freytag 2011), the importance of strategic planning and execution is universal. For example, the creation of the "Television Presidency" was not only due to Kennedy's natural charisma, but also largely thanks to a strategic vision which Kennedy and his team had for the medium. This vision was carefully translated into a series of tactical decisions ranging from content, such as topics and presentation, to technical decisions such as venue set-up and camera reel choice. This strategy was not static and was debated and adjusted throughout his presidency. Furthermore, the process of strategic planning is not only useful for thinking about the future but also considering the present, and CIG leadership is actively reflecting and adjusting their engagement strategy. As Peter Schwartz argues in *The Art of the Long View,* strategic planning includes "effective ways of framing the planning efforts that already take place, to further illuminate the decisions that are already being made" (Schwartz 1996). Incorporating such strategic planning therefore has the twin benefit of helping us thinking about present *and* future decisions. Without careful consideration of past and current decisions, it will be more difficult for policymakers to make the best possible decisions.

Finally, these findings also suggest that leadership in the public sector should place some consideration on the *digital source credibility* of the leader, as well as, their potential in encouraging *autonomous motivation* with young adults. According to the States of Change project at the Center for American Progress, in 2018 Millennials will become the largest vote-eligible generation, surpassing baby-boomers who have been the largest voting bloc for four decades (Brownstein 2017). We know that Millennials are far more active online and more likely to participate civically online (PEW Survey) which will make successful mobilization online more important in the future. Recruiting the correct staff and experts who have *source credibility* with a younger demographic and understanding how to create and sustain *autonomous motivation* online will likely become more important. It is too early to tell what impact these changes will have on the political, social and civic systems in the Western Democracies, but improving strategies for engaging young adults could improve civic engagement in general, and potentially benefit those policymakers who apply such strategies early.

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Section 4: Revisiting the First Presidential Debate: Messengers, Messages and Media

Leaders are always looking to exploit the most effective communication medium to bring their message to followers. There is a constant tug of war between more traditional and established media such as radio, television, and newspapers, and the newer forms of communications enabled by the creation of the Internet and the World Wide Web. In the United States, young people increasingly consume their news via digital tools such as social media, blogs, emails or podcasts and increasingly shun traditional sources (Marchi 2012). This is particularly true of young adults who are much more likely to be engaged politically online (PEW 2008) and targeting this demographic will become more important as the "post-internet" generations, starting with the Millennials, now "outnumber their parents" (Brownstein 2017).

While there is some evidence that young adults are more likely to turn to online sources for information, the evidence on the efficacy of online vs. traditional media is unclear (Sveningsson 2015). Indeed, this is not the first time society has gone through a significant communication transformation. The printing press, the telegram, telephone, radio, and television were all disruptive technologies. In democratic politics, a recent communication revolution occurred in the late 1950s and culminated with the 1960 televised presidential debates between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. It is also the first widely studied use of communication medium using modern methods (Self 2005), yet the role that the two dominant live mediums at the time – radio and television – played in the outcome of the debates, and ultimately the election, has not been given enough empirical attention.

The popular account of the time is that the outcome of the first debate set the tone for the rest of the 1960 campaign trail; Kennedy wooed a 100 million strong television audience through charm and good looks, while Nixon's message carried through on the radio (Mickelson 1972). Some have argued that this was a victory of style over substance (Schudson 1995, Self 2005) and that it was Kennedy's more likable persona which won over Nixon (White 1961). There is little doubt that Kennedy looked better than Nixon in the first televised debate, as Nixon himself admits, he refused makeup, was ill, and did not have sufficient time to prepare for the debate (Nixon 1978). However, good looks on their own are not sufficient to win someone's trust and the results of

research exploring the link between trust and beauty have been mixed without a clear consensus (Wang and Bowen 2014, Bascandziev and Harris 2013, Yuksel et al. 2017). This paper will re-examine the first debate through an experimental survey and will agree with some of the new literature that the medium did not matter as much as the message. In fact, Kennedy was the preferred candidate, irrespective of demographics, and crucially: irrespective of the tested mediums (video, audio, digital text).

Literature Review

Much of the historical narrative surrounding the first televised presidential debates places Kennedy as the key winner with the television audience while giving Nixon credit for winning over radio listeners. This interpretation has led some to argue that a television audience respond better to style rather than substance (Schudson 1995, Self 2005). The news media accepted this conclusion at the time and Bill Moyers would later summarize this sentiment by explaining that "Appearances were everything... radio audiences thought Nixon won the debate. But to TV audiences, he seemed nervous and uncomfortable" (Moyers 1984). This perception of the debate outcome led to concerns about television well before Robert Putnam highlighted the potential social impacts. In her book *Packaging the Presidency*, Kathleen Jamieson writes that "the tragedy of the first debate... was the that an aggregation of cues irrelevant to the audience's judgment" for a potential president played an important role in voter decision making. She suggests that "whether or not a candidate perspires under the hot studio lights should have no bearing on his possible performance as president" (Jamieson 1996).

However, some scholars have questioned these conclusions as there is a lack of empirical evidence to support the view that Kennedy won on television or that the voter was greatly persuaded by personal style. These conclusions are based on a handful of evidence which has some serious flaws. The first claim that Kennedy won the television audience is based on polls at the time of the first debate. Of the numerous polls conducted in late 1960, only one asked if the debate had been watched or listened, and therefore it was simply not possible that most polls gave Nixon a "clear advantage" with the radio audience - a common narrative at the time (Nixon 1962). While these polls did agree that Kennedy won the first debate, the evidence for a Nixon radio victory all came from a single telephone poll conducted by Sindlinger and Co.

There are two methodological concerns with the Sindlinger poll which pose some challenges to its validity. First, there are problems with the sample size. Sindlinger claimed that a sample size of "approximately 3000" would be large enough, yet this "inexplicably dropped to 2138" of which only 292 were radio listeners and only 178 expressed an opinion about the debate (Vancil & Pendell 1987). This is far too small a sample for a national population of about 180 million (US Census) and is unlikely to be representative of all radio listeners across the country (Morse 2000). Since Sindlinger did not publish all their data or complete methodology, it is not possible to discuss any remedies they took before reaching their conclusion or any areas where their conclusions might be applicable. However, it is very unlikely that a sample of 178 listeners, over 50 states, represents the "average" radio listener.

Second, Sindlinger did not collect any information on partisan affiliation, voting history or religious views. This is problematic because there were likely systematic differences between television and radio listeners in 1960. For example, a more conservative, Protestant audience were more likely to favor Nixon, and many did ultimately choose to vote for Nixon in what would be a very close election (Nevin 2017). This poses a serious issue as "radio listeners were more likely to be from rural areas who lacked television access or west coasters who, due to the time of the debate, listened to it during their workday commute;" both were groups which leaned Republican (Bruschke & Divine 2017). Burschke and Divine further question this outcome by pointing to another Sindlinger poll conducted after the third debate which found that only 4.4% of those sampled said their preferred candidate lost the debate. Even if radio listeners were primarily Republican-leaning it would still have taken a considerable "defection" of Democratic radio listeners in order for Nixon to have won a 2-1 margin with radio listeners as reported by Sindlinger (Vancil & Pendell 1987). Given that Kennedy won the election, such a large defection towards the end of the 1960 campaign seems unlikely. In addition, the Sindlinger results are not consistent with other polls at the time. For example, a Gallup poll conducted at the time found that almost twice as many people thought that Kennedy won the first debate (Gallup 1960). While others polls presented similar data at the time, none asked how the debate was consumed

(Bruschke & Divine 2017), but it is unlikely that the consensus results of all other polls - in contradiction to the one conducted by Sindlinger - was wrong.[44]

The second source which seems to support the conclusion that Kennedy was more likable on television, and therefore won the television audience, is an experiment conducted at the University of Minnesota and published in 2003. Durckman sampled 210 University of Minnesota students and exposed them to half of the first presidential debate in an experimental setting: students were randomly assigned to either watch or listen to the debate (Druckman 2005). This study found that, on a scale of 1-7 (low numbers for Kennedy and high for Nixon), "television viewers (2.57, with a standard deviation of 1.4) were significantly more likely to think that Kennedy won the debate than audio listeners (3.28, 1.3)" with a reported p-value of less than 0.01. Druckman suggests that this is evidence that television, by "enhancing the impact of image," can sway voter decisions and supports the argument that Kennedy won the first debate due to the large television audience.

There are two major issues with this study, however. First, with a theoretical mean of 3.5 on a 1-7 scale, a result of 3.28 for radio listeners still suggests that Kennedy won, although not as convincingly as with television. While image could have played a role in this result, I do not believe that the outcome is sufficient to conclude that this lead Nixon to win with the radio audience. It also does not mirror the almost 2-1 radio results in favor for Nixon reported by the Sindlinger poll. Second, much like the Sindlinger results in 1960, Druckman did not collect party affiliation data or ideological leaning from his students. Therefore, potential biases are not controlled as name and party recognition could skew results. While Druckman is probably correct that images can influence behavior, this is not sufficient evidence to conclude that television played such a significant mediating role in the first debate. Pendell and Vancill (1990) conducted the only other experiment which attempt to replicate the first debate in this manner, however, they found no differences between the two mediums with or without controlling for party affiliation. This paper will add to this discussion by conducting an experiment similar to

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[44] There were two other anecdotal accounts which support the popular narrative from the Sindlinger poll. One is based on reactions at a governor's conference and the second based on interviews with a few people in the street in Atlanta (Kraus 1996). Neither of these offer empirical evidence which supports the Sindlinger poll.

the two discussed but controlling for party affiliation and also add a digital communication medium (online forums).

The majority of empirical evidence from the time has been largely overlooked. It suggests that Kennedy won the first debate - and likely irrespective of the medium. If the impact of television was not significant enough to sway the first debate for Kennedy, then why did Kennedy carry the first debate? Some observers have pointed out that the first debate was bland (White 1961) and excitement was likely over a new form of political debate which was also carried on a novel medium. There was very little new material in this debate as neither candidate outlined any new or surprising policy positions. A more likely explanation for Kennedy's victory was that Nixon was too defensive and his strategy in the debate was to attack the means not the goals of Kennedy's policies. In fact, the very first thing Nixon says in the debate is "The things that Senator Kennedy has said many of us can agree with" (JFK Paper 1960). Nixon would spend much of the debate on the defensive and is something that he acknowledged (Nixon 1978 – pp. 219). He was simply not prepared to deal with an aggressive Kennedy. A good example was Kennedy's attempt at leveling the playing field by suggesting that his and Nixon's political experience was comparable – they had both served in the Senate, but Nixon had also served as Vice President. Yet when Kennedy omitted this experience when comparing himself to Nixon, and Nixon was asked to respond, he simply replied: "I have no comment" (JFK Paper 1960). Nixon spent a great deal of time defending his points, and the Eisenhower administration's domestic policy, and not enough time making "an overall case of himself" (Bruschke & Divine 2017) or attacking Kennedy's positions or experience - as his campaign was otherwise doing.

Second, the topic of the first debate was agreed to be limited to domestic issues. Domestic policy is an area where Democrats have often done well, and the focus of this debate would better serve Kennedy. Indeed, this was mirrored by general polls as in August 1960, Nixon held a 6 point lead over Kennedy (Gallup 2008), but after the debate, the lead had eroded. Nixon himself would admit that agreeing to contain the policy discussion only to domestic issues was a strategic mistake (Nixon 1978, pp. 217-218) and he would insist the following debates focus on other issues. When Kennedy approached Nixon about setting up a fifth debate and revisit discussed topics – including domestic topics on which Kennedy had an edge – Nixon responded to

Kennedy that "in our last two debates some of the same ground has already been covered" and that questions "may become repetitive" (Nixon 1960). Since Kennedy was better prepared for the first debate, was debating on a topic in which his party held an advantage, was not suffering from illness, and was well rested, it should be no surprise that he performed better than Nixon. The first debate was stacked in Kennedy's favor, not necessarily due to the television, but due to the topic choices which Kennedy and Nixon had agreed to and Nixon's own mistakes.

It should also be noted that debates can favor less experienced candidates. When appearing next to a more experienced candidate, an inexperienced candidate can gain "equal stature" by sharing a common stage (Bruschke & Divine 2017). Nixon was advised against the debates by his advisers since part of the case they had built against Kennedy was his lack of experience (a topic brought up by the press in the first debate). Kennedy also faced bias due to his Irish, Catholic roots and there is some evidence that unfairly disadvantages subjects can earn support when such biases are invoked (Vendello et al. 2007, Michniweicz & Vandello 2013, Shirai 2017). Despite recommendations by his advisers who saw the risks of a debate, Nixon pushed ahead with all three debates, as he was confident that he would defeat the less experienced Kennedy. He would be proven correct in their subsequent debates.[45]

An objective reading of the evidence, therefore, casts some doubt on the popular interpretation of the results of the first presidential debate. It is not clear if television was more important for Kennedy or radio for Nixon, and it is also not clear what role charisma or attractiveness played in voter decision making calculus. While Nixon had not yet recovered from his illness (Nixon 1978), was underweight and looked "pale" - and possibly still running a fever - (Allen), there is insufficient evidence that attractiveness played a significant mediating role. Kennedy likely carried both audiences – a result which has been replicated experimentally. However, these experiments did not attempt to remove the bias which both the Nixon and Kennedy names bring to any such experiment or for ideological leaning, and one (Druckiman 2003) did not control for party affiliation. This paper will attempt to build on the two experiments already done by controlling for a number of important, omitted variables and use an anonymous message to

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[45] By many accounts Nixon had performed better than Kennedy in the remaining debates and clearly won them (Kraus 2001).

attempt to account for name recognition bias. The goal of this paper is to experimentally test how much communication medium matters in candidate trust.

Experimental Survey

This study recruited 104 undergraduate students at The University of Texas at Austin who took an experimental survey designed to test the hypothesis that Kennedy won the television audience and Nixon the radio audience in their first presidential debate. Students were offered a $10 incentive to participate in the study and represented a wide range of majors. All students were older than 18 and were not given the title or subject of the study until after it was completed. In this sample, 54% of students identified as white, 23% as Hispanic, 17% as Asian, 2% Black and 2% as other, and 55% identified as male. Also, 47% identified as Democrats, 13% as Republicans, 20% as Independent and 20% did not to disclose their political affiliation. Much like the experiment which Druckman conducted in 2005, students were randomly assigned to experimental groups - one of which watched the debate and another who listened to it.

This study adds to the current literature by adding two more groups to test for differences in trust for a digital medium. The debate was transcribed into a typical online discussion forum format. Since the 1960 debate was more structured than the most recent televised debates, and the candidates stuck to a simple back-and-forth on fielded questions without interruptions, it was relatively straightforward to transcribe the debate into an online discussion forum format. Two such groups were included in this study: one where the context was made clear to students at the start and the second was anonymous where any references which might immediately betray the discussion as the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debate was removed. For example, when the candidates referenced each other their names were replaced with "candidate" or where Eisenhower was invoked his name was replaced with "president." In total 4 (15%) students recognized that they were reading an anonymized, transcribed format of the first Kennedy-Nixon debate (out of 26 who were assigned to that group). Table 4.1 has a complete breakdown of the four groups with their choice for most trustworthy and most likable candidate:

Table 4.1: Summary Preference Results

Group	Total Students	Kennedy More Trustworthy	Kennedy More Likeable
Video	26	77%	81%
Audio	26	62%	65%
Forum	26	73%	81%
ForumAnon	26	77%	73%

Trust and likeability were measured as a binary variable. Students were asked which candidate they found more trustworthy after they were exposed to the entire debate. The anonymous forum discussion group was simply asked if they prefer Candidate A or B (as they were labeled in the text). Kennedy was assigned A, because he fielded the first question. Students were also asked whom they found more likable or charismatic in the debate based on the discussion they saw, heard or read. The definition of likeability was left up to the students and how students define "charisma" was not explored in this study and is not directly relevant to this discussion.

Results Discussion

As with previous studies, this experiment found that students who listened to the debate were slightly less likely to pick Kennedy as the winner. However, none of the differences between the groups proved to be statistically significant. This held true when comparing groups on trustworthiness and likeability. These results suggest Kennedy was judged more trustworthy and more likable regardless of the medium and supports the results found by Pandell and Vacill (1990) and is consistent with the analysis of polling data from 1960 conducted by Burschke and Divine (2017). The relevant p-values for t-test are presented in tables 4.2 and 4.3 below.

Table 4.2: Trust Var (T-test p values)

	Video	Audio	Forum	Forum An
Video	-	0.24	0.75	1.00
Audio		-	0.39	0.24
Forum			-	0.75
ForumAn				-

Table 4.3: Likeability Var (T-test p values)

	Video	Audio	Forum	Forum An
Video	-	0.22	1.00	0.52
Audio		-	0.22	0.56
Forum			-	0.52
ForumAn				-

These results are also not that different from Druckman's (2005), who also found that Kennedy won the overall debate. However, as already discussed, Druckman found statistically significant differences between the audio and video groups, while this study did not. Criticism of the

Sindlinger poll conducted in 1960 and Druckman's study has focused on their lack of control for party affiliation or ideological leaning. I tested for these effects in this study by using logistic regressions and comparing weighted and un-weighted results for both the trust and likeability variables. The results were as predicted: party affiliation can matter and could influence results.

Table 4.4: Logit Reg Weighted (Trust for Kennedy)

Odds Ratio, Kennedy, Weighted (Party)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
E_Audio	0.37 (0.307)	0.71 (0.593)	0.72 (0.599)	0.68 (0.603)
E_Forum	1.40 (1.302)	3.12 (3.19)	3.09 (3.077)	2.86 (3.103)
E_AnonF	0.32 (0.261)	0.39 (0.287)	0.4 (0.284)	0.38 (0.341)
Rep		0.07 (0.073)***	0.08 (0.076)***	0.07 (0.070)***
Ind		0.52 (0.345)	0.50 (0.328)	0.53 (0.357)
Ideology		1.14 (0.317)	1.14 (0.309)	1.18 (0.331)
Delivery (1) - Content (5)			0.88 (0.273)	0.98 (0.343)
Civic Engage Score				1.05 (0.154)
Black				*omitted*
Hisplanic				0.43 (0.317)
Asian/P. Island				0.97 (0.822)
Other				0.26 (0.292)
Female				0.99 (0.661)
Cons	3.11 (1.973)	3.96 (4.033)	3.35 (4.659)	4.19 (6.692)
Pseudo-R^2	0.0626	0.1909	0.1929	0.2065
Obs	83	81	81	78

Table 4.4 presents the logit regression odds ratios (and standard errors) with probability weights to account for the underrepresentation of Republicans in the sample.[46] The video audience is used as the baseline and results are shown for exposure to audio (E_Audio), forum (E_Forum) and anonymous forum (E_AnonF). In the basic model (Model 1) none of the differences are

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[46] Three stars indicate a statistical significance of higher than 99%; two stars indicate 95%; one star indicates 90%. This holds for all tables in this paper.

statistically significant as expected. However, in Model 2, where party affiliation was controlled (Democrat is the baseline), this study found that political affiliation was a powerful predictor of a student's choice of trust. Republican students were 93% less likely to pick Kennedy as the more trustworthy candidate, while the mediums were not statistically significant. No difference was found for Independents. Self-reported ideological leaning (on a 1 to 7 scale) was not statistically significant and its inclusion in the model did not change the results.[47] Model 4 included demographic and other individual characteristics such as a Civic Engagement Score which is computed based on the number of civic activities a student participates - the more civic activity a student partakes in, the higher the score.[48] None of these variables were found to be statistically significant, nor did they impact the results from Model 2. Results for black students were omitted as they were perfectly predicted due to underrepresentation in the sample. Excluding the smallest ethnic groups in this sample did not change the statistical significance of results.

Table 4.5: Logit Reg (Trust for Kennedy)

Odds Ratio, Kennedy	Full
E_Audio	0.53 (0.379)
E_Forum	0.73 (0.529)
E_AnonF	0.78 (0.572)
Rep	0.19 (0.182)*
Ind	0.42 (0.319)
Ideology	0.92 (0.228)
Delivery (1) - Content (5)	0.68 (0.162)
Civic Engage Score	1.02 (0.139)
Black	*omitted*
Hisplanic	0.99 (0.551)
Asian/P. Island	1.21 (0.846)
Other	0.69 (1.176)
Female	0.54 (0.3)
Cons	20.05 (28.299)
Pseudo-R^2	0.1113
Obs	98

The importance of party affiliation did not appear in the un-weighted results. For reference, Table 4.5 is included below and contains a replicated full model (Model 4 from Table 4.4) without adjustment for the underrepresentation of

[47] There is ideological deviation across both political parties and it is possible that students interpreted their own ideological position on the liberal-conservative spectrum differently from each other (even if in the same party). Additionally, the ideological positions of the two parties has shifted somewhat since 1960 and this could also have had an impact on the ideology variable.

[48] Students were asked if they participated in the past 12 months in the following ways: volunteered, participated in peaceful protest, contacted an elected official, voted, persuaded others how to vote, collect political information online, and participated in online activism. The Civic Engagement Score was the sum of the number of activities they indicated.

Republicans. As expected, the effect of party affiliation is smaller and is statistically significant at the somewhat lower threshold at p-value of 0.1. This hints at the importance of party affiliation in this trust decision and suggests that party affiliation could explain the differences found in the Sindlinger 1960 poll and Druckman's (2005) experiment.

Table 4.6: Logit Reg Weighted (Like for Kennedy)

Odds Ratio, Kennedy, Weighted (Party)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
E_Audio	0.38 (0.306)	0.54 (0.410)	0.52 (0.400)	0.52 (0.433)
E_Forum	5.49 (5.447)*	8.65 (9.986)*	9.12 (11.009)*	7.56 (9.747)*
E_AnonF	0.39 (0.325)	0.43 (0.347)	0.44 (0.355)	0.37 (0.339)
Rep		0.26 (0.259)	0.24 (0.245)	0.20 (0.208)
Ind		0.71 (0.460)	0.77 (0.502)	0.66 (0.452)
Ideology		0.96 (0.264)	0.97 (0.273)	1.07 (0.309)
Delivery (1) - Content (5)			1.23 (0.395)	1.36 (0.495)
Civic Engage Score				1.30 (0.226)
Black				*omitted*
Hisplanic				1.05 (0.846)
Asian/P. Island				3.85 (3.526)
Other				0.386 (0.462)
Female				0.82 (0.545)
Cons	3.11 (1.973)	4.97 (4.7)	3.08 (0.395)	0.78 (1.290)
Pseudo-R^2	0.1234	0.1775	0.1826	0.2247
Obs	83	81	81	78

The results for likeability were only slightly different. Party affiliation no longer mattered and there were some detected differences between the mediums. Specifically, those who read the debate in a discussion forum format were more than 8 times as likely (than the video group) to pick Kennedy as the more likable candidate (when controlling for party affiliation). However, these results are only statistically significant at the 90% level and only when the sample is weight-adjusted to account for the underrepresentation of Republicans (compare Table 4.6 to 4.7 as for trust above). There are some reasons why this could have occurred. First, the non-

anonymous forum included a picture of Kennedy and Nixon taken from the debate. It is possible that the constant "face shot" of the candidates exacerbated Nixon's looks problem[49] in this first debate. In the televised clip, the camera focused not only on the candidates - and not always an up-close shot - but also switched to the moderator and the journalists. Bias could have been introduced as Kennedy, by contrast, was well-rested and wore appropriate make-up. While none of the students who chose to answer an open-ended question about their choice noted the candidates' physical appearance as an issue when choosing whom they trust, it is not possible to rule out a subconscious bias effect (Beckes et al. 2013).

Table 4.7: Logit Reg (Like for Kennedy)

Odds Ratio, Kennedy	Full
E_Audio	0.43 (0.332)
E_Forum	1.21 (1.035)
E_AnonF	0.57 (0.437)
Rep	0.35 (0.4)
Ind	0.48 (0.319)
Ideology	0.86 (0.231)
Delivery (1) - Content (5)	0.88 (0.226)
Civic Engage Score	1.16 (0.171)
Black	*omitted*
Hisplanic	0.7 (0.42)
Asian/P. Island	2.91 (2.530)
Other	0.55 (0.906)
Female	0.59 (0.35)
Cons	10.58 (15.871)
Pseudo-R^2	0.1178
Obs	98

Second, these differences could be the result of random sampling. Since only four students from the forum discussion group picked Nixon as the more likable personality, it is simply not possible to run a meaningful statistical analysis on this sub-group. There were also no clues in the optional short answer section as none of these students chose to qualify their choice. There were also no clear patterns as party affiliation and demographics were mixed for these four students who preferred Nixon. It is simply not possible to drawn any useful conclusions from this data and a larger sample size would be necessary for further statistical analysis.

Finally, I ran a series of logic regressions adding the likeability response as an independent variable. Research suggests that there is a correlation between those we trust and we those we

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[49] As already discussed, Nixon had been ill and refused make-up.

find charismatic or otherwise likable, although the strength of this relationship is not consistent (Fanelli et al. 2009, Beck et al 2012). As with the original model predicting trust (Table 4.4) the medium used is not statistically significant, but likeability and party affiliation are. As presented in Table 4,8 below (Model 2), those who like Kennedy are far more likely to pick him as the more trustworthy candidate and party affiliation still matters.

Table 4.8: Logit Reg Weighted (Trust for Kennedy)

Odds Ratio, Kennedy, Weighted (Party)	Model 1	Model 2
Like Kennedy	196.96 (190.825)***	502.69 (563.409)***
E_Audio	0.59 (0.517)	2.04 (2.338)
E_Forum	0.24 (0.295)	1.01 (1.526)
E_AnonF	0.28 (0.455)	0.52 (0.851)
Rep		0.00 (0.008)***
Ind		0.26 (0.328)
Ideology		2.12 (1.292)
Cons	0.13 (0.129)**	0.025 (0.063)
Pseudo-R^2	0.5714	0.6682
Obs	83	81

These results indicate that control for party affiliation is necessary when analyzing the first presidential debate between Kennedy and Nixon and suggests that the results collected by Sindlinger could indeed be biased. If party affiliation still matters for a debate that took place more than 50 years ago, is it highly likely that it mattered in 1960 when the candidates and the issues were more salient than today. Kennedy's small margin of victory over Nixon - a vote that went along party lines (White 1961) - is perhaps an indication that party affiliation played a role in the choice of candidate. The choice of medium, however, did likely *not* play a role in students' choices in this experiment.

Limitations

It is important to qualify a few limitations of this study before discussing the implications of the results. First, while 104 students took part in this study when split into four experimental groups the power of the results drop accordingly. Statistically speaking, smaller sample size can increase

the likelihood of a Type II error: a failure to reject the null-hypothesis (Columb and Atkison 2016). In this study, a Type II error would lead to the conclusion that exposure to different mediums for the first debate did not lead to any meaningful differences in trust. However, this is unlikely to be an issue in this study as the sample used in the t-tests (24), and the logistic regressions (min 78) are sufficiently large (Winter 2013). Also, the study results are in agreement with those found by previous empirical studies.

This experiment used undergraduate students, which while a common strategy in academic papers, has some potential drawbacks. First, undergraduate students are not the ideal candidates for subject matter which requires specific expertise (Ford 2017). Since this study did not require any unique expertise, it is unlikely that using a student body invalidates the results presented in this paper. Second, undergraduate students are generally more left-leaning than the general population (CIRCLE 2016, PEW 2008). In the sample used in this survey, there were three times as many students who identified as Democrats (47%) than Republicans (13%). The imbalance due to this over-representation of Democrats can skew results in political or policy experiments (Vancil & Pendell 1987) as such partisanship "induces individuals to evaluate members of their group more favorable than members of opposing (party) groups" (Gerber et al. 2010). This experiment addressed this concern by adjusting results with a probability weight, which have been discussed above. It is clear from this experiment that party affiliation *could* have a statistically significant impact on candidate preference.

There is likely a degree of bias present in any experiment which relies on subjects' opinions of historically significant figures; as E.H. Carr warned, "we can view the past... only through the eyes of the present" (Carr 1961). This experiment tried to control for these by introducing the anonymous forum discussion group. Since the anonymous group had (statistically) the same preference for Kennedy as the non-anonymous groups, it suggests that the presence of this bias might not have been very strong. The actual responses of the students who were in the anonymous group also suggest a similar conclusion. Only 4 recognized it as the first debate and 20 did not. Of those four, one admitted that it probably swayed their opinion, while the others claimed it do not. Likewise, four students who did not recognize the debate said they would change their answer (who they found more trustworthy) after they were told that this was the first

Kennedy-Nixon debate. Two of those had initially chosen Kennedy as more trustworthy and two chose Nixon; all explained it was due to the historical weight of the two candidates. While it is impossible to rule out the presence of historical biases[50], the results - and students responses - generally do not indicate that it played a significant role.

Finally, all experimental studies comparing past televised events will not capture the early excitement of a novel and new technology, or the novelty of the first presidential debate. Thomas Hood, observed the human fascination with the new and exciting more than 200 years ago when he commented that "there are three things which the public will always clamor for, sooner or later: namely, Novelty, novelty, novelty" (Darwin 1980). Research has confirmed that some people find a psychological and biological reward in the pursuit of novelty (Cloninger 1987, Bevins 2001, Lehman and Stanley 2011). New technology has been found to generate such novelty effects ranging from genetically modified foods (Hill et al. 1998) to business systems (Dastidar 2015). In addition, research into technology adoption and diffusion has found demographic differences between early adopters and those who adopt later (Kennedy and Funk 2016). Television was not "new" in 1960, but it was not until the late 1950s that television sets became prevalent in US homes (TV History) - presidential debates, however, were new. It is not possible to rule out that Kennedy - who had championed television for years before running for president, and who pushed for the debates - benefited from television exposure due to a "novelty factor." None of the debate polls in 1960 captured attitudes towards television or new technology and none of the experimental studies examining the first debate, including this one, have controlled for a potential novelty effect. Given that Kennedy won the popular vote by 0.1% it is not possible to rule that a novelty factor, associated with the television, tipped the election in favor of the candidate who publicly supported those novel ideas.

Conclusion

There is often an intuitive sense that the medium, the message, and the messenger all matter, but solid empirical evidence is harder find. It is difficult to determine which matters more and under which circumstances. The first televised presidential debate is a good example of this

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[50] The same biases are true of historians and the selection of a historical subject itself betrays preferences. The choice of the first Kennedy-Nixon debate for this paper was deliberate as it was the first televised debate and has been studied in some detail.

phenomenon as poor empirical evidence was taken at face value when it was propped up by convincing anecdotal evidence. However, the apparently logical conclusion was wrong: Kennedy did not win the first debate because of the television. Rather, Kennedy debated better than Nixon for many reasons, many of which were Nixon's own fault. Kennedy was better prepared, he was not ill and was well rested, he accepted make-up, and crucially, he was debating domestic topics which were a distinct Democratic advantage at the time (Nixon 1978). Yet, despite contradictory evidence from numerous polls, the media and the public latched onto the explanation that Kennedy won because he looked better on television, perhaps because the explanation offered by the Sindlinger poll (that Kennedy carried the television audience and Nixon the radio listeners) gave power to a novel and revolutionary communication medium.

As discussed in this paper, there is actually no statistical evidence that viewing the first debate resulted in a different preference than listening or reading. The experiment presented here agrees with those conclusions and adds that reading the debate (anonymous or not) does not produce any statistical differences in preference for Kennedy or Nixon. In this case, the medium did not matter as much as the message or the messenger. As Burschke and Divine (2017) have pointed out, the debate was on a topic on which the Democrats had an advantage (a fact recognized by Nixon as well) and polls at the time supported this conclusion - independent voters were more likely to side with Democratic than Republican policy messaging. Republicans, however, were generally not swayed by Democratic arguments and party politics was alive and well in 1960. Party affiliation, therefore, played an important role in 1960 and the experiment presented here found the same conclusion: Republicans were less likely to choose Kennedy than Nixon as more trustworthy. These results were also found in the anonymous group where students did not know that they were reading the first Kennedy-Nixon presidential debate.

The messenger's charisma also matters as we are more likely to trust those whom we find likable. While research on this topic has been mixed (Wang and Bowen 2014, Bascandziev and Harris 2013, Yuksel et al. 2017), this experiment supports the assertion that there is a relationship between trust and likeability - at least in the political sphere. In this case, someone who found Kennedy more likable than Nixon was likely also to find Kennedy more trustworthy. These results were consistent across all four experimental groups and suggest that in policy debates

likeability (based on speech, looks or mannerisms) is a good predictor of early trust. While the non-anonymous groups could have been influenced by *a priori* opinions of Kennedy or Nixon, the anonymous group was not and had results consistent with the all three non-anonymous groups. However, it should be noted that the anonymous group did not include visual or audio elements and therefore I cannot rule out that there are specific visual or audio clues that could have influenced likeability. Unfortunately, the sample size in this experiment was not large enough to allow for in-group analysis to draw further conclusions.

The important question for politicians seeking office is, therefore, when does the message and messenger matter? I stipulate that it may have little influence with those voters who have a strong preference as they have already have decided who they trust more - a decision likely driven by political party identification. This is consistent with the research already conducted in this field. Daniel Kahneman found that there are two different mental systems at work when we make decisions: the more intuitive "system 1" and the deliberate "system 2" (Kahneman 2013, pp. 92-94). We often rely on system 1 to make quick "intuitive judgments" with "little or no effort" in many daily activities (Kahneman 2013, pp. 89-90). The same is also true for political judgment where a link between likeability - specifically physical characteristics - is a good predictor of initial trust and political preference (Ballew and Todorov 2007). However, this is true for "information poor and TV-prone voters" more so than for those who are better informed (Kahneman 2013, pp 91) and this effect is no more pronounced today than it was in 1960 (Hayes 2008). Moreover, researchers have found that the effects of likeability on television is not as good a predictor of voting behavior as are: party affiliation, voter education, or "urbanization of voters' locality" (Elmelund-Præstekær and Hopmann 2012). Since by the time of the first televised debate on September 26, 1960, the candidates had been debating for months, it is likely that many voters had already become well informed of their positions. In addition, the newspaper was still the primary source for political news and there were very few voters who relied primarily on television (Baughman 1993). This research casts further doubt on the common interpretation that the first presidential debate was carried by Kennedy primarily due to his likeability on television.

This paper does not suggest that only the message and the messenger matter: the choice of medium is important and should not be overlooked. As already noted: different demographic groups are more likely to use the radio, television or internet as their primary source of political or policy news. We know that in rural areas the radio was more prolific than the television in the 1960s (Bruschke & Divine 2017) or that today young voters are more likely to rely on the internet for political news than television, radio or newspapers (Pew 2008, Marchi 2012, Xiaoming et al. 2014). Such information is important since different media platforms are more likely to reach the desired audience, specifically the undecided voters. If policymakers today are serious about engaging young voters then their choice of medium is relevant since the the right message and the right messenger still needs to be heard by the target audience.

Policy Implications

Political debates play an important part in modern democratic societies. Real-time broadcasting has opened a window into the political process and brought an additional degree of transparency via the *fourth estate*. The implications and the power of television was not lost on Senator Kennedy who in 1959 remarked that:

> *The searching eye of the television camera scrutinizes the candidates-and the way they are picked. Party leaders are less willing to run roughshod over the voters' wishes and hand-pick an unknown, unappealing or unpopular in the traditional "smoke- filled room" when millions of voters are watching, comparing and remembering.*
> (Kennedy 1959)

The Internet and the World Wide Web has had a similar effect as more governments strive to increase transparency through various e-government initiatives including the publication of documents and government collected data.   There is more government published data available today in democratic societies than ever before. But for technological tools to be put to best use policymakers must have a better understanding of the roles and limitations of communications tools, as well as a good understanding of which audience is accessible through which medium. This has important implications for democratic societies and policymakers who see the value of a civically engaged youth.

The importance of early interest in civic and political education for life-long engagement in civic activity has been well documented (Hart et al. 2007, Flanagan et al. 2012). It is important that policymakers reach out to youth, especially the 18-29-year-old who are typically least civically engaged, but to do this effectively policymakers need to understand the opportunities and the limitations of the mediums they choose. As this paper, and others have demonstrated, the effect of images - which can be powerful tools - has likely been overestimated when compared to audio or digitized text. While images play an important role in forming our initial impressions, they are not immune to change and are often overridden by political information and education (Kahneman 2013). Relying on political figures who are likable is also not sufficient as our own personal characteristics, particularly political party preference, play a very significant role: a charismatic or otherwise likable Democrat is not likely to convince a Republican to switch their voting history, or *vice-versa.* Charisma alone is also *not* likely to have a long-term effect on non-party aligned voters as personal demographic characteristics play a much larger role in our civic behavior (Elmelund-Præstekær and Hopmann 2012).

These limitations, however, do not make any communication tool, be it traditional radio and television or the newer social media and online discussion boards, irrelevant or useless. The findings of this paper suggest that political parties need be careful in their candidate selection since likeability is clearly important in building trust, but choosing charismatic leaders alone is not sufficient. If the goal is to reach "independent" voters then reaching across the aisle and moving beyond partisan politics can be a useful strategy to win votes. The average voter should be given far more credit and not be taken for granted as, for most, the choice of whom to vote for is not driven solely by physical likeability. The voting decisions, or calculus, for most voters is complex and relies on a many factors beyond just the physical appearance of a candidate and includes: social concerns, party loyalty, style of debates, demographics, and family voting history, among many others (Ballew and Todorov 2007, Edlin et al. 2007, Kedar 2012, Singh and Roy 2014, Han and Calfano 2018). It is therefore risky to deconstruct voter preferences and assume that their favor can be carried in the long-term through charisma alone.

The right candidate and the right message, still need to be transmitted with the correct medium. In 1960 the first debate between Kennedy and Nixon was broadcast on television and radio. The perception that Kennedy won on television because of his looks - and that style carried a greater weight on television than on the radio - persisted for decades (and still does today), but the reasons for the reported differences were not necessarily due to Kennedy's charisma. The two mediums, television and radio, reached a very different audience who - on average - had a different political party preference and were also already well versed on the candidate's positions after months of campaigning. In other words: Kennedy was speaking to his supporters on the television, while Nixon spoke to his on the radio. In this way, the same debate could have found two different audiences, who also voted along party lines. The true question, which we cannot answer with certainty for the 1960 election, is: how many independent voters did Kennedy convince in the debate and how many did Nixon? Given the very close results - and close polling - any small edge granted by the television to Kennedy could have helped him carry the popular vote, but only if that also influenced undecided voters. This is a critical question and one that policymakers today need consider as choices over venue or media appearances always need to made by candidates and are driven by monetary or temporal concerns.

Finally, none of these tools are proof against bad decisions or poor leadership. Democratic societies have had successful and failed leaders irrespective of the presence of radio, television, digital debates, or other messaging tools. While the low barrier to entry for Internet-based campaigning makes it an attractive option, there is still a choice to be made regarding the platforms used and all need to be planned and to some extent managed. There are also limits to the ability of digital tools to truly reach undecided voters as even small biases can cause self-stratification or "cyberbalkanization"; many people do not look for alternative sources of information online, but rather visit sites and virtually socialize with people with whom they already have common views[51] (Alystne and Brynjolfsson 1997). There is evidence that some youth (aged 16-21) do seek out both echo-chambers *and* divergent perspectives (Kahne et al. 2011) however these often lead to an increased "ideological distance between individuals" as their positions are usually hardened by divergent opinions (Flaxman et al. 2016). A careful survey of the various online engagement options is necessary to isolate further those mediums or

[51] This is especially true of social media which relies on existing social networks.

portals which promote consumption of divergent opinions, and more research will be required to determine under which conditions such mediums encourage true debate. In addition, further research might be needed to study the effects which polarization itself has on communication tools and how it impacts our news and policy information consumption online. Without better understanding policy makers risk amplifying the effects of online echo-chambers and further polarizing society. Kennedy's warning about television is therefore especially apt here:

> *But political success on television is not, unfortunately, limited only to those who deserve it. It is a medium which lends itself to manipulation, exploitation and gimmicks. It can be abused by demagogs, by appeals to emotion and prejudice and ignorance.* (Kennedy 1959)

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Section 5: Conclusion: Rethinking Digital Technology

Policy and public debate about digital technologies is often framed in terms of positive and negative, or simplified to "good" and "bad." While these discussions can be relevant, and the impact worthy of analysis, they have also led to a binary way of thinking, with policymakers often falling on the regulate or deregulate side of the debate. For example, in 2017 the heavily debated "net neutrality" rules at the FCC were changed as opponents of regulation argued that the rule was an overreach which stifled "openness, and freedom" and was a "bad" decision (FCC 2018). This was countered by attempts at the federal (Kang 2018) and state level (SB 822 2018) by policymakers who prefer regulation. A similar binary way of thinking about digital technology also predominates online video games and social media as policymakers debate the merits of different kinds of regulation in the aftermath of the latest tragic school shooting. In these cases, the technology *itself* is often labeled as either good or bad, desirable or undesirable.

There is little doubt that understanding the impacts of digital society is important, but regulation will not curtail the advancement of these technologies. The internet and the technologies which are built on its framework, from e-commerce and social media to video games and crowdsourcing, will play an increasingly larger role in our society whether we regulate it or not. Binary thinking, which often leads to an interpretation of new technology as "good" or "bad" - especially in the media and popular culture[52] - does not lead to constructive debate. Rather than focus so heavily on how (not) to regulate digital technologies, policymakers should consider ways to integrate digital technology into the policymaking process as tools to build trust and encourage civic engagement. Such directional thinking is more likely to produce positive and nuanced results and is often linked to more positive outcomes (Pristley 2015). It is also more likely to resonate with young voters who have adopted these technologies and who see it as an integral part of their world and a key component of the future.

Asking critical, open-ended questions is important if we want to see a real change in thinking because questions frame how we think about issues. Without asking questions which encourage

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[52] A simple search on Google for "is digital tech..." automatically completes with "good or bad" indicating that this is the most popular follow up when searching. Similar, although more varied results, are also suggested on Bing and Yahoo search engines (as of March 15, 2018).

directional thinking, it will be much more difficult to see digital tools as potential opportunities rather than problems best addressed through regulation and law. If we do not make such a shift and approach technological changes as potential opportunities, we will continue to stumble and alienate younger members of society who are likely to see complex legal battles for the digital space as attacks on their beliefs by "out-of-touch" policymakers (Gilman and Stokes 2014). Likewise, this could make senior policymakers more entrenched and more skeptical of integrating digital tools (McCarthy 2017), as some might view techno-driven optimism as a form of misplaced youthful idealism and an attack on traditional approaches to leadership and governance. In short, we must not ignore discussions of regulation, but we must be careful that they do not overwhelm the debate as they do today and distract our focus from creative thinking.

Directional Thinking: Opportunities in Technology and Society

There are significant potential benefits for policymakers who are willing to change their thinking on digital technology and approach it as a strategic opportunity. First, such a stance is more likely to encourage entrepreneurial, creative thinking. This kind of thinking led to creative applications of technology and innovations ranging from the Fireside Chats and the Television Presidency to social media and digital crowdsourcing. No technology is perfect, as Kennedy himself warned us about television, however, by approaching technology as a problem or a threat we will be less likely to find creative and positive ways to use it. Indeed, as I discussed in my first paper, Kennedy was not the first candidate or president to use television, but he had the foresight to see it as a positive component of governance and surrounded himself with advisers who could translate his vision into a working strategy.

Kennedy was willing to take a risk and was confident that he could mitigate uncertainties, and thereby established a precedent that - after a brief respite - became the norm and contributes to political transparency today. My research found that there were two key elements of achieving this, which were relevant to television and are relevant today in the digital space: a flexible strategy and careful implementation. Any change in thinking must come from a leader's coherent strategy and vision. In the case of the Kennedy, I found ample evidence that Kennedy - and his staff - were thinking about television on a grand scale and asking critical questions. There was a cohesive strategy and plan to use this new medium in creative ways, and Kennedy

had thought about this when he was still a Senator when considered both the benefits and challenges of television (which he outlined in a 1959 article for *The TV Guide*). I found a similar focus on strategy at Cloud Imperium Games where Chris and Erin Roberts had developed a clear strategy for crowdsourcing their game. In both cases, I also found a willingness to re-examine a strategy and adjust it to maximize benefits. Kennedy was eager to meet with television executives - from friendly and unfriendly broadcasters - to learn as much as possible about creative application of a new medium from those intimately involved with the development of television programming. Such discussions led to the opening up of the White House press briefings to television crews, despite some technical and established press challenges. Likewise, Cloud Imperium Games' strategy adjusted as the organization gained experience with crowdsourcing. For example, as the scale of support became clear, CIG leadership was able to pivot and changed both the technology used to manage the vast number of backers (to a more robust platform) and the modes of interaction with backers by offering creative new ways for backers to become involved (such as designing game elements). This did not happen by accident and was prompted by thinking differently about the challenges associated with rapid growth and turning them into advantages through creating diverse, constructive ways to contribute.

To be successful, these strategies had to be supplemented by careful tactical implementation. In both cases, a critical element of successful translation of a strategy into a real action was the creation of a capable team. The key to translating Kennedy's strategy into action was his press secretary Pierre Salinger who diligently worked with experts from the broadcasting industry to create detailed implementation plans. For example, Salinger's team examined every registered broadcaster in the United States and noted their popularity, and views both on Kennedy (as a leader) and his policy goals. This register was used to identify stations best suited for outreach or invitation to White House events. Likewise, at Cloud Imperium Games a team was built by tapping creative thinkers from across the entertainment industry from experienced moderators and community managers to entertainment stars and legal experts. While the Roberts brothers stay involved in as much of the game development as possible, their project grew too large to be directly managed by two individuals. Cloud Imperium Games' experts are often introduced to backers through interviews and feature in regular webcasts taking questions from backers, creating a sense of trust and transparency, and a building a digital relationship.

Second, framing the discussion of technology as a problem or a threat – especially a technology central to the identity of many young adults – will erode trust young people hold in their leaders and potentially in government itself. Young adults are already skeptical about the government, and most believe that their political representatives do not understand them or their way of life (Jarcke-Cheng 2017). Attacks on Millennials as lazy, selfish, or unrealistic are all too common, and their shortcomings are frequently blamed on their embrace of digital technology. These opinions often ignore the positive impacts from this generation and their adopted technology, and have already lead to a backlash (Pomeroy and Handke 2015). Alienating an entire generation of voters is dangerous as it risks further eroding already low levels of trust and civic participation. This is a serious problem for a free-market democracy as youth are often the driving force of change and alienating them can impede social, economic and political progress. If we were to think about digital technology as an opportunity, it could help shift the broader narrative in politics, media, and society, not only about the technology, but also the demographic which has embraced it. This was especially evident in Kennedy's approach to television, as he was keen to use it as a tool to reach out to the American people since it was a medium which people were increasingly embracing. In a very close election, it is not impossible to completely rule out that television - even if its impact was small - could have helped Kennedy defeat Nixon.

The Next Generation and the Digital World

The recent awakening of youth activism, and increased organized action, in many ways enabled by digital technologies, has similarities to the movements of the 1970s which rejected mainstream American foreign policy. Disenfranchising the views of youth in the 1970s had a profound impact on trust and participation but did not prevent political change. Just as the younger generations did then, youth today are likely to drive change, and including them in the decision-making process early is more likely to produce engaged adults with a positive stake in democratic society. Since early engagement is often indicative of future participation - in all manner of civic activity - it would be prudent to incorporate rather than disenfranchise youth from the policy process. Furthermore, policymakers and political parties who fail to make a shift in thinking risk becoming irrelevant, as they will lose goodwill with younger generations of voters who are no longer willing to sit on the sidelines.

Rather than fighting inevitable change, policymakers would serve their constituents and democracy better if they begin to think about digital technologies such as social media, crowdsourcing, and gamification, as exploitable opportunities rather than problems to be regulated. Such a mindset requires an openness to change which is not always easy as there is often comfort in the status quo. This is especially true for large institutions - like governments and political parties - where path dependency often results in a slow and difficult change process (North 1992). However, integrating such change is possible, and an effective method is to give young people the means to express their frustrations in positive ways. Taking their concerns seriously, inviting their views into the halls of power and providing the opportunity to demonstrate their technological savvy can be low-cost first steps to achieving this outcome. In fact, some approaches, such as Cloud Imperium Games' crowdsourcing, demonstrate that the benefits presented by new technologies can outweigh the costs if carefully applied.[53]

There are a handful interesting examples of such digital engagement in action in the policy arena, from which policymakers could also learn. For example, *Change.org* is a digital petition tool which leverages crowdsourcing by offering not only an online petition tool but also connects people with similar policy issue concerns to each other and to relevant experts. The tool has been very popular not only with Millennials but also with Generation X, which is also is more likely to engage in digital civics than previous generations (Smolensky 2014). In 2015, I helped develop a similar tool called *CivicSourcing*, which introduced elements of gamification (badges, points, competitions, etc.) to this process and was well received by some policymakers.[54] The idea behind *CivicSourcing* was similar to *Change.org,* but the goal was to intentionally target the 18-29-year-old demographic who are more likely to be gamers and therefore more receptive to gamification as a tool for motivation.

Such initiatives can be adopted by policymakers, with cooperation from the private sector, including video game developers who have extensive experience systematically engaging youth.

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[53] As discussed in the second paper, a well developed and implemented crowdsourcing initiative is resource intensive, but CIG derived significant benefits from their approach.

[54] This tool and the concept was a finalist at the National Invitational Public Policy Challenge hosted by the Fels Institute of Government at the University of Pennsylvania (Fels 2014).

This has not yet happened in the United States, however, it is taking place in China - although not as a tool to enhance democracy or transparency. The Chinese government has been developing a system called "Zhimat Credit" (or "Sesame Credit"), which assigns a social score to a person based on how they behave in the physical and digital world, *and* with whom they associate.[55] People who behave in approved ways (for example, posting pro-government comments) gain points while dissent is penalized. In addition, one's relationships are used to determine a score, and associating with those with a low score could impact your sesame credit rating. Those with low scores will be deemed "seriously untrustworthy" which could impact access to credit, free-movement or jobs, and has already had such an impact for some Chinese citizens (Hvistendahl 2017, Huang 2017). This tool was developed by the private sector, including input from the Chinese video game industry, as the government is keen to make it appealing to youth. While such application is problematic for liberal democracies, it is an example of directional, creative thinking as the Chinese government has opted to (partially) embrace these digital tools rather than continue trying to ban them. However, there is no reason that tools which leverage crowdsourcing or gamification cannot be used to enhance participation and transparency, and elements of the strategy adopted by Could Imperium Games or *Change.org* could be good starting points.

Finally, it may be tempting to dismiss excitement about novel technologies as over-optimism by people too young to appreciate the complexity of the world but this is generally not true. While younger generations may lack professional experience, concerns that youth do not think about the limitations of their adopted technology is unfounded as youth are not only interested in "technical process and developments" but are generally "reflective and quite critical of considerations of consequences" and consider long-term implications (Wahler and Tully 1992, Cook 2016). The implications they foresee, however, are often different because their intimacy and experience with digital technology gives them insights which previous generations lack. Some limitation, therefore, may lie with current leaders *not* younger generations.

The future of leadership and democracy lies with future rather than past generations. While this does not mean that there is no value to practical experience, we must be careful that overreliance

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[55] Using this tool is optional but will become mandatory by 2020.

on past experiences does not make us complacent. Digital technology is fundamentally changing the world, and with it, we must change our thinking if are to harness it to improve society. It is simply not possible to continue thinking about technology policy the same way in the 21st century as we did in the 20th century. Digital technology is changing how people interact, build trust, and express civic engagement in significant ways. Success has rarely been built on doing things the same way we did in the past, but rather embracing change and contemplating the future in fundamentally different ways. The past can be a useful tool, but policymakers would be wise to remember that "History does not repeat itself... it rhymes" (Eayrs 1971). As the futurist Peter Schwartz advised a group of leaders from the defense industry, "the map that got you here is unlikely to be the map you need going forward" (Schwartz 2014). The question, Schwartz argues, is "how do we frame the right mental map" for the future and one way to achieve that is to include youth in the strategic thinking process.

Digital Democracy

Digital technology, such as crowdsourcing or social media is changing the world, and with it, we must change our thinking if we truly want to advance our society. Rather than focus on ways to regulate digital technologies to limit their impact we should embrace them – while remaining cognizant of limitations - and focus on positive outcomes. Our focus should be on ways to amplify positive elements and offer opportunities for young people to lead this change, especially where their personal experiences can offer unique insights. This does not mean that our core values, such as representative governance are threatened, but that the means of achieving those goals might change. For example, democracy is crowdsourcing of political decision making, and digital crowdsourcing is simply an extension of that practice.

However, we do need to be mindful of how such tools are as applied as they can be used as elements of control and oppression. While the example of the Zhimat Credit system in development in China is anathema to democratic ideals, there are creative ways that digital technology can be used to promote trust, transparency, and the democratic process. The *CivicSourcing* tool, which combines gamification with crowdsourcing, is one example of a positive implementation. In a government setting such a tool would give constituents the means to raise issues by submitting them to a digital platform where others can provide feedback, offer

their expertise, help find connections, or get involved in other ways (in the digital or physical space). This first step would be much like an online petition, except that it would also function as a social network which connects people who have signed up and shared their interests and expertise. This process could be gamified whereby submitting, participating or completing projects would earn participants points, badges, and achievements (like video games). These awards would help identify the most involved users and help identify people's expertise. Also, like in many video games, such a tool could rank groups of people – for example, neighborhoods on a local level – fostering a sense of competition which can increase involvement. Such concepts have been tested on a small scale, such as recycling programs, and have yielded very positive results (Rosenberg 2017). To successfully develop such a tool which could supplement physical, civic engagement, will require support and cooperation between the public and private sectors. While video game and software developers can bring the concepts and technical skills to implement such tools, such initiatives will only succeed if they find champions in public sector leaders.

In the American democracy, a large part of this responsibility falls on our elected officials, especially the President. Since the Office of the Presidency carries a degree of moral authority, the President has some ability - and obligation - to set the tone for national discourse. While the office is already burdened with significant, and perhaps unrealistic expectations (Suri 2017), it could benefit from the inclusion of digital tools such as crowdsourcing. For example, it is not always easy for the President to accurately judge the expectations of every demographic group, partly because some groups are less civically active and less likely to share their views. This has traditionally been the case with youth who are less likely to participate in policy debate in the physical world, but much more likely to participate in the digital space. A well developed and deployed digital platform which relies on gamification and crowdsourcing could assist the office of the presidency in identifying and prioritizing issues facing youth. In fact, such a tool could have highlighted the concerns youth have with school safety earlier and might have started a dialogue - with youth involvement - sooner.

As young generations mature, and their understanding of digital technologies becomes mainstream, they will take their ideas about digital technologies with them to the highest offices

as well. The question is not if digital technology will change leadership, but how quickly and in what ways. There is an opportunity for our public sector leaders to take the lead in such change, and as Kennedy did almost 60 years ago, embrace the potential of new technologies, and combine the benefits of experience with that of youthful zeal and optimism. Such a change will require that our leaders are willing to think differently and to give creative ideas about novel technologies ample space for constructive debate, even those ideas which come from unconventional sources such as video game or app developers.

We need to accept that the ultimate success of our democracy is in the hands of future generations and that their means of expressing democratic norms, of building trust, and civic engagement, will be driven by different thinking, and achieved through different means and tools. Just as the radio displaced magazines, and television "killed the radio," digital technologies are supplanting television. This change is inevitable and the sooner we change how we think about these technologies *and* the generation which has embraced them, the more likely we will be to reap socio-economic benefits. As more social and economic activity moves into the digital space, so will more of our political activity, as the three are often closely intertwined. The future shape of digital democracy is not yet clear, because it is still in development and it will be young people who will drive the bulk of this innovation. Involving them early in the democratic process, through means with which they are comfortable, is more likely to produce positive socioeconomic and political results in the long-run.

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