Bush and Kerry Battle It Out in Cyberspace

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John Kerry's candidate Web site was visited by over 1.5 million people in April, bettering the audience of George Bush and Dick Cheney's site, reports Nielsen//NetRatings.

The Republican party, however, achieved millions more online ad impressions in April than its Democratic counterparty.

With the Democratic and Republican nominees for President having been determined in March 2004, political advertising has already moved into full swing five months before Election Day. Data collected by Nielsen//NetRatings in April indicates significant interest by the public in the primary candidates' Web sites, and increased spending by the candidates and their parties on the Web.

John Kerry maintained his lead in site popularly for another month, as "John Kerry For President" attracted a larger unique audience than the "Bush Cheney '04" site. Kerry's site attracted over 1.4 million unique visitors in April, down from over 2 million the previous month, but still enough to better Bush and Cheney's site, which also experienced a usage decline from March. It should be noted, however, that Kerry's online advantage has declined slightly with each month.

Usage of Presidential Candidate Web Sites by At-Home and At-Work Internet Users in the US, February-April 2004 (unique audience in thousands)

	February	March	April
John Kerry for President	1,052	2,045	1,598
Bush Cheney '04	865	1,886	1,477

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings, May 2004

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Kerry's site may be attracting more traffic in part because his campaign gained a sizable amount of online ad impressions in April compared to the Bush-Cheney online efforts -- over 51 million online ad impressions for 'John Kerry for President' and just 5,000 impressions for 'Bush Cheney '04.' However, it is important to note here that the Republican National Committee claimed the most online ad impressions in April, with over 112 million.

Presidential Candidate and Political Party Ad Impressions in the US, January-April 2004 (in thousands)

	January	February	March	April
John Kerry for President	32	39	8,248	51,745
Bush Cheney '04	–	8	28	5
Republican National Committee	21,008	227,157	189,443	112,901
Democratic National Committee	–	–	–	63

Note: among home and work Internet users
Source: Nielsen//NetRatings AdRelevance, May 2004

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With polls placing Kerry and Bush in a dead heat, candidates' Web sites and online advertising could easily play a vital factor in victory or defeat this fall, and both audience numbers and spending numbers should go up as November approaches.

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