Coffee or Tea? An Examination of On-line Organizing Techniques of the Tea Party and Coffee Party Movements

John McNutt

Karen Curtis

Todd O'Boyle

Steve Fox

University of Delaware

What's New???

- **Exploratory Study of two emerging Technology Enhanced nonprofit political organizations**

- **Changing Nature of Political and Social Movements**

- **New Media and New Politics**

- **Strategy and Structure**

Research Questions

- **What types of on-line technologies are used by Coffee and Tea Party Groups?**

- **Does the range of on-line technologies vary by group?**

- **Does the range of on-line technologies vary by Location?**

- **Is there a relationship between ideology and technology strategy among the groups?**

Tea Party

- **Formed in 2009 in response to a number of Issues including the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) and the bailouts of the auto and financial industries**

- **The movement is general conservative and generally aligns itself with conservative Republicans.**

4

Major Subgroups

- **Tea Party Nation**

- **Tea Party Patriots**

- **Tea Party Express**

- **9/12 Patriots**

- **Freedomworks**

Coffee Party

- **Initiated in January 2010 to Counter Balance the Tea Parties**

- **Founders: Annabel Park & Eric Byler**

- **Started on Facebook**

- **Mission Statement: The Coffee Party Movement gives voice to Americans who want to see cooperation in government. We recognize that the federal government is not the enemy of the people, but the expression of our collective will, and that we must participate in the democratic process in order to address the challenges that we face as Americans. As voters and grassroots volunteers, we will support leaders who work toward positive solutions, and hold accountable those who obstruct them.**

Coffee Party Dynamics

- **Coffee Party is coordinated through a central website and a Facebook Page**

- **There are ## Local Chapters**

- **Only One Chapter is located in the three state region [Baltimore].**

Role of Technology in Modern Political Campaigns

- **Technology has become a major driver in political action**
  - **Electoral Campaigns**
  - **Issue Campaigns**

- **Technology Evolves Web 1.0-. Web 2.0**

- **Changes in Technology Drive Changes in Strategy and Structure**

8

Rise of Leaderless Organizations

- **Spider and the Starfish**

- **Open Management/Leaderless Organizations**

- **Smart Mobs, Flash Mobs and Related**

Methodology

- This is an exploratory study of technology enhanced organizing techniques employed by social movement groups within the movements in question.

- The unit of analysis is the group. Subjects are selected from groups in three states using a sampling frame provided by a national clearing house. The States of New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania are involved

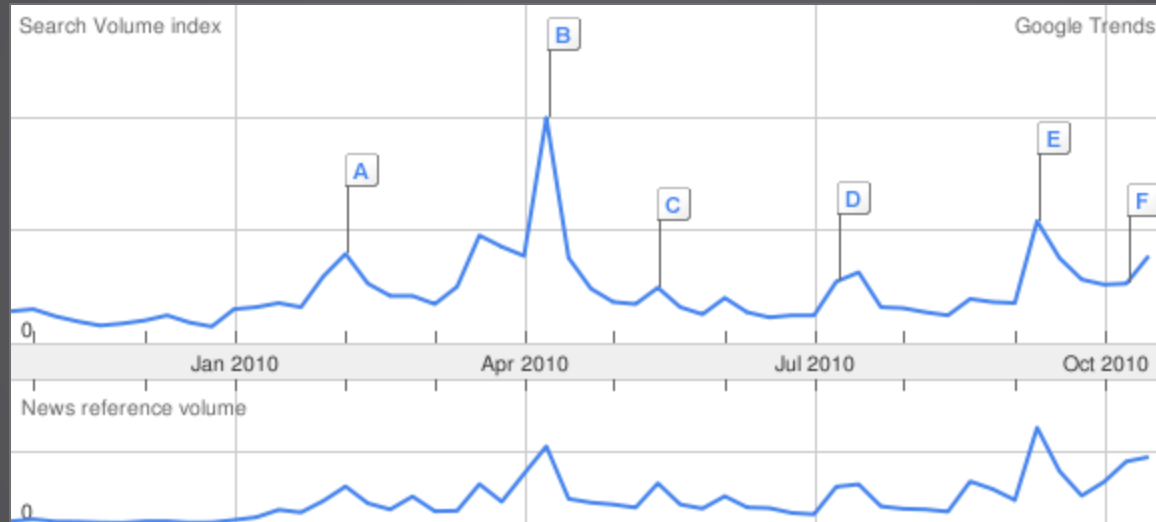- Data collection is accomplished with information taken from social networking sites.

Results

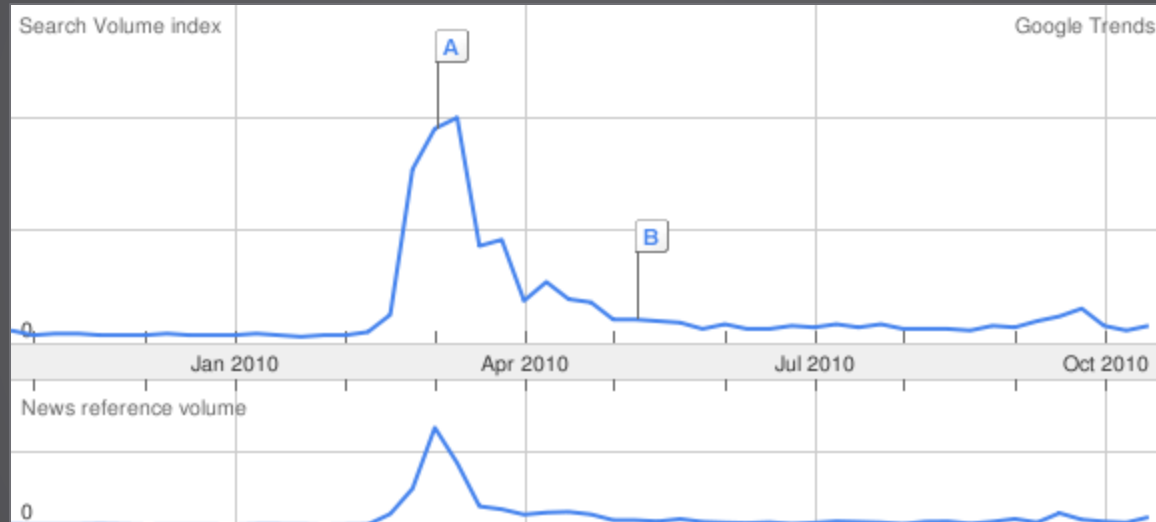- **Number of Tea Party Groups 90**

- **Coffee Party Groups 4**

Table 1: Groups by State

State	Tea Party	Coffee Party
Delaware	10	1
Maryland	33	2
New Jersey	47	1
Total	90	4

Overall Online Impact: Tea Party

Overall Online Impact: Coffee Party

Social Media Usage by Coffee and Tea Party Groups

Media	Tea Party		Coffee Party	
	N	%	N	%
Facebook	36	40	4	100%
Twitter	15	16.7	4	100%
YouTube	8	8.9	4	100%
Meet Up	5	5.6	1	.25

Issues

- **Limitations**

- **Implications**

- **Future Research**