

John Kerry Acceptance Speech
HCD Research Emotion Tracker

(patent pending)

Beta Test Report

Among Undecided Voters in the 2004 Presidential Election

August 2, 2004





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I. Background and Objectives

- HCD Research, in conjunction with the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion (MCIPO), has been conducting studies of voter perceptions of the major candidates on-line promotional advertisements since Spring 2004. The service uses HCD's proprietary AdverTest methodology to measure the total impact of these ads on viewers' emotions, as well as their interest and belief of the material presented. The results of a portion of these comprehensive assessments are available for review on a web site located at <http://www.readmylipz.com>. The website provides a national forum for users to: View and review political advertisements distributed via the internet Watch reviews of those same advertisements made by other users Answer polling questions on important election-year issues Engage other users in discussions critical to the 2004 Presidential Election The 2004 Presidential campaign is making unprecedented use of the internet to disseminate messages to potential voters, as well as supporters of both major parties. Internet-specific advertisements are being sent to potential voters, who can view them on their home or office computers. The speed with which information and messages can be disseminated via the internet, as well as the types of messages that can be sent, makes this forum groundbreaking in its scope, and likely a model for future campaigns.
- This report covers the first iteration of the next step in the use of HCD's AdverTest platform: The review and analysis of Presidential nomination speeches by **Undecided Voters In The 2004 Presidential Campaign.**
- The review was conducted using HCD's new Emotion Tracker internet-based speech tracking platform (patent pending), which combines state of the art video review technology with accepted research methodology. This report covers the results of a beta-test of the Emotion Tracker platform with 27 Undecided Voters, conducted in the days following the John Kerry acceptance speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, July 2004.

II. Methodology



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- ❑ A total of **27 Undecided Voters** participated in the Emotion Tracker beta test. Important: The sample was recruited primarily by Independent affiliation status. However, respondents were asked their likelihood to vote for a particular candidate only after agreeing to participate in the survey. The total sample included 53 voters, 27 of whom described themselves as Undecided (51%). Hence, while these voters were not recruited to be Undecideds, the Unaffiliated status of the prospective respondent pool naturally lead to a higher proportion of Undecided Voters for this test (51%) than is generally agreed to exist nationally (20% of current registered voters).
- ❑ After recruitment, participants visited a password-protected site on the internet. They viewed the John Kerry Nomination Acceptance Speech online approximately 24 hours after the original airing, and recorded changes in their emotions – positive (7) or negative (1) as represented by a Likert-type scale -- as they changed by clicking on their computer mouse. Respondents then completed a 10-minute post-speech survey, and provided further input into the speech's impact on them. The sample was not controlled for previous exposure to the speech prior to participating in the survey.
- ❑ In addition, because politics means emotions as well as rationality, HCD administered the *Ayer Emotional Battery (AEB)* to each respondent. This battery was developed by the former advertising agency, N. W. AYER. It offers a simple and reliable way for participants to express how advertising makes them feel, and provides a layer of granularity and depth to the negative/positive emotional responses recorded while viewing the speech.
- ❑ Emotions at the higher end of the AEB (e.g., Not bored, Attentive) are Positive-Vector emotions, indicating a positive emotional response from the survey respondent. Emotions at the lower end (e.g., Disgusted, Irritated, Enraged, Contemptuous) indicate a negative emotional response.
- ❑ Lastly, the Impact of the Speech on Undecided Voters' likelihood to vote for Kerry was recorded. In this exercise, Undecided Voters were asked whether they felt swayed sufficiently by the speech to vote for Kerry in the upcoming election.
- ❑ Note: These results reflect a small sample of potential pool of Undecided Voters in the 2004 Presidential Election, and as such should be considered directional in nature.

III. Research Findings: Executive Summary



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- The Kerry Nomination Acceptance Speech has a strong positive impact; elicits mostly positive emotions; and appears to be effective in increasing Undecided Voters' interest in the Kerry Campaign, and likelihood to vote for John Kerry.
- Each Speech topic elicits Positive Average Emotions, ranging from 5.0 to 6.0. Although directional, the Positive Emotion Levels appear to build throughout the speech, starting at 5.0 and increasing slowly throughout the course of speech to 6.0.
- Interestingly, only one in three (33%) felt the complete range of emotions, from 1 (Most Negative) to 7 (Most Positive).
 - Further, while only 33% of these Undecided Voters felt the Most Negative emotion (1), more than eight-out-of-10 (81%) felt the Most Positive emotion (7).
- The vast majority of these Undecided Voters report the speech is **Clear and Easy to Understand; Attention-Getting; Relevant; and Persuasive** – a key indicator of its potential to sway voters to vote for a particular candidate (Rating of 5-7 on a Scale of 1-7, where 1 equals Strongly Disagree and 7 Equals Strongly Agree).
 - Most importantly, three-out-of-four of these Undecided Voters (76%) say they are **More Likely to Vote for John Kerry** after viewing the Kerry Nomination Acceptance Speech than they were before they saw it.
- The strong majority of these Undecided Voters (86%) also agree that the Kerry Nomination Acceptance Speech increases their **Interest in the Kerry Campaign and Compels Them to Seek Additional Information About the Campaign**.
- The Undecided Voters in this sample (n=27) are primarily White, Moderate-to-Liberal, Non-Catholic Christian Females. Importantly, 34% of these Undecided Voters report describe themselves as politically Moderate, meaning they are neither Liberal nor Conservative.
 - Intuitively, this suggests that even within the Undecided Voter pool, there are those voters who are high-potential swing voters and decidedly harder to categorize in terms of voting tendency.
- Generally, the Kerry Nomination Acceptance Speech elicits strong positive emotions, and few highly negative emotions – but with a healthy dose of skepticism – from these Undecided Voters (n=27).
 - The largest majority (72%) felt the Highest Vector Emotion, *Not Bored, Attentive*
 - However, as would be expected -- given the political subject matter of the speech, and the Undecided status of these voters -- nearly half the sample also felt ***Suspicious, skeptical*** (45%).
 - Very few of these Undecided Voters (17%) felt the most negative emotion: ***Disgusted, irritated, enraged, contemptuous***.

Description of Sample



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- The Undecided Voters in this sample (n=27) are primarily White, Moderate-to-Liberal, Non-Catholic Christian Females.
- Importantly, 34% of these Undecided Voters report describe themselves as politically Moderate, meaning they are neither Liberal nor Conservative. Intuitively, this suggests that even within the Undecided Voter pool, there are those voters who are high-potential swing voters and decidedly harder to categorize in terms of voting tendency.
- Notably, self-described Liberal-leaning Undecided Voters (Somewhat Liberal and Liberal, 34%) outnumber Conservative-Leaning Undecided Voters (Somewhat Conservative and Conservative, 17%) by a 2-1 ratio. If this trend holds nationally, the potential exists that the makeup of the Undecided Voter pool may be predisposed to vote for a candidate associated with liberal ideology.

Political Beliefs (n=27) % of Sample	Conservative	Somewhat Conservative	Moderate	Somewhat Liberal	Liberal	Not Sure	
	0%	17%	34%	31%	3%	14%	
Gender	Male			Female			
	22%			78%			
Religion	Catholic	Jewish	Non-Catholic Christian	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	All Others
	17%	0%	62%	4%	0%	0%	17%
Race	White	Black	Native	Asian	Hawaii/PI	Others	
	79%	7%	3%	0%	7%	7%	



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A. Review of Emotional Response to Kerry Speech

Synopsis: The analysis below contains two sequential breakdowns of responses and analysis of the range of emotional responses recorded.

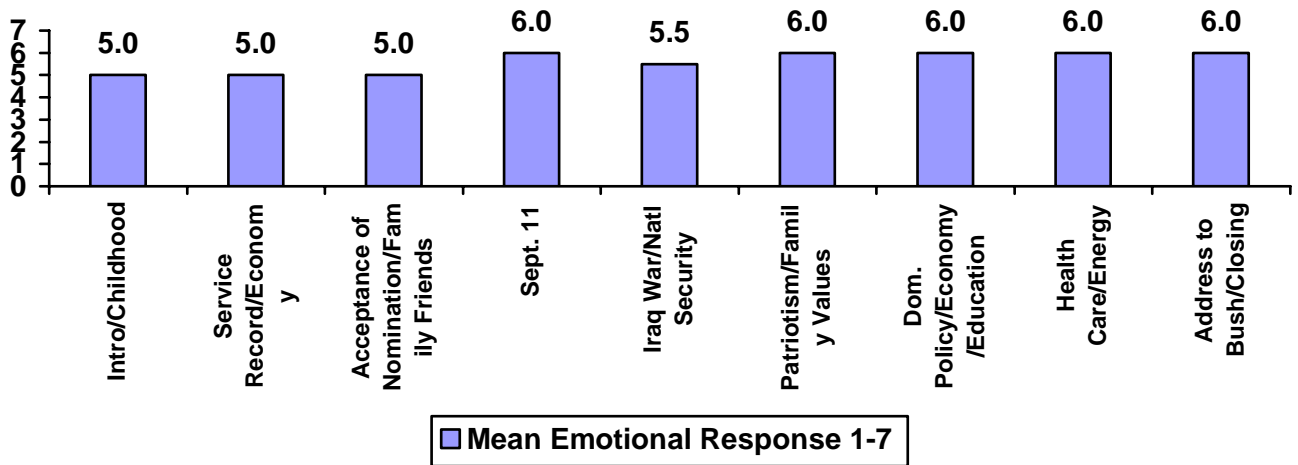
- The first (figure 1) provides an average of the total Positive And Negative Emotion response clicks as they were sequentially distributed by topic throughout the speech. Positive And Negative Emotions are defined as a rating of 1-3 (Negative) on a scale of 1-7, and a rating of 5-7 (Positive) on that same scale.
- The second (figure 2) depicts the percentage of these Undecided Voters who recorded any emotion change by topic.
- The third (figure 3) depicts the percentage of these Undecided Voters who experienced each range of emotions.



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- Each Speech topic elicits Positive Average Emotions, ranging from 5.0 to 6.0. Although directional, the Positive Emotion Levels appear to build throughout the speech, starting at 5.0 and increasing slowly throughout the course of speech to 6.0.

Figure 1: Kerry Speech Sequence by Average Emotional Responses (n=27)





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- The vast majority of these Undecided Voters changed emotions during each topic. Notably, however, when Sen. Kerry discusses Sept. 11, only two-thirds of these Undecided Voters reported emotion changes. This suggests somewhat higher levels of attention to this particular issue.
- Intuitively, this suggests that Sept. 11 remains one of the most captivating issues surrounding the 2004 Presidential Campaign.

**Figure 2: Kerry Speech Sequence by Proportion
 of Sampling Changing Emotions**

Speech Topic	% Sample Changing Emotions (n=27)
Introduction and Childhood	96%
Service Record and Economy	85%
Acceptance of Nomination/Family & Friends	93%
9/11/2001	67%
Iraq War and Foreign Policy/National Security	85%
Patriotism and Family Values	89%
Domestic Policy Overview/ Economy/ Education	81%
Health Care and Energy	85%
Address to Pres. Bush/Closing	93%



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- These Undecided Voters report a range of emotions felt throughout the Kerry speech, but interestingly, only one in three (33%) felt the complete range of emotions, from 1 (Most Negative) to 7 (Most Positive).
- Further, while only 33% of these Undecided Voters felt the Most Negative emotion (1), more than eight-out-of-10 (81%) felt the Most Positive emotion (7). This finding is indicative of the high level of positive specific emotions felt, as well as the relatively high interest and persuasiveness scores given by these Undecided Voters (see Sections B and C of this report).
- A small minority of these Undecided Voters (15%) reported no emotion changes during the speech (high and low emotion clicks unchanged).

Figure 3: Range of Emotions Reported by Proportion of Sample

Percent of Sample (n=27)	Low	High
33%	1	7
19%	3	7
11%	4	7
11%	7	7
7%	2	7
7%	3	6
7%	4	6
4%	2	6
4%	4	4



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B. Kerry Acceptance Speech Review and Impact Among Undecided Voters (n=27)

		<i>Disagree</i>			<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>		
Speech Review (n=27)	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Clear and Easy to Understand	6.2	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	62%	31%
Attention Getting	6.0	0%	0%	0%	7%	21%	41%	31%
Relevant	6.0	0%	0%	0%	14%	10%	38%	38%
Persuasive	5.8	0%	0%	0%	3%	45%	20%	31%
Memorable	5.3	0%	7%	3%	14%	27%	24%	24%
Speech Impact (n=27)	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gave respondent a positive feeling about the Kerry Campaign	5.7	0%	0%	0%	10%	27%	41%	21%
Increases respondents' interest in the Kerry Campaign	5.7	3%	0%	0%	14%	14%	45%	24%
Compels respondent to seek additional information about the Kerry Campaign	5.6	3%	0%	3%	14%	17%	28%	34%
Makes respondent more likely to vote for John Kerry	5.4	0%	0%	3%	21%	34%	14%	27%

Speech Review Measures:

- ❑ All of these Undecided Voters find the Kerry Acceptance Speech to be **Clear and Easy to Understand** (Rating of 5-7 on a Scale of 1-7, where 1 equals Strongly Disagree and 7 Equals Strongly Agree: Mean Rating 6.2), and the vast majority (93%) agree that it is **Attention-Getting** (Mean 6.0).
- ❑ The vast majority of these Undecided Voters also believe the speech is **Relevant** to them (86%). Perhaps more importantly, though, virtually all (97%) agree the speech is **Persuasive** – a key indicator of its potential to sway voters to vote for a particular candidate. (See detailed Impact analysis below).

Speech Impact Measures:

- ❑ These Undecided Voters generally agree that the Kerry Nomination Acceptance Speech is Impactful.
- ❑ Most importantly, three-out-four of these Undecided Voters (76%) say they are **More Likely to Vote for John Kerry** after viewing the Kerry Nomination Acceptance Speech than they were before they saw it.
- ❑ The strong majority of these Undecided Voters (86%) also agree that the Kerry Nomination Acceptance Speech increases their **Interest in the Kerry Campaign** and **Compels Them to Seek Additional Information About the Campaign**.



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C. Specific Emotions Evoked by the Kerry Acceptance Speech

- Generally, the Kerry Nomination Acceptance Speech elicits strong positive emotions, and few highly negative emotions – but with a healthy dose of skepticism – from these Undecided Voters (n=27).
- The largest majority of these Undecided Voters (72%) felt the Highest Vector Emotion, *Not Bored, Attentive*, while roughly two-out-of-three voters (69%) felt ***Wishful, desirous, hopeful***.
- More than half these Undecided Voters also felt ***Competent, confident, in control, proud*** and ***Benefited, enlightened*** (62% and 55%, respectively).
- However, as would be expected -- given the political subject matter of the speech, and the Undecided status of these voters -- nearly half the sample also felt ***Suspicious, skeptical*** (45%) in addition the range of positive emotions reported above.
- It is also important to note that very few of these Undecided Voters (17%) felt the most negative emotion: ***Disgusted, irritated, enraged, contemptuous***.

Emotion Statements	Undecided Voters (n=27)*
<i>Not bored, attentive</i>	72%
<i>Active, aroused, playful, entertained, excited</i>	24%
<i>Wishful, desirous, hopeful</i>	69%
<i>Benefited, enlightened</i>	55%
<i>Affectionate, loving, innocent, pure</i>	24%
<i>Competent, confident, in control, proud</i>	62%
<i>Virtuous, reverent, moral</i>	38%
<i>Serene, restful, pure, soothed</i>	17%
<i>Sorrowful, thankful, afraid, regretful</i>	24%
<i>Worshipful, reverent</i>	10%
<i>Sad, angry, powerless, helpless, distressed</i>	14%
<i>Amazed, astonished</i>	24%
<i>Spiritual</i>	24%
<i>Tense, conflictful, anxious</i>	14%
<i>Ashamed, embarrassed, mad, guilty</i>	14%
<i>Suspicious, skeptical</i>	45%
<i>Confused, uniformed</i>	0%
<i>Disgusted, irritated, enraged, contemptuous</i>	17%

* Totals exceed 100% as respondents are asked to select all emotions felt