

Google, Twitter and Other Web Giants Change Political Debate Forever



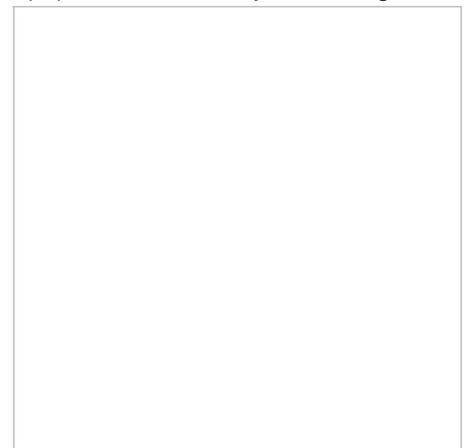
Colin Walker, 2008-07-10

□ Google, Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, iTunes - They've all been changing the way that the average person goes about their day for a long time now. The thing that sets these monolithic figures in technological history apart from others is that they are not only changing the game for those of us that have long been denizens of the web. Indeed they are making the web and the delicious, bountiful fruits therein accessible to the masses. This is what is allowing them to change the face of the world as we know it.

A prime and quite pointed example of exactly how these giants of the technological industry are helping to shape the course of history is [the data that Google released yesterday](#). In their blog Google gives us information the likes of which wouldn't have been more than a plot point in some science fiction novel not 15 years ago. Google showed us *by the minute* stats of the most popular search terms that people were using during the VP debates. Being able to present this kind of information in such a granular format over such a broad spectrum of the populous is absolutely astounding.

This shows not only the immense power of Google searches, and their obviously immense ability to track inconceivable amounts of statistical information, but something most assuredly more surprising and impressive. This is an amazing display of just how prevalent and mainstream Google searches have become. The fact that the average American viewing the debates knows how to use Google to search for things is fantastic. What's *shocking* is that [an apparently large portion of that group knows how to use the protocol appropriately](#), performing what could be characterized as more skilled searches, such as "define:maverick".

Think about how this has changed things. 15 years ago, if you weren't informed by the time of the debates, it was too late. If you hadn't done your duty as a citizen and read, listened and researched to get aware of what was going on and the issues at hand, there was no way to catch up this late in the game, and certainly not real-time while watching the debates occur.



□ If that's not enough for you, there's another [really cool example of technology](#), in this case Twitter and Current.tv, giving us yet another way to watch the debates while sharing information and opinions. [RWW has a great article](#) about the video streaming collaboration that includes a twitter overlay of comments happening real-time during the debate. The example video on the above linked page is pretty cool, and worth a quick view.

What does all of this mean? It means that advanced technology and the world wide web isn't just for us geeks anymore. It means that there are some pretty major forces at play here and that technology is very mainstream, very powerful, and is definitely having an affect on the way people go about their business, especially when it comes to finding/using/gathering/distributing information. I guess that shouldn't come as a surprise. It sounds awfully "Yeah, duh!" when I say it like that, but these examples seemed awfully compelling to me, and I thought I'd share.

#Colin

Listening to: Apocalyptica - Apocalyptica - Betrayal/Forgiveness

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