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THE NEW NORMAL:  
A GUIDE TO DIGITAL ADVERTISING  
DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

**MAJORITY  
STRATEGIES**   
ELECTIONS ▪ ADVOCACY ▪ BRAND





## WHAT'S INSIDE

<b>A Message from the Majority Strategies Team</b>	3
<b>National Trends: What We Are Seeing Across the Nation</b>	4
<b>Majority Strategies Observations: What We Are Seeing Internally</b>	8
<b>Recommendations: Our Team of Experts' Best Advice</b>	10
<b>Conclusion: The New Normal</b>	14

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MAJORITY STRATEGIES TEAM

We live in an unprecedented time. COVID-19 has changed our definition of “normal.”

More people are home and using the internet. The number of voters searching the news and streaming video has skyrocketed.

However, due to uncertainty, fewer digital advertisers are running ads.

This presents a unique opportunity to build new audiences to have meaningful conversations with during a time of crisis.

Acting now builds trust and leads to future campaign-related conversions.

**It's time to move forward in this new normal.**



## NATIONAL TRENDS

### What We Are Seeing Across the Nation

#### Internet activity and web traffic are up.

News sites have reported massive traffic spikes, with The Wall Street Journal, The Atlantic, Business Insider, The Los Angeles Times, and The New York Times having “doubled or nearly doubled” visits. Many have dropped paywalls to allow readers to access coronavirus-related articles.<sup>1</sup>

According to a Nielsen survey, the COVID-19 crisis is increasing content viewing by 60% or more. This number is dramatic, considering Americans were already consuming media at a historic high (almost 12 hours per day).<sup>2</sup>

**ACCORDING TO A NIELSEN SURVEY, THE COVID-19 CRISIS IS INCREASING CONTENT VIEWING BY 60% OR MORE. THIS NUMBER IS DRAMATIC, CONSIDERING AMERICANS WERE ALREADY CONSUMING MEDIA AT A HISTORIC HIGH (ALMOST 12 HOURS PER DAY).<sup>2</sup>**

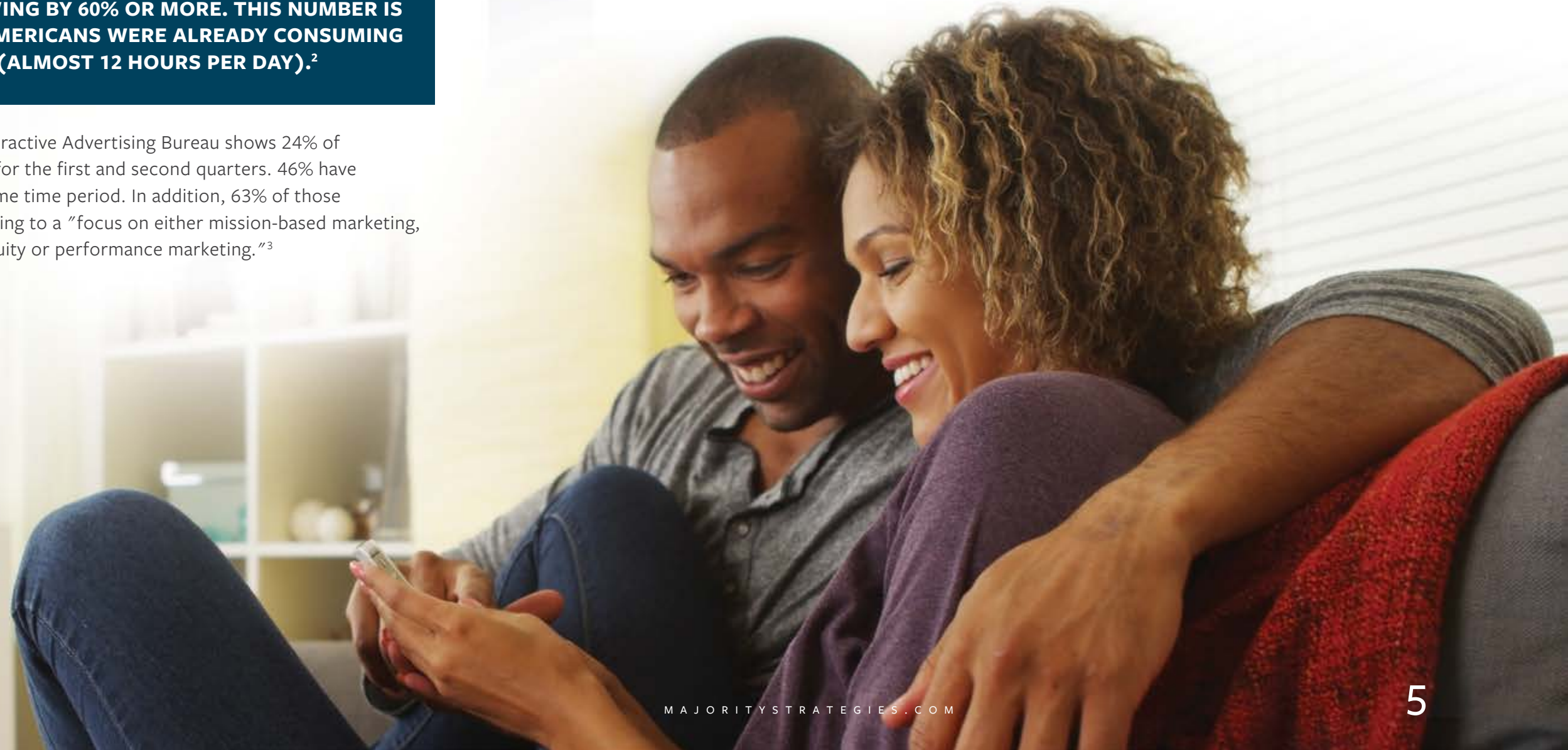
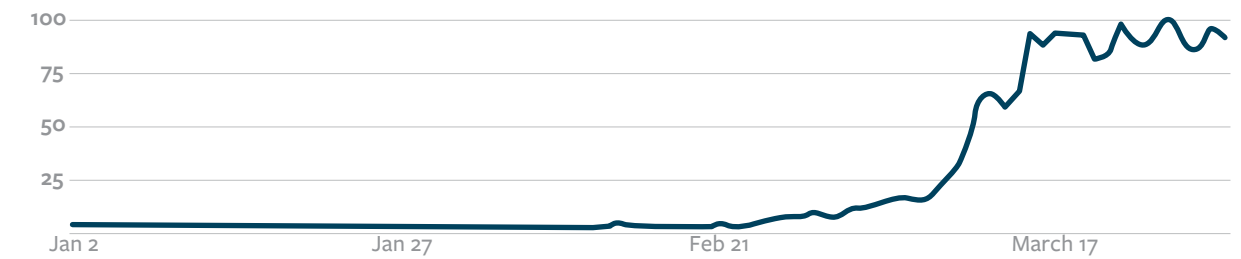
According to AdAge, a survey from the Interactive Advertising Bureau shows 24% of marketing firms have paused all ad spends for the first and second quarters. 46% have adjusted their media spends during that same time period. In addition, 63% of those surveyed, who are still advertising, are shifting to a “focus on either mission-based marketing, cause-related marketing, building brand equity or performance marketing.”<sup>3</sup>



#### COVID-19 dominates Google search activity.

These searches are appended to many everyday questions (“tax preparation” or “travel booking”) along with virus-related uncertainty (“California lockdown rules” or “Will grocery stores be open tomorrow?”).

#### Interest Over Time

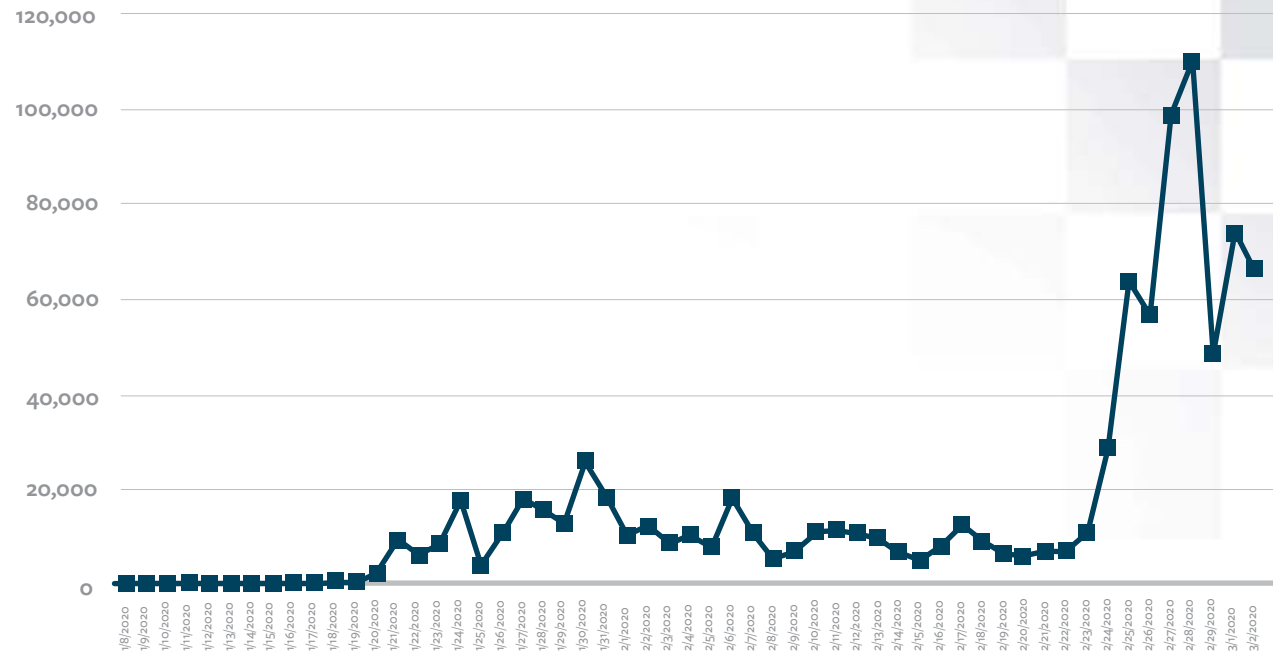




### COVID-19-related TV-watching is dominating social conversations.

On Twitter, it was clear that social conversations were focused on TV viewing during the COVID-19 shutdown.

#### Number of Tweets Mentioning Coronavirus or COVID-19 by Day



Source: Nielsen Social Content Ratings

## MAJORITY STRATEGIES OBSERVATIONS

### *What We Are Seeing Internally*

 **Political ad spending on social media is down by 14% across the country. However, campaigns are still talking to voters online.**

Virtual events, teletownhalls, and video rallies are the “new normal” for campaigns. President Trump’s re-election campaign digitized their entire field office, making millions of phone calls and conducting training on video platforms like Zoom and Google Hangouts. Being creative with digital outreach is key.

**BEING CREATIVE WITH DIGITAL OUTREACH IS KEY.**

 **Display, pre-roll, and OTT Inventory have also increased as more people spend time browsing apps and sites from home and streaming content on TV.**

CTV volume is up 7% from 12-4pm and 15% from 6-9pm.

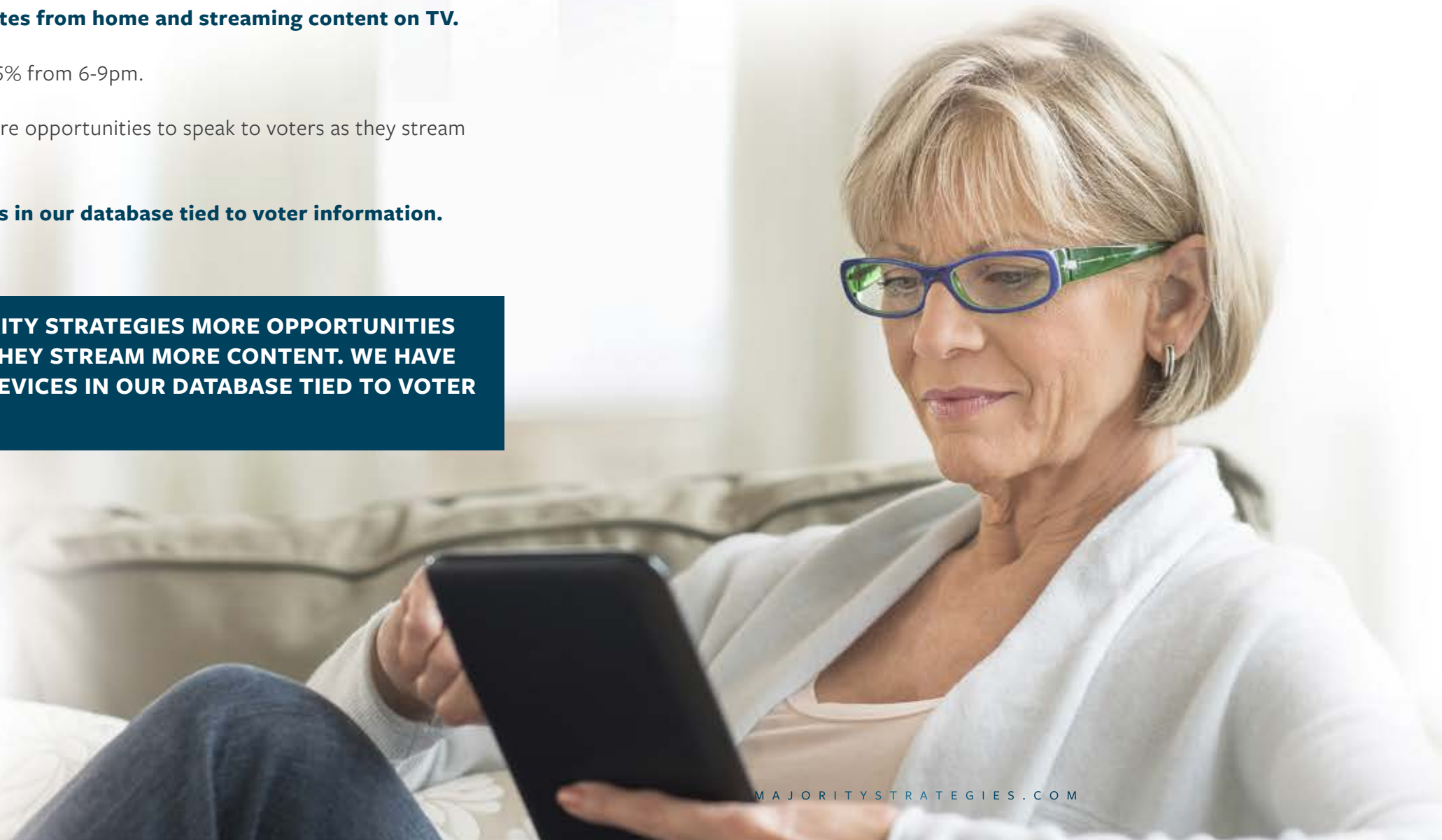
COVID-19 is giving Majority Strategies more opportunities to speak to voters as they stream more content.

**We have 105 million streaming devices in our database tied to voter information.**

**COVID-19 IS GIVING MAJORITY STRATEGIES MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SPEAK TO VOTERS AS THEY STREAM MORE CONTENT. WE HAVE 105 MILLION STREAMING DEVICES IN OUR DATABASE TIED TO VOTER INFORMATION.**

 **News viewership is also up for both live broadcast and their website and mobile apps.**

Majority Strategies has curated local news across the country, down to most location broadcast and streaming stations. These channels allow you to find voters as they search for updates on COVID-19 during a period of historic increases in viewership.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Our Team of Experts' Best Advice*

#### **Messaging**

As a candidate, put yourself in the shoes of voters. The COVID-19 crisis is deadly and affects us all. Switching gears from the most robust period of economic growth in our country's history to millions of new layoffs every week is heart-wrenching and tragic.

Regardless of what digital advertising method utilized, provide hope, show sympathy, and relate on a personal level. Even if a new ad campaign does not address COVID-19 directly, all ads must be sensitive to the ongoing crisis and use the right tone.

#### **Mediums**

With social political ad spending down but internet activity increasing, there are more pairs of eyes looking at fewer political ads. This is a perfect time to use ads to introduce a candidate and start a conversation.

Expanding digital activity now builds an audience for future campaign conversions such as people becoming donors, volunteers, or supporters.

**EXPANDING DIGITAL ACTIVITY NOW BUILDS AN AUDIENCE FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGN CONVERSIONS SUCH AS PEOPLE BECOMING DONORS, VOLUNTEERS, OR SUPPORTERS.**



## Audiences

According to a Pew Research survey of Americans who are age 65+, 52% have searched online for information about COVID-19, while 28% have used social media to post or share information about the virus. Between age 50 and 65, the number of those searching for COVID-19 is 64% and 34% have used social media to share COVID-19 information.<sup>4</sup>

Through digital advertising, you can build specific audiences that fit the concerns of those people and speak to the issue in ways they are engaging.

The survey also shows that while companies are encouraging or requiring telework, 1/4th of those surveyed have used video services like Zoom or Webex. Since many using the video services are working parents, think about segmentations that allow useful, targeted messages for families struggling to juggle work-from-home and homeschooling.

## Inventory

Expand focus on display, pre-roll, and OTT inventory, including news and entertainment as more video and TV is being watched.

That is where a candidate can stand out in a time of crisis and uncertainty.

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## CONCLUSION

### *The New Normal*

With millions of Americans out of work and families unable to leave the house, internet use will keep rising.

During this historic crisis, voters are discovering and expanding their digital sources for news and entertainment.

With more time on their hands and less money for commercial-free subscriptions, there is more ad inventory out there than ever.

**Elections are still on the calendar, and they will take place. This “new normal” caused by COVID-19 provides candidates with unique opportunities to give voters reasons for optimism and hope.**

1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/business/coronavirus-news-sites.html>

2 <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2020/staying-put-consumers-forced-indoors-during-crisis-spend-more-time-on-media/>

3 <https://adage.com/article/digital/advertisers-say-covid-19-will-hit-harder-2008-financial-crisis-iab-report/2246756>

4 <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/31/americans-turn-to-technology-during-covid-19-outbreak-say-an-outage-would-be-a-problem/>





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