Are Digital Technologies Supporting Traditional Styles of Electioneering?

Measuring and Explaining the Use of Interactive Web Campaigning by Candidates in the 2010 UK General Election

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ADOPTION OF WEB 2.0 SITES</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEASURING WEB 2.0 SITE ADOPTION</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WEB 1.0 IN THE 2010 GENERAL ELECTION</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WEB 2.0 SITE ADOPTION IN THE 2010 GENERAL ELECTION</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXPLAINING WEB 2.0 SITE ADOPTION</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INCLUDING CONTROL VARIABLES</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ADOPTION OF INTERACTIVE FEATURES</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEASURING INTERACTIVE FEATURES</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXPLAINING INTERACTIVE FEATURES</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INCLUDING CONTROL VARIABLES</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>WHY CAMPAIGN ONLINE? A QUALITATIVE APPROACH</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DATA &amp; METHODS</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHAPTER STRUCTURE</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CAMPAIGNING</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADDITIONAL SOCIAL FACTORS</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CANDIDATE FACTORS</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEASURING INTERACTIVE WEB CAMPAIGNING</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXPLAINING INTERACTIVE WEB CAMPAIGNING</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INTERACTIVE WEB CAMPAIGNING AND PARTY DECLINE</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIMITATIONS, LESSONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................250

APPENDIX A | MEASURING TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CAMPAIGNING
......................................................................................................................................267

APPENDIX B | INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ......................................................................280

APPENDIX C | PARTICIPANT INFORMATION .................................................................284

APPENDIX D | CONSENT TO BE INTERVIEWED ............................................................288

Word count: 72,256
TABLES

Table 1: Information Provision And Participation Activities ........................................ 45
Table 2: Original Measures Of Traditional And Modern Campaigning ....................... 61
Table 3: Incumbency and Marginality by Party in the 2010 EAS ................................... 88
Table 4: EAS Questions and Web 2.0 Site Adoption ................................................... 90
Table 5: Seats Won in England, Scotland and Wales at 2005 General Election and
Number of Marginal Seats ......................................................................................... 94
Table 6: Content Analysis Schema For Measuring Interactivity In Local Campaign Web
Presences ..................................................................................................................... 98
Table 7: Variables Used To Compose Revised Traditional And Modern Campaign
Indices (2010 EAS Question Number) ....................................................................... 104
Table 8: Control Variables Used In Chapter Four Analysis (EAS Analysis) ............... 108
Table 9: Incumbency And Marginality By Party Affiliation In The 2010 CCS ............. 112
Table 10: Frequency Of Interactive Web Campaign Site Adoption Reported In CCS
And EAS Datasets (% Of All Responses) .................................................................... 113
Table 11: Additional Control Variables In The CCS Model ....................................... 115
Table 12: Model Used For The Analysis Of Web 2.0 Site Adoption ............................ 116
Table 13: Control Variables Used In The Analysis Of Interactive Web Campaign
Features ....................................................................................................................... 120
Table 14: Model Used For Analysis Of Interactive Features ....................................... 121
Table 15: Case Selection For Chapter Six ................................................................. 125
Table 16: Analytical Framework For Chapter Six ....................................................... 127
Table 17: Reporting Of Analyses ................................................................................. 133
Table 18: Logistic Regression Of Web 2.0 Adoption (Traditional And Modern Indices)
In The 2010 General Election (N=969) .................................................................... 145
Table 19: Logistic Regression Of Web 2.0 Adoption (Traditional And Modern Indices
And Control Variables) In The 2010 General Election (N=969) ......................... 147
Table 20: Logistic Regression On The Adoption Of Web 2.0 Sites (Candidate Factors)
(N=534) .................................................................................................................... 154
Table 21: Logistic Regression Of Web 2.0 Adoption (Time Spent Canvassing/Direct
Mail (N=554) ............................................................................................................. 156
Table 22: Logistic Regression On The Adoption Of Web 2.0 Sites (All Control
Variables) (N=513)...........................................................................................................158
Table 23: Content Analysis Schema For Measuring Interactivity In Constituency
Campaign Web Presences .................................................................................................171
Table 24: Frequency Of Posts In The Last Seven Days Across Different Social Media
Platforms (N=223)..............................................................................................................174
Table 25: Poisson Regression Of Personal Interactivity And Automated Interactivity
Features (Traditional And Modern Indices) (N=102).....................................................179
Table 26: Poisson Regression Of Personal Interactivity (Traditional And Modern
Indices And Control Variables) (N=102)........................................................................182
Table 27: Poisson Regression Of Automated Interactivity (Traditional And Modern
Indices And Control Variables) (N=102).........................................................................183
Table 28: Use Of Template Sites By Party ........................................................................186
Table 29: Poisson Regression Of Automated Interactivity (Traditional And Modern
Indices And Control Variables) (N=65)...........................................................................187
Table 30: Poisson Regression Of Personal Interactivity (Traditional And Modern
Indices And Control Variables) (N=65)...........................................................................188
Table 31: Case Selection for Chapter Six ........................................................................200
Table 32: Un-Rotated Component Matrix Based On Fisher & Denver Traditionalism
And Modernisation Index B ............................................................................................269
Table 33: Variables Used To Compose Revised Traditional And Modern Campaign
Type Indices ......................................................................................................................270
Table 34: Unrotated Component Solution Based On Revised Indices Of Traditional And
Modern Campaigning.......................................................................................................271
Table 35: Component Matrix With Orthogonal (Varimax) Rotation..............................272
Table 36: Pattern Matrix With Oblique (Direct Oblimin) Rotation.................................273
Table 37: Structure Matrix With Oblique (Direct Oblimin) Rotation...............................273
Table 38: Pattern Matrix With Oblique (Promax) Rotation.............................................274
Table 39: Structure Matrix With Oblique (Promax) Rotation ........................................274
Table 40: Results Of CFA .................................................................................................275
FIGURES

Figure 1: Party Membership In The UK 1980-1998 As % Of The Electorate.................. 17
Figure 2: Distribution Of Traditional And Modern Indices......................................... 105
Figure 3: Frequency Of Web 1.0 Use During 2005 And 2010 Campaigns (2005 N=539
2010 N=1051)........................................................................................................ 138
Figure 4: Campaign Effort Maintaining A Website Pre-Campaign And During The
Campaign (Pre-Campaign N=1060 During Campaign N=1026).............................. 139
Figure 5: Use Of Computers For Emailing Voters And Campaign Workers (Voters
N=847 Workers N=916).......................................................................................... 140
Figure 6: Effort Using Social Media: Pre-Campaign And During The Campaign (Pre
Campaign N=1057 During The Campaign N=1035)............................................... 141
Figure 7: Campaigns Using Twitter (N=1051).............................................................. 142
Figure 8: Campaign Effort Using Image/Video Sharing (N=1023).............................. 143
Figure 9: Time Spent on Doorstep Canvassing And Direct Mail (Canvassing N=590
Direct Mail N=567).................................................................................................. 156
Figure 10: Frequency Of Personal Interactivity Features (% Of Campaigns) (N=204)172
Figure 11: Frequency Of Automated Interactivity Features (% Of Campaigns) (N=204)
............................................................................................................................... 173
Figure 12: Frequency Of Personal Interactivity Features (Content Analysis N=203,
Content Analysis & EAS N=110).............................................................................. 178
Figure 13: Frequency Of Automated Interactivity Features (Content Analysis N=203,
Content Analysis & EAS N=110).............................................................................. 178
Figure 14: Distribution Of Regression Scores For Traditional Campaigning............. 277
Figure 15: Distribution Of Regression Scores For Modernised Campaigning........... 278
Figure 16: Scatter Plot Comparing Traditional And Modernised Scores............... 278
ABSTRACT

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Are Digital Technologies Supporting Traditional Styles of Electioneering?
Measuring and Explaining the Use of Interactive Web Campaigning by Candidates in the 2010 UK General Election

This thesis is a mixed methods analysis of the use of new, interactive web campaign techniques, often referred to as Web 2.0, by constituency level campaigns at the 2010 UK General Election. It has two main objectives: measuring the adoption of new web campaign techniques amongst constituency campaigns and assessing the influence of different factors on campaigns’ propensity to use interactive campaigning. Drawing on previous work on parties’ use of technology, this thesis tests a socially shaped explanation of adoption, hypothesising that the offline campaign style will be a strong influence. This contributes to the wider debate about election campaigning online by using an analytical framework of traditional and modern constituency campaigning that contextualises web campaign elements within the campaign as a whole.

Data to test this hypothesis comes from a diverse range of sources. A national survey of election agents (ESRC Electoral Agent Survey 2010) is used to measure the offline campaign style of campaigns and their adoption of Web 2.0 campaign sites. Content analysis data from a subset of regional campaigns is then used to assess the extent to which campaigns actually used specific interactive features across a range of platforms. Finally, the findings of these analyses are triangulated using qualitative data collected in interviews with campaigners following the election.

The findings of this work show that despite the rapid adoption of Web 2.0 sites, campaigns have not fostered the kind of interaction associated with an architecture of participation. The drivers of Web 2.0 adoption are more complex than originally envisaged, whilst social shaping explanations are relevant, statistical models leave much of the variation in adoption unexplained. In conjunction with the accounts of campaigners collected through interviews, this strongly suggests that researchers must consider more intangible factors such as the perceived symbolic and instrumental value of web campaigns alongside social factors when attempting to explain the adoption of Web 2.0.
DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

This thesis would not have been possible without the kind help and sound advice of the following:

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Benjamin Lee was born in Wigan in North West England. He attended King’s College London where he graduated with a BA in War Studies in 2003. In 2005 he graduated from The University of Manchester with an MA in Political Science after submitting a dissertation on the use of the internet as a campaign tool in the 2005 UK general election. He worked in the private sector for three years as a public relations consultant before returning to The University of Manchester to study for a PhD in 2009.
This work is a study of the adoption of interactive web campaigning by constituency campaigns during the 2010 UK general election. Interactive web campaigning refers to a group of campaign techniques that allow campaigns and voters to exchange information, synchronously or asynchronously, online through the use of conventional websites owned by parties, or in spaces built on an architecture of participation such as Facebook and Twitter commonly referred to as Web 2.0.¹ Despite some bold predictions the political impact of the web had largely been seen as a normalisation of political practices, with the online political realm coming to mirror the established offline order (Margolis et al, 1999; Margolis & Resnick, 2000). In the context of comparative political campaigns literature, the web has been seen as contributing to the wider modernisation of political campaigns, potentially allowing campaigns to better target specific groups of voters (Kavanagh, 2005; Farrell, 2006; Howard, 2005, 2006; Gibson & Rommele, 2009). Since 2005 however, the emergence of a new, highly interactive layer of the web, commonly referred to as Web 2.0, has cast doubt on the link between web campaigns and campaign modernisation. Web 2.0 can potentially be used in support of modernised campaigning; as voters put ever more personal information online the opportunities for campaigns to target them with tailored messages will also increase. However, the properties of Web 2.0 such as its emphasis on user generated content and the exchange of information through interactivity also align well with more traditional constituency campaign techniques based on establishing dialogue between campaigners and voters. Potentially the web could have just as great a role in supporting traditional constituency campaigns, in particular at the constituency level where campaigns may lack the resources and expertise required to exploit data provided Web 2.0. At the current time, which of these scenarios will prove to be true is unknown, and it is unclear what the role of Web 2.0 is in campaigning.

This work aims to measure the adoption of interactive web campaigning at the constituency level in 2010, and then go on to analyse the factors that explain why some

¹ This thesis conceptualises and measures the adoption of interactive web campaigning in a number of different ways: as the adoption of specific Web 2.0 sites, as the adoption of interactive features in both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 sites and in more general terms through discussions with campaigns. Where this work refers to these differing approaches collectively they will be termed interactive web campaigning.
campaigns chose to adopt interactive web campaigning and why some did not. The later, analytical part of the project, tests a theory nascent in the literature, that the role of interactive web campaigning at the constituency level will be in supporting established traditional campaign techniques rather than continuing modernised campaign methods. This work predicts that interactive web campaigning at the constituency level will provide a ‘digital doorstep’ through which campaigns that emphasise traditional campaigning can reach out to and interact with potential voters.

In contrast to previous studies, the focus of this work is on the constituency rather than the national level campaign. Whilst there is much to be said about the emergence of national campaigning, and the associated application of modernised campaign techniques, the resulting accounts of campaigning have been broad and sweeping and are unlikely to apply uniformly across all 650 (at the time of the 2010 election) constituencies in the UK. Some constituencies may see highly developed, modernised campaigns, whilst other constituency campaigns may still rely on doorstep canvassing and public meetings, techniques unchanged in hundreds of years (Holt & Turner, 1968; Denver & Hands, 1997a; Norris, 2000). In addition to adding an important level of detail, studying constituency campaigns also offers an opportunity to be more systematic, so whilst other studies of web campaigning at the national level have been based on a relative few national campaign web presences, the constituency level offers hundreds of campaign web presences. The larger number of cases dramatically increases the options for analysis.

It is also important to note that this work deals with the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, and the use of interactive campaign features, it does not deal with the adoption of Web 1.0 sites in isolation. Although much of the literature cited herein, and many of the arguments have been derived from the study of Web 1.0, in the context of campaigning, Web 1.0 adoption has reached, or is very near, saturation. Data from the 2010 electoral Agent Survey (a mainstay of this work, see Chapter Three) shows that four out of five constituency campaigns in the UK have a website: there is very little variation in the data to analyse. Furthermore, in-depth content analysis in which the researcher searched for candidates revealed that even where campaigns did not have their own website, the central party was very often providing one in the form of online directories hosted
inside the central party site, so even 80% adoption is likely to be low. Whilst this work does not deal with the adoption of Web 1.0 specifically, it does incorporate some elements of Web 1.0 into a discussion of interactive features (Chapter Five). Despite the reputation of Web 1.0 as being static and acting as a repository for campaign materials, it also can provide more interactive features such as providing an email address or allowing users to download material.

Having set out the goals of this work along with what it is not doing, the remaining aims of this chapter are: to set out the initial point of inquiry for this research which justifies the choice of web campaigning as an important topic, to set out the structure of this work, and to highlight the original contribution to knowledge made by addressing this topic.

WHY STUDY WEB CAMPAIGNS? PARTY DECLINE

The starting point of this thesis is the idea that political parties in the UK are in decline. This is likely caused by many factors, but this work concentrates on changing campaign practices. Interactive web campaigning is an important subject for research as, by opening up campaigns and providing a space in which campaigns and voters can interact, it could possibly reinvigorate the link between parties and citizens.

Many researchers consider democracy in the UK unthinkable without political parties (Whiteley et al, 1994; Ware, 1996; Lipow & Seyd, 1996; Yanai, 1999; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Webb, 2000). According to McKenzie (1965), the key function of parties is to sustain competing teams of leaders for the electorate to ultimately choose from at election time. This draws on Schumpeter’s (1943) interpretation of democracy that sees the role of the electorate not as forming a coherent public will, but instead to choose between competing party elites. In this role, parties are relatively un-challenged, partisan politicians still populate Parliament, and election day still requires voters to make decisions about competing teams of leaders (indirectly). However, secondary to their role as vehicles for power, parties have a number of subsidiary functions, many of which provide a connection between the party membership and the wider electorate, and
the party in Parliament. McKenzie (1965) himself goes on to talk about the role of parties as two-way channels of communication between leaders and supporters. Webb (2002) highlights a number of party functions in a similar vein: interest aggregation, political communication, education and the encouragement of political participation. It is the ability to link governments and citizens that makes political parties unique institutions and thereby ensure parties remain legitimate representatives of public opinion (Lawson, 1980). Katz (1990) focuses to an even greater extent on the linkage functions of parties:

‘From the perspective of the elites the organized party was an important channel of communication. The party meeting, in particular, provided a way of speaking to and coordinating the party’s local body of ‘opinion leaders’, while at the same time obtaining enough ‘feedback’ from them to prevent wholesale desertions. From the mass perspective, party provided a channel for participation and a means of communicating with political elites at the same time more forceful and more discriminating than the simple ‘yes or no’, ‘this one or the other’, allowed at the ballot box.’

Katz, 1990, p.143

Despite the importance of linkage functions in maintaining the connection between political parties and those they represent, there is substantial evidence that they are coming under substantial pressure in the current political environment.

The clearest evidence of a problem between parties and the public is in party membership. Notionally at least, parties in the UK are still membership organisations, but membership rolls have been in decline in the post-war era, with the percentage of the UK electorate that are formal party members halving between 1980 and 1998 (Figure 1)(Mair & van Biezen, 2001). There is also earlier evidence for declining party membership; Katz & Mair (1992) reported a 6% decline in party membership in the UK (as a proportion of the electorate) between 1964 and 1987. In addition to declining membership figures Dalton (2000) highlights further evidence of partisan de-alignment, suggesting that attachment to parties is also waning, with the public becoming less partisan overall. Stoker (2006) presents a picture of a UK electorate growing disengaged
by formal politics, trending away from long term commitments to politics (like joining a party) in favour of short bouts of non-party activity such as engaging with interest groups. Alongside falling membership numbers, Stoker also reports declining partisan attachment. Given that parties enjoy a privileged position as gatekeepers of political power, and that in part the legitimacy rests on their ability to represent the interests of the electorates, the decline in membership and attachment raises serious questions about the continuing role of political parties. Furthermore, there is a pressing need to identify the causes of this phenomenon and ways to address it.

**Figure 1: Party Membership In The UK 1980-1998 As % Of The Electorate**

The catalyst for these trends is likely multi-faceted and complex. Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) highlight several trends at the micro, meso and macro levels, including rising educational attainment, dissatisfaction with political outcomes (they suggest partisan de-alignment in Britain is linked to declining international status), post-materialism, rising significance of non-party political organisations and most interesting for this thesis, what they term the professionalization of political campaigning:

*‘Several studies have discussed the trend of increasing professionalization and institutionalization within contemporary parties (Katz & Mair, 1995; Farrell, 1994). These changes are partly in response to other changes in the political*
process, such as the increased reliance on the mass media during election campaigns and the declining mass memberships of many parties. Once initiated however they tend to reinforce the transformation of parties as political institutions. For instance, increasing professionalization may further marginalize the value of party membership to the organization; hiring campaign consultants may shift even more resources to media-centred campaigning.'

Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000, p12

Dalton and Wattenberg suggest that the relationship between the professionalization of political campaigning and the corresponding negative impact on the engagement between parties and citizens is self-reinforcing: professionalization causes de-alignment, and de-alignment leads to greater professionalization. As parties rely more heavily on professionals and the media to run campaigns, the pool of local labour and volunteers dries up, forcing parties to rely more heavily on professional campaigners. Coleman and Blumler (2009, p46) also characterise changing political practices as both a response to wider societal changes and a contributing factor to what they term a ‘crisis in public communication’. They identify the processes of ‘individualisation,’ ‘modernisation’ and ‘secularisation’ and the resulting political response as leading to the professionalization of political parties and a concentration on the importance of strategic and disciplined approaches to advocacy.

Other researchers have focused on the concept of professionalization of campaigns itself (Gibson & Rommele, 2009). However, there is debate over the value of professionalization as a term, with some arguing that it has been misapplied to include any politician with a degree of media training (Lilleker & Negrine, 2002). Fortunately there is no shortage of other phrases to describe changing campaign practices with wider comparative literatures on campaigning describing it variously as: Americanized (Scammell, 1995), Phase III (Farrell, 2006), and Post-Modern (Norris, 1997, 2000). The accounts to some extent are unified in their description of campaign practices: campaigns have shifted from attempts to engage through face-to-face meetings to focus instead on targeted mobilisation of voters.
Postmodern campaigns are characterised by more focused communications which allow different messages to be tailored to different groups of target voters, such as the elderly or women. The focus of professionalised campaigns is strategic marketing, finding a clear space the party can contest which 'promotes' a 'product' identity which maximises support. Norris, 1997, p210

As for the consequences of these changing campaign practices, Russell (2005) suggests that greater managerialism in parties and increased control over campaigns is likely a factor in falling electoral turnout. More specific evidence from Labour’s 2001 campaign also suggests that campaign modernisation has led to falls in turnout, arguing that the low turnout in 2001 was as a result of party’s focus on targeting of strategically important voters (Lilleker, 2005a, 2005b). As a consequence of New Labour choosing to concentrate their efforts on relatively few voters, the remaining voters, many of them the core Labour vote in safe seats, were left feeling disenfranchised by a party seen as chasing middle class votes (Lilleker & Negrine, 2003). Chadwick (2006) highlights the cynicism engendered in voters but the dominance of professionalised campaign and the reinforcement of this point of view by a mainstream media that treats politics as a game and not a tool for discussing issues and policy. Franklin (1994) termed these developments the ‘Packaging of Politics’, suggesting that politics had been reduced to the status of a spectator sport as citizens were increasingly relying on the media as an arbiter of political engagement, unable or at least unlikely to engage with political figures in person:

‘The consequences of packaged politics for citizens are greater; the implications for democracy are more worrying. It has resulted in a decline in the number of face-to-face encounters between politicians and the public’

Franklin, 1994, p11

Green and Smith (2003) view the changing campaign practices (termed professionalization here also) as creating a collective action problem - as described by Olsen (1965) – and also link this to voter turnout. Olsen argued that any large organisation is doomed to struggle when competing with smaller more focused
organisations, as the contribution of the individual member in a larger organisation is of little consequence, thereby providing a strong incentive to ‘free-ride’. Under Green and Smith’s interpretation the low status of local supporters reduces the value of contributions of the rank and file to the point that they have little incentive to get involved.

Coleman and Blumler (2009) were writing about a wider phenomenon of public communication that can be said to include political campaigning within it. They describe voters feeling disconnected from their representatives, in part due to their communication practices:

‘There is a pervasive sense that politicians and the people they represent inhabit different worlds, speak mutually incomprehensible languages and fail to respect one another.’

Coleman & Blumler, 2009, p69

Before continuing it would be wise to acknowledge a number of caveats and contrary opinions to the party decline thesis. The numbers for party membership are speculative; parties are not required to report their members and shifts in accounting methods over time also contribute to making these numbers an educated guess rather than hard fact (Mair & van Biezen, 2001; Seyd & Whiteley, 2004). Despite this, studies of parties in the UK have also remarked on the decline in membership numbers and declining activism within parties suggesting that the picture of membership decline is accepted within parties themselves (Whiteley et al, 1994; Seyd & Whiteley, 2002; Whiteley et al, 2006). Equally, many reject the notion that declining membership and attachment means party decline altogether, suggesting that harking back to an imagined golden age of mass participation parties is ignoring the realities of the current transformation of parties into new organisational forms (Selle & Svåsand, 1991; Heidar & Saglie, 2003; Scarrow & Gezgor, 2010). Arguments over turnout also suffer slightly from the recent upward trend in turn out for UK General Elections; turnout for 2010 was 65.1%, up from an all time low of 59.4% in 2001, although nowhere near the comparative highs of 77.7% experienced in 1992. These caveats and the term ‘decline’ aside, theoretical and empirical evidence does seem to indicate a problem of political parties losing their
connection with the voting public. In essence, as parties have come to rely to an ever greater extent on professionals to make campaigns work, the roles of the local rank and file activist and casual supporter has been diminished, eroding the connection between parties and citizens formed by the campaign process. As party organisations have transformed, moving away from the classical Mass Party as envisaged by Duverger (1951) towards Catch-All (Kirchheimer, 1969) and Electoral-Professional models (Panebianco, 1988) there is seemingly a risk that the link between voters and those that claim to represent their interests will be broken. Furthermore, there is good reason to think that the transition between traditional, face-to-face local campaigning to modernised campaign techniques has had some part to play in these developments.

It is an irony pointed out by Franklin (1994) that just as communications technology was evolving to a point where voters could make their voice heard more effectively, that the active role of the voter in party political campaigns was becoming so reduced. Initial speculation about the web and its impact on political life was optimistic, seeing the web as a way to democratise politics and give new levels of efficacy to individual voters (Abramson et al, 1988; Rheingold, 1993; Negroponte, 1995; Budge, 1996), and many of these early visions can still be found embedded in more contemporary and cautious texts about the potential positive impact of the web (Benkler, 2006; Coleman & Blumler, 2009). Empirically however, the web has not offered much hope for enabling parties to change their organisational patterns or leading to a new and more equitable balance of political power. The verdict on Web 1.0 from scholars has largely been one of normalisation of existing power relationships (Margolis & Resnick, 2000). The emergence of Web 2.0 around 2005 however once again poses questions about the role of the web in democracy and the relationship between the public and parties. Seemingly, Web 2.0 offers the possibility for even the least technically skilled voters to engage with campaigns online through simplified and highly interactive tools such as Twitter and Facebook. In particular, this work is interested in the adoption of these new tools and the type of campaigning they are used to support. If Web 2.0 is being used to further traditional, interactive campaign forms - to exploit a digital doorstep - then this is evidence of the web providing an avenue through which one of the causes of party decline might potentially be addressed.
STRUCTURE OF THIS WORK

This work uses a mixed methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative data to develop a multi-faceted understanding of interactive web campaigning at the 2010 election. It aims to both measure and explain the adoption of interactive web campaigning at the constituency level. After establishing the levels of interactive web campaigning using a variety of measures, it attempts to explain them by testing a theorised connection between the traditional offline campaign techniques and the interactive web campaigning. Initially interactive web campaigning was considered as the adoption of specific Web 2.0 sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The focus on sites suited a far-reaching statistical analysis using secondary data supplied by party election agents and allowed both for the measurement of Web 2.0 site adoption and attempts to explain it through considering its relationship to different independent variables. In order to further develop this approach a subset of campaigns were analysed in greater depth using content analysis of web presences. This analysis was focused on the use of interactive web campaign features across web presences as a whole rather than specific sites. While more detailed, this information was less wide-ranging resulting in a trade-off between the detail of measurements and the power of the analysis. The final element was a series of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with a range of campaigns and campaign workers in order to develop a more in-depth understanding of the reasons for the use of interactive web campaigning. This approach allowed for the consideration of factors not available to quantitative analysis, including more technologically determined explanations of interactive web campaigning.

The results of these analyses, and additional background information such as relevant literatures and the data and methods used are reported over the course of seven chapters. Chapters Four to Six contain the main analyses this work is based on, each chapter addresses the research question through the analysis of different data: secondary, content analysis and qualitative.
Chapter One (this chapter) is the introduction and summarises the thesis, explaining the objectives, how they were accomplished, and concentrates on why interactive web campaigning is a worthwhile subject for study and how this work fits into and advances the wider debate on web campaigning.

Chapter Two is a literature review that gives a more critical evaluation of literature in this area. It starts with literatures that chart the growth of the use of websites and interactive features more specifically, before moving on to more analytical literatures covering the categorisation of constituency campaigns, wider comparative campaign literatures and previous analysis of web campaign adoption.

Chapter Three outlines the data and methods used in each of the subsequent analysis chapters. The key challenge in this chapter was operationalising the hypotheses developed in the literature review and testing them with the available data.

Chapter Four is the first of the three analytical chapters of this thesis. It looks at the adoption of interactive web campaign sites by constituency level campaigns using secondary data collected from a number of surveys. This chapter offers the largest possible analysis of interactive campaign web campaigning at the constituency level and enables the testing of the hypothesised connection between interactive web campaign sites and traditional offline campaigning styles.

Chapter Five develops a more complex measure of interactive web campaigning, measuring the adoption of specific features rather than more general sites considered in Chapter Four. This analysis is based on content analysis data of web campaigns from the North West of England. As above, this chapter tests a hypothesised connection between interactive web campaigning and traditional campaign styles. In doing so this chapter overcomes a number of complex methodological challenges involved in gaining a deeper insight into interactive web campaigning.
Chapter Six is a qualitative analysis focusing on data collected through interviews with candidates and campaign workers. Whilst Chapters Four and Five offer insight into the levels of adoption and feature use, as well as statistical understanding of the factors that drive them, the explanations they offer are limited to those factors that can be quantified and that are available in data. Chapter Six returns to these factors, retesting the findings of Chapters Four and Five by comparing the accounts of different campaigns selected on the basis of their scores on indices of traditional and modern campaigning. Also, this chapter expands beyond the statistical models to consider the role of factors that cannot be quantified, including factors such as the symbolic value of using new campaign tools and the intrinsic instrumental value of new campaign tools.

Chapter Seven is a concluding chapter that summarises the findings of earlier chapters and returns to the central preoccupation of this thesis: testing the hypothesised connection between traditional campaigning and interactive web campaigns. This chapter also suggests a future research agenda as well as reflecting on the lessons learned during this project.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

This work makes a number of contributions to existing knowledge in the field of web campaigning by extending established literatures and developing new approaches to the measurement of web campaigning. The Literature Review (Chapter Two) addresses these contributions more fully, but they are précised here for the sake of clarity.

In the first instance, this work extends the existing literature charting the proliferation of web campaigning at the constituency level in the UK. This is particularly relevant as the 2010 election was the first general election at which Web 2.0 services such as Facebook and Twitter were widely available to campaigners, and so this is the first chance to evaluate how far these tools have penetrated into campaign practices. As well as charting the development of new techniques, this work also brings forward new sources
of secondary data on web adoption in the form of the 2010 Electoral Agent Survey and the 2010 Comparative Candidates Survey.

Secondly, this work looks at the adoption of specific interactive features by campaigns – again, this is the first chance to look at this issue in the UK, in a general election, since the emergence of Web 2.0. As such this work is a significant contribution to established attempts to evaluate the levels of interactivity in UK web campaigns. In order to measure the adoption of interactive features this work develops a new content analysis schema that distinguishes between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 platforms, between different forms of interactivity, and that is sufficiently parsimonious to be applied to a large number of campaigns in a relatively short space of time.

Thirdly, the analytical portion of this thesis tests a theorised connection between traditional constituency campaigns and the adoption of interactive web campaigning. This introduces the web to established constituency campaigns literature in the UK for the first time, providing a valuable synthesis and attempting to fit new campaign techniques into established analytical frameworks. This thesis also challenges the wider comparative campaigns literature that has presented the web as a tool for the continuation of the modernisation of campaigning. Whilst not contradicting this at the national level, this thesis carves out a specific role for interactive web campaigning at the constituency level that has yet to be considered.

Finally, this work significantly extends the debate around the adoption of web campaigning. The majority of approaches have considered similar factors in their analysis, all of them driven by the assumption that campaigns will rationally respond to various social stimuli such as their party affiliation and demographics of the constituency in question. This work extends this social shaping position, by introducing a new measure of offline campaign techniques not previously considered. Equally however, this work also provides scope for challenging this interpretation by allowing campaigns to describe their reasons for adopting interactive web campaigns in their own words. The justifications they provide may tie with the socially shaped explanations considered previously, but they can also introduce additional, more technologically
determined factors such as the symbolic and instrumental value of interactive web campaigning.

**SUMMARY**

The central question addressed in this work concerns the measurement and explanation of interactive web campaigning at the constituency level at the 2010 election. The overarching theory of this work is: that instead of being used in the continuation of modernised campaigns, at the constituency level the properties of Web 2.0 make it better suited to traditional campaigning, and that by supporting and expanding the traditional campaign in this way that the arrival of interactive web campaigning may go some way to resolving the issue of party decline. The main goal of this thesis is to test this argument by locating interactive web campaigning in the context of constituency level campaigns.

Most importantly, this chapter has explained why interactive web campaigning is a worthwhile field of endeavour by interpreting the phenomenon of party decline, and highlighting the negative influence of changing campaign practices on the representative functions of parties; identifying a problem that interactive web campaigning could help to solve. This chapter has also set out how this work will proceed with its analysis. The theorised connection between traditional offline and interactive web campaigning will be tested using both quantitative and qualitative methods. This chapter has also set out to provide an overview of the structure of this work with each of the three analytical chapters addressing the research question through the analysis of different datasets: secondary data, content analysis data and qualitative interview data. Finally, this chapter has set out to clearly demonstrate that this research fits with and extends the current debate on web campaigning in the UK in a number of ways: by extending and challenge existing literatures and by innovating methodologically with the inclusion of new analytical frameworks in analysis, and analysing new and recent datasets.
The next chapter is a Literature Review, which sets out the research question more fully, and evaluates the existing literature in this field. This is then followed by the Data and Methods chapter, which operationalizes the argument developed in the literature review by developing specific, testable hypotheses as well as outlining the available data and methods used in analysis.
2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the available literature on web campaigning and related areas. It is designed to build on the problem of party decline described in the introduction, and develop the idea of interactive web campaigning as a potential solution as well as set out previous approaches to the measurement and explanation of interactive web campaigning. Specifically, the aims of this chapter are to:

- State and justify the research question
- Summarise the findings of relevant literatures including gaps in existing knowledge
- Where necessary, develop an overarching argument in response to the research question to test in later analysis
- Locate the significance of this research question in the wider literature, showing how answering this question makes a relevant contribution to existing knowledge

After setting out the research question, as well as the main arguments of this thesis in response to the question, this chapter engages with three literatures: constituency campaigns, wider comparative campaigns and finally web campaigning literatures which can be further divided into literatures focused on measuring interactivity and those that seek to explain adoption. Each of these literatures engages with the research question in a significant way, and each would be extended by answering it.
RESEARCH QUESTION

The introduction has set out the initial observations that have driven this inquiry, the apparent decline in the representative role played by political parties in the UK and other democracies. This has been linked in part to a process of campaign modernisation that has been gathering pace in the UK since the end of the Second World War, but has seemingly accelerated with the arrival of television and survey methods into the political campaign. Campaigners have sought to augment locally focused campaign techniques that resulted in a large amount of face-to-face campaigning and interactions between campaigners and voters, with modernised campaign techniques that keep voters at arms length and minimise opportunities for direct face-to-face discussion and, as a consequence, the interactions that stem from them. As a result the linkage functions of parties have been diminished. One possible solution to this problem is using newly emerging web-based technologies (referred to here collectively as interactive web campaigning) in order to encourage voters and campaigners to interact with one another, in effect creating a ‘digital doorstep’. These hopes however must be balanced with new technologies being seen as intrinsically a part of the modernisation of campaigning, and therefore more likely to be used in a continuation of an arm’s length, non-interactive campaign strategy. In essence, this thesis seeks to uncover the role of interactive web campaign techniques in 2010 constituency campaigns; firstly by measuring the extent of their use, and secondly by explaining why campaigns chose to use them. This is expressed as a two-part research question:

Is constituency campaigning becoming more interactive as a result of the availability of interactive web campaign tools and how can this be explained?

The research question is addressed through a mixed methods approach based on both quantitative (Chapter Four and Five) and qualitative data (Chapter Six). The first element of the question is descriptive, calling for the measurement of the level of interactive web campaigning at the constituency level in the 2010 election. In practice this is answered through two different operationalisations of interactive web campaigning. The broadest measure comes from self-reported use of Web 2.0 sites by
campaigns and is explored at the outset of Chapter Four. This analysis offers a general overview of the proliferation of Web 2.0 sites and contributes to some of the more general literatures on the adoption of the web in different contexts. This is a useful point of comparison between the 2010 local campaign and previous campaigns in the UK and provides an important baseline for further analysis. The second operationalisation measures the use of interactive features across both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 platforms, which not only tells us about the adoption of interactive web campaign tools, but gives more detail as to how these tools are implemented. This analysis is reported in Chapter Five. Given that this is a more detailed operationalisation than looking at the adoption of sites, it required a more complex implementation. There has been a great deal of discussion of what constitutes interactivity, but equally the theoretical considerations need to be tempered by the practicalities of assessing it in constituency level political campaigns, in particular the available data (Stromer-Galley, 2000; Bucy, 2004). This section summarises the interactive campaigns literature and gives an overview of some of the previous methods used to assess interactivity and their findings. The main contribution of this thesis to the consideration of interactivity in web campaigns literature is to develop a method of analysis that takes account of a campaign’s wider web presence (both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 sites) and is sufficiently parsimonious to deal with multiple constituency level campaigns. In addition, answering this research question will offer the first glimpse of how Web 2.0 sites are linked to interactivity at the constituency level in the UK, something not previously considered in the literature.

The initial elements of the research question has created measures of the overall levels of interactive web campaigning in the form of measures of Web 2.0 sites and interactive features, but does not speak to why these are being used. The second element moves beyond measuring the adoption of interactive web campaigning and is centred on explaining why campaigns are using interactive web campaigning as they are. The results of this analysis are reported in all three analytical chapters (Four, Five and Six). As above, interactive web campaigning is operationalised differently in Chapters Four and Five - although given the available literature both these approaches speak to the same literatures - and are combined in Chapter Six. Chapters Four and Five look at the adoption of web campaigning through the use of statistical models, with earlier findings of levels of adoption providing the dependent variables required for analysis. Chapter
Six offers a qualitative and more integrated approach to interactive web campaigning more generally and concentrates principally on explaining the adoption of interactive web campaigning. The aim is to develop our understanding of the role that interactive web campaigning is playing in constituency level campaigns, in particular whether these tools are linked to traditional or modernised constituency campaigns (or both, or neither) and therefore whether or not interactive web campaigning can provide a potential avenue through which to address party decline by supporting traditional campaign techniques.

Where the first element of the research question was descriptive, this question is more analytical and tests a predicted relationship: that there will be a connection between traditional campaign styles and the adoption of interactive web campaign tools - in other words that the availability of interactive web campaign tools will be used by traditional campaigns in support of their existing traditional offline campaign styles. This is based on three core propositions supported by literature. The first is that interactive web campaigning is based on increasing interactivity online through the use of social media and other sites designed around the architecture of participation. These sites add an additional interactive layer to the web and allow users with only basic technical skills to upload their own content. In the case of political campaigning this could take the form of publicly commenting on content posted by campaigners. In addition, Web 2.0 sites support a range of more private interactive features such as direct messaging.

The second proposition is that constituency campaigning can be characterised as either being modern or traditional to different degrees based on the campaign techniques that they use. This is supported by the local campaigns literature which offers a number of different approaches to measuring local campaigns, of which the most suitable in this instance is that made by Fisher and Denver (2009) who characterise constituency campaigns as being, to different extents, traditional and modernised. Traditional campaigning is based on exploiting local labour resources and relying on face-to-face campaign techniques such as doorstep canvassing and campaigns are seen as relying on mobilising and persuading supporters through local support networks and personal contact. Modern campaigning is characterised by using techniques that keep voters at arms length including direct mail and telephone canvassing. Based on the
characterisation of interactive web campaigning, and traditional constituency campaigns, there is a clear similarity between techniques and the resulting local network strategy of traditional campaigning, and the interactivity afforded by Web 2.0. The mutually complimentary nature of techniques used by traditional campaigns and Web 2.0 is the basis for the expected traditional-Web 2.0 relationship. Crucially however the local campaigns literature does not speak to the adoption of the web as a campaign tool, indeed it focuses to a large extent on computerisation, a necessary precursor for web campaigns, but a distinct phenomenon. This thesis offers an opportunity to update this literature firstly by developing measures of traditional and modern campaigning that can be applied in a contemporary constituency campaign (in which computerisation is universal), but most importantly this work acts as a synthesis between the local campaigns and the web campaigns literatures. Answering this research question would demonstrate how the web, as a campaign tool, best fits in the context of constituency level campaigns; binding to traditional, modern, both or neither campaign type.

In touching on the local campaigns literature this work also offers comment on the wider comparative campaigns literature. Thus far the modernisation narrative has been fairly consistent across campaigns, but the role of the web in this process is still largely unknown. Many descriptions of modernised campaigns imply that the role of the web is to support targeted communication and refine the modernised campaign (Franklin, 1994; Howard, 2005). Despite this, descriptions of the web, and the level of interactivity offered by Web 2.0 seem a poor fit for this mode of campaigning (Stromer-Galley, 2000). If interactive web campaigning is found to be linked to traditional rather than modernised campaigns, this would challenge the assumption made in the comparative literature that the web is an agent of modernised campaigning and instead carve out a clear role for interactive web campaigning in traditional constituency level campaigns.

The final proposition that supports the traditional-interactive argument, and the final literature considered, is that in choosing to adopt new technologies into their campaigns, candidates and their associated campaign teams will be driven by varying degrees of social rather than technological factors. The rejection of technologically driven explanations of adoption has been central to much of the theoretical and empirical analysis of web campaign adoption and party web use (Rommele, 2003; Lofgren &
Smith, 2003). Up to this point literature has seen the use of the web as linked to wider social factors and therefore governed by elements such as party affiliation and electoral circumstance. Some further research has also evolved to study candidate factors such as age and gender, with younger candidates being theoretically more experienced on the web and therefore open to the idea of web campaigns (Gibson & McAllister, 2006). As a result candidate factors fit better with a more deterministic explanation of campaigning: candidates that use the web because they value the technology itself rather than see it as fitting into pre-established goals. For the most part however, literature explaining the adoption of web campaigning takes the position that campaigners are bound by existing norms, conventions and circumstances that affect the perceived value of the web campaign for them. So if the wider party has an existing commitment to use digital tools, then this is likely to impact the decision making of the campaigners at constituency level, as are the specific electoral circumstances of the campaign and the perception of the voters in the seat. If a campaign uses a specific group of techniques offline, for example relying heavily on doorstep canvassing to meet with voters and introduce the candidate, then this too will likely affect the adoption of new technology.

The belief that technology does not operate in a vacuum, but instead is viewed through a series of social constraints is known as social shaping, and represents a wider critique of technologically deterministic views of technology (Williams & Edge, 1996). This position also reflects a wider perspective that sees institutions as important filters to the study of political behaviour, often referred to as the ‘new institutionalism’ (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p5). Initially, this work does not deviate from this position, but rather extends it by adding an extra variable to the equation: that of offline local campaign style represented through the traditional and modern measures outlined above. This builds on socially driven arguments, allowing for a more explicit measure of offline campaign style than in previous analysis to be incorporated. The final qualitative analysis chapter also allows for an exploration of technological factors as possible explanations of interactive web campaign adoption, a possibility that much of the literature implicitly discounts. Both of these represent significant additions to existing literature of web campaign adoption.
In combination these three points support the argument that traditional campaigning will be positively related to the use of interactive web campaigns as they support their existing offline campaign styles.

1. Web 2.0 can potentially be used to allow campaigns to interact with voters online (interactive web campaigning).
2. Traditional campaigns are reliant on developing local support networks through face-to-face interaction.
3. The theoretical basis for the adoption of technology by campaigns and parties suggests that campaigns will adopt technologies that support their existing strategies.

It is important to note that this work only addresses a single element of the multifaceted phenomenon of party decline, the use of technology in election campaigns, and so caution needs to be taken to not over-claim on the basis of these results alone. The methods used in this thesis, in many cases, can only demonstrate relationships between factors, or, in other cases, findings cannot be generalised from the sample to wider populations. At the same time, if support for this argument can be found, then there is good reason to think that the arrival of Web 2.0 to the constituency campaign scene in the form of interactive web campaigning will support traditional rather than modernised local campaigns and that potentially this will generate greater levels of interaction between campaigns and voters. Whilst not conclusive, this finding would suggest that the interactive web campaigns and the technology they are based on could go some of the way to arresting party decline.

Having set out the overarching argument this review now aims to provide a more in-depth analysis of the available literature on this topic with the dual aims of summarising previous findings in this area that speak to the research question described above, and showing where answering this research question would develop the literature further and make a contribution to original knowledge. Firstly it considers literatures dealing with the general proliferation of web campaign sites (both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0). It then goes on to consider previous attempts to explore interactivity more specifically, concentrating on the associated measurement problems. Following this, this review then
sets out the literature supporting the theorised relationship between traditional campaigning and the use of interactive web campaigning by outlining both the national and local campaigns literatures followed by a section dealing with previous analyses of the adoption of web campaigning.
THE PROLIFERATION OF WEB CAMPAIGN SITES

The initial part of the research question is concerned with measuring the adoption of interactive web campaigning at the constituency level in the UK. Interactive web campaigning is operationalised in two ways: firstly though the use of self-reported secondary data to assess the adoption of Web 2.0 sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and secondly through the use of content analysis to assess the adoption of specific interactive features. This section begins with an overview of web campaigning in the UK and attempts to measure the growth of web campaign sites in the UK.

The web (termed hereafter as Web 1.0 to distinguish it from Web 2.0) was developed originally as an information organisation tool at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) by (now) Sir Tim Berners-Lee (Berners-Lee, 1989). Berners-Lee channelled decades of previous work on information management into a system that allowed those with knowledge of the mark-up language used, to write webpages and make them available for all to see online using the internet (Naughton, 2000). Much of the early political buzz surrounding the web came from cyber utopians who, many already interested in the effect of growing telecommunications on democracy, envisaged that the web would bring about profound societal changes in many areas, including politics (Negroponte, 1996; Castells, 1996, Budge, 1996). One of the things that pricked the interest of these early visionaries was the interactivity afforded by the web. Users would no longer need to passively accept information sent to them but instead were empowered to seek out the things that interested them. Interactivity, it was thought, would allow users to challenge previously dominant creators in multiple arenas, including politics where the web was thought to allow the everyday citizen a greater access to representatives and consequently more opportunities to hold them to account.

‘The great power behind the idea of electronic democracy is that technical trends in communications technologies can help citizens break the monopoly on their attention that has been enjoyed by the powers behind the broadcast paradigm.’

Rheingold, 1993, p308
The optimism of these early visions (and of Web 2.0) would subsequently be critiqued as being idealistic and overly enthusiastic, in particular when empirical studies began to show limited amounts of interactivity (Coleman & Blumler, 2009; Larsson, 2012). The first job for the political science community in developing a more rigorous understanding was assessing the arrival of the web empirically. At this point the literature became divided between researchers interested in the behavioural implications of the web who studied examples of citizens using the web to bring about social change (Cleaver, 1998; Lin & Dutton, 2003; Khan & Kellner, 2004; Pickerill, 2006; Gillan & Pickerill, 2008; Christensen, 2011), and the impact of the web on other forms of political participation including voting (Bimber, 1998, 2001; Shah et al, 2001; Ward et al, 2002; Kruger, 2002; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003; Gibson et al, 2005; DiGennaro & Dutton, 2006; Gibson et al, 2008a; Östman, 2012). Others chose to adopt a more institutional approach, concentrating on the use of new technologies by established political actors rather than citizens, including political parties. This literature can be further divided by those who concentrated on ‘peace-time’ and the potential of the web for re-ordering the internal organisational patterns of political parties (Gibson & Ward, 1999; Margolis et al, 1999; Wring & Horrocks, 2001; Lusoli & Ward, 2004; Pederson & Saglie, 2005; Margetts, 2006; Boyd, 2008) and the study of the use of the web as a tool for external communication i.e. in election campaigning. It is the last approach that is of most relevance to this work.

Foremost in the objectives of scholars of web campaigning was a better understanding of how the web was being used at the national level campaigns (Foot & Schneider, 2002; Norris, 2003; Gibson et al, 2003b, 2003b; Stanyer, 2005; Schweitzer, 2005, 2011; Vaccari, 2008). In contrast, this work is focused on the role of the web in constituency level campaigns, which has received far less attention. Empirical study of the web as a constituency campaign tool in the UK began with the 2001 election, which was the first at which constituency candidates began to develop their web presences. The 1996 US presidential campaign had seen some use of websites at the national level, but they were largely fledgling efforts (D’Alesso, 1997; Chadwick, 2006). Similarly the 1997 UK general election had seen national parties establishing their online presences, but only a handful of constituency candidates were online with one author declaring the 1997
offering ‘truly dire’ (Chadwick, 2006, p158). 2001 was dubbed in some-quarters as the first real internet Election (Ward & Gibson, 2003). There is some confusion over the number of candidates with an online presence in 2001, with journalistic reports putting the figure between five and eight per cent (Ward & Gibson, 2003, p193). Ward and Gibson (2003) note a series of challenges facing researchers in establishing the number of web sites including confusion over MPs using established sites to campaign and the difficulties of identifying sites. Ward and Gibson offer a final total of 400 identified campaign sites, which represents around 25% of campaigns. This figure only includes campaigns in England affiliated with the Conservatives, Labour or the Liberal Democrats. Coleman (2001) similarly laments the lack of any unified database with which to identify campaign sites and suggests that nationally around one in five candidates was online in the 2001 campaign.

By the 2005 campaign, the number of constituency candidates online was far higher, with one estimate putting the figure at around 1,300 or 37% of candidates, but this was marked by differences in adoption by party with 68% of Conservatives online and 45% and 42% of Liberal Democrats and Labour campaigns respectively (Ward et al, 2005, p16). At the point of the 2005 election the web was limited to conventional html sites, and there is good reason to believe that between 2005 and 2010 having a Web 1.0 presence became an indispensable part of constituency campaigns in the UK. This analysis will subsequently show that self-reported levels of Web 1.0 use by constituency level political campaigns in the UK are close to 80% (see Chapter Four). Content analysis data puts the figure even higher as it includes elements of campaign web presences that respondents to survey data may have discounted or been unaware of, often including campaign sites controlled by the central party rather than the constituency campaign (see Chapter Five). The universality of Web 1.0 therefore makes it an unappealing subject for analysis of this kind; there is little variation left to analyse.

Despite the far-reaching penetration of Web 1.0, there have been more recent developments that still offer a worthwhile subject for research. Following the dot com crash of the early 2000s the surviving companies re-emerged with products that had a

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2 It should be noted that claims of the ‘first Internet Election’ actually pre-date even the web. Chadwick (2006, p151) points to the 1992 US presidential campaign where a number of Bill Clinton’s speeches were made available on a server located in the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
qualitatively different feel, what came to be known as Web 2.0 (O’Reilly, 2005). Publisher Tim O’Reilly developed a number of headings that he considered to embody the phenomenon of Web 2.0. Many of these were geared towards how best to identify solid investments in a risky technology sector but from the perspective of campaigns it is worth focussing in on a single concept highlighted by O’Reilly: ‘the architecture of participation’. What makes Web 2.0 sites different from Web 1.0 is that they are built on contributions from the user, not the developer. Whereas Web 1.0 was about delivering content to users, Web 2.0 was about allowing users to deliver their own content, uploading their own material. Where O’Reilly proved prescient is in publishing the idea of Web 2.0 either before or just after several key services had developed, all of which were based around the user adding content to a site as opposed to the designer: Facebook, a social networking service, established 2004; Twitter, a micro blogging service, established 2006 and YouTube, a video sharing service, established 2005. Tools for allowing users to publish were around prior to the emergence of Web 2.0, in particular key early blogging platform Blogger was launched in 1999, but 2005 marks the point that the availability of such services converged and obtained the critical mass that led to the Web 2.0 era.

Since O’Reilly, a number of scholars have gone on to try and develop an expanded definition of Web 2.0, but a single unified idea remains elusive (Anderson, 2007a, 2007b; Chadwick, 2012; Jackson & Lilleker, 2009). There was criticism of Web 2.0 from a number of quarters, most notably Berners-Lee himself, who feels that Web 2.0 is simply a piece of jargon and that the web has always allowed anyone to publish and interact:

‘Web 1.0 was all about connecting people. It was an interactive space, and I think Web 2.0 is of course a piece of jargon, nobody even knows what it means. If Web 2.0 for you is blogs and wikis, then that is people to people. But that was what the web was supposed to be all along. And in fact you know, this ‘Web 2.0’, it means using the standards which have been produced by all these people working on Web 1.0.’

Berners-Lee quoted in Anderson, 2007b, p5
In point of fact Berners-Lee is correct, but the emergence of Web 2.0 services have provided simplified and structured tools with a focus on usability that promote interactivity in a way that Web 1.0 did not (Chadwick, 2012). We can think of a Facebook profile as analogous to home pages which were often built by users looking to establish a presence on the web, the only difference being that Facebook has put the ability to publish online within the reach of all users, not just those with the resources to create a conventional website. This has previously been described as the difference between a technical and an experiential definition of Web 2.0 (Jackson & Lilleker, 2009). As Berners-Lee reminds us, the underlying technical concepts are much the same as Web 1.0, but it is the experience for the user that is altered. It should be noted that criticism of Web 2.0 expands far beyond the definition, with several authors questioning the perceived individual self publicity and assault on experts as arbiters of knowledge (Keen, 2007), the disciplining and conditioning element of Web 2.0 interactivity (Jarrett, 2008) and finally the degree to which unprecedented levels of receiver control supports the creating of self-radicalising online ghettos of extremist thought (Sunstein, 2007). Privacy concerns and questions over the ownership of data have also taken central stage in discussions of Web 2.0 and particular ramifications for campaigning (see below) (Howard, 2005, 2006; Ghel, 2011).

So whereas Web 1.0 could be considered to be ‘played out’ in the campaigning field, with most campaigns now having some kind of basic web presence, measuring the adoption of Web 2.0 sites is the next challenge. A number of studies have touched on the issue at a variety of levels, but are hampered by a lack of UK data and the difficulties of measuring the fragmented Web 2.0 space. The 2005 election had predated the arrival of Web 2.0 and the intervening years did not offer much opportunity to study Web 2.0 in an electoral context. Jackson and Lilleker (2009) identified a number of web presences in 2007, focussing on the national level. They were able to identify 45 social networking profiles linked to national political parties (Jackson & Lilleker, 2009). Reporting of the 2009 European election gave some further indication of how Web 2.0 was being used by political campaigns, with 86% of major campaigns using some element of Web 2.0, 43% of minor parties and 33% of fringe parties (Jackson & Lilleker, 2010, p536). Thus far the use of Web 2.0 in the 2010 general election has only been examined at the national level and indicates that parties were seemingly keen to
incorporate Web 2.0 in their websites, with all the major and many smaller parties developing presences on tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Lilleker & Jackson, 2010). In addition there is more anecdotal evidence from reporting of the campaign that UK national parties were taking Web 2.0 seriously as a campaign tool, with evidence that the Conservative Party was seeking to import ideas from the highly successful Obama campaign (Crabtree, 2010).

Where this study advances the literature on site adoption however is in both the temporal and structural context. Firstly, the 2010 election is the first opportunity to look at Web 2.0 proliferation in the UK at a general election and as such this research contributes to the embryonic study of this phenomenon. Secondly, existing literature has not been able to focus on constituency level campaigns - so whereas nationally and at the European level campaigns have seemingly been quick to use Web 2.0 sites, little is known about how constituency level campaigns will respond to the opportunities offered by Web 2.0. This is particularly important as arguably the free or low cost price point of many Web 2.0 sites seems to be particularly relevant to cash-strapped constituency level campaigns. In addition, those constituency level campaigns with little central oversight may be better positioned to exploit the interactive elements at the heart of Web 2.0 sites compared with more regimented national campaigns. It could well be the case that very different patterns of Web 2.0 site adoption emerge at the constituency level.
INTERACTIVITY IN WEB CAMPAIGNING

Exploring the adoption of specific sites is useful, but is only the first of two operationalisations of interactive web campaigning that stem from the first part of the research question. As well as the adoption of sites, this work also concerns itself with how sites are used, specifically focussing on the levels of interactivity offered across web presences; establishing if interactivity is a feature of the 2010 general election at the constituency level. As already discussed, interactivity is central to Web 2.0, giving users the ability to comment on, re-post and contact candidates and campaigns. It is this property that is thought to underpin the theorised relationship between traditional campaigning offline and interactive web campaigns. However, it cannot be assumed that use of Web 2.0 sites equates to greater interactivity; this must be tested empirically.

This section initially develops a conceptualisation of web campaign features based on previous work in this area, focusing on the degree to which campaigns allow interactivity within their web campaign. It then reviews existing empirical studies of interactivity in campaigns - in both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 eras - that have so far shown that campaigns seem reluctant to develop interactive online campaigns.

Interactivity has been a theme of the web campaign literature dating back to the Web 1.0 era and speaks directly to the early visions of the cyber-utopians. Norris (2003) saw the web as offering a new pluralistic civil forum for voters. Ward and Gibson (2003) highlighted the possibility of the web allowing dialogue between campaigns and voters and building a feedback mechanism. Rommele (2003) argued that the web was a new way for campaigns to open up to interested voters. Foot and Schneider (2006, p199) described the best practice for web campaigns as building a ‘transactional relationship’ with their voters. Despite the possibilities identified by a number of writers for forging new links between voters and campaigns, there were also arguments against the idea that interactivity would become a wide-spread mainstay of campaigning. Most persuasively Stromer-Galley (2000) suggested that campaigns would avoid interaction as it added to already heavy burdens on resources, opened up the possibility of campaigns losing control of their own web campaigns to malicious outsiders, and finally that campaigns would face too many direct questions and consequently have to make public too many unpopular details of their policies.
Before these claims can be investigated however, there remains a great deal of difficulty in adequately conceptualising and measuring interactivity. Bucy (2004) argues:

‘After nearly three decades of analysis, we scarcely know what interactivity is rather than what it does...’

(Bucy, 2004, p373)

Bucy goes on to critique the study of interactivity claiming that social science lacks an overarching theory of interactivity and remains stuck on classification of interactivity on the assumption that more interactivity must be a good thing. Bucy further suggests that more attention should be paid to the consequences of interactivity (Bucy, 2004). The political science literature that describes the study of web campaigns is in truth an example of this - focused on identifying examples of interactive features and behaviours rather than the impacts of them. For example, Gibson et al (2003a) developed a framework that differentiated between information-provision features on campaign websites such as calendars, frequently asked questions and participation features such as downloading software or completing polls. In this instance the heading of participation masks a diverse set of features, chat rooms for instance offer the real time exchange of information between users and campaigns, whilst providing an email address or completing a poll is asynchronous. This distinction is recognised by Gibson et al themselves, who argue that participatory behaviours range between what they term ‘site-based’ interaction between a user and the architecture of the site itself, to direct communication with party elites. Rommele (2003) described the same differences as bilateral versus multilateral communication, distinguishing between one to one interaction and one to many. Stromer-Galley (2000) suggests a distinction be expressed as media interaction, that is interaction with a website, and human interaction, exchanging information with another person. The fact that this literature is focused on classification of campaign features, and not measuring wider consequences is understandable in the context. The constantly changing set of interactive online features and the arrival of new features (for example Web 2.0) makes classification a difficult problem for scholars of web campaigning. As for the wider effects of interactivity, this is likely a valid criticism, and a better understanding of the relationships between voters
and campaigns mediated by interactivity would be useful. However, this would require extensive amounts of data on users, data that at the time of writing is hard to obtain. As a response, most web campaign scholars seem to have adopted an institutional approach, measuring the supply of interactive features rather than the effect on voters. Given the rapidly changing technology however, measuring and classifying interactive features remains a pressing question in this area and, whilst a broader understanding would be beneficial, this contribution should not be overlooked.

The primary way in which researchers of web campaigning have sought to measure interactivity has been through the use of content analysis, the coding of website features based on a framework. The advantages of this method are that it is relatively simple (although time consuming) to implement and it can be tailored to meet specific requirements. Examples of this kind of framework include Gibson et al’s (2003a) schema (see table 1) which concentrates on the features in a single campaign website. More detailed frameworks have also been developed and applied to the study of campaign sites. Jackson and Lilleker (2009, 2010) built on previous work in the area by Ferber et al (2007) to develop a 30-point scale of interactivity based on the direction of communication (one, two or three-way) and the level of receiver control (rated between one and ten). This was applied, in one of the earliest studies of Web 2.0 adoption in the UK context, to the national level web presences of parties (including leaders) in 2007 and subsequently to an analysis of national sites in the 2010 campaign. In other research, the study of interactivity has become part of much wider frameworks cataloguing hundreds of features which have thus far been limited to the study of national level campaigns (Lilleker et al, 2011). More detailed frameworks require more time and resources to develop and populate. These factors are particularly acute when dealing with constituency level web presences which requires the coding hundreds of campaigns instead of a limited number of national campaigns.
Table 1: Information Provision And Participation Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Provision</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party history</td>
<td>Downloading screensaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation structure</td>
<td>Search engines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme/policies</td>
<td>Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Press room</td>
<td>Online shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographies</td>
<td>Email contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar of events</td>
<td>Opinion polls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAQ</td>
<td>E-postcards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist group pages</td>
<td>Donate/volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader focus</td>
<td>Chat rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q&amp;A session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gibson et al, 2003a, p169

This work requires more parsimonious approaches to the measurement of interactivity. Firstly, it does not consider information providing features – all websites are information providing to some extent, even if it only confirms that a campaign exists. This work does distinguish between different interactive features, termed here automated and personal interactivity features. Automated features are akin to Stromer-Galley’s media interaction, users communicating with systems. Personal features are those that allow communication between a user and a campaign. To some extent his work also develops a distinction between private and public personal features but this was not found to support a viable analysis and so public and private were combined into a single measure in subsequent analysis. The final framework used in this analysis is reported in more detail in the data and methods chapter (Chapter Three).

Having set out how interactivity is to be conceptualised and measured in this research, it now remains to evaluate what recent findings show about likely levels of interactivity in web campaigns and where a fresh analysis of interactive features can contribute. Empirical attempts to evaluate the level of interactivity in campaigns have largely concentrated on national level campaigns, with a few exceptions. As a result the bulk of empirical evidence is descriptive rather than analytical, and does not offer any hypotheses as to what factors might be related to the adoption of either interactive or information providing online campaign styles. The earliest web campaigns in the UK
concentrated heavily on information provision, with interactivity largely absent from campaigns (Coleman, 2001; Ward & Gibson, 2003; Bartle, 2005; Ward et al, 2005). The focus on information provision has also been seen in ‘peacetime’, with MPs seemingly using websites to convey information to, rather than exchange information with, their constituents (Jackson & Lilleker, 2004). This lack of interactivity in campaigns is not exclusive to the UK, with work from Germany (Schweitzer, 2005), Greece (Yannas & Lappas, 2005) and the US (Druckman et al, 2007) highlighting candidate’s preferences for non-interactive web campaigns. Contrary to this some accounts of the US 2004 presidential campaign suggest that candidates were keen to interact online (Trammell, et al, 2006). A cross-European study of national campaign websites in 2000 by Norris also found that there were a large number of possible communication activities available online, certainly enough for her to argue:

'Moreover, these websites are not simply 'top-down' channels of information or party propaganda, instead, contrary to the American studies, in Europe they also facilitate 'bottom-up' communication from citizens to parties and elected officials.'

Norris, 2003, p43

At the constituency level, the balance of evidence suggested that interaction was a minority pastime amongst campaigners. Studies of local level sites in the UK during the 2001 election campaign revealed that very few sites contained any level of interaction beyond that of a simple e-mail address (Ward & Gibson, 2003). Local sites were found to vary little in their content, containing a largely standardised menu of items including candidate biographies, standard policy lines, appeals for volunteers, news items and links to the national party (Ward & Gibson, 2003). Studies of the 2005 campaign showed a similar pattern with Ward et al (2005) describing campaign presences as ‘cyberbrochures’ that were not updated during the campaign (p17).

The arrival of Web 2.0 gives renewed value to the consideration of interactivity in campaigning, with campaigners now able to access a new range of tools centred on encouraging users to contribute and potentially develop relationships between users and campaigners in a way not previously possible (Lilleker & Jackson, 2010). As with
interactivity in a Web 1.0 context, the focus has again been on national level web campaigns, with few scholars looking at the constituency level or anything comparable. In the UK, based on analysis of national level web campaign sites (including blogs linked to leaders) in 2007, Jackson and Lilleker (2009) concluded that national level web campaigns in the UK were practicing what they termed ‘Web 1.5’, largely rejecting the established norms of social media communities:

‘Political parties still seek to a significant extent to control their communication process and to inform rather than interact. As a result, in only a limited number of social media sites can we identify politicians joining in with these new interactive communities; rather the conditioning of the Westminster community, where a more Burkean, top-down communication strategy prevails, seems to dominate behaviour.’

Jackson & Lilleker, 2009, p247

This finding was repeated in subsequent work focused on the 2009 European elections in which the authors also noted that national level sites and not candidate level sites were more likely to exhibit Web 2.0 applications which implies that the level of Web 2.0 adoption at the constituency level may also be limited, although equating the European and constituency level is difficult given the differing electoral systems in place (Jackson & Lilleker, 2010). Following their study of the 2010 UK election at the national level Lilleker and Jackson (2010) concluded:

‘Yet, there is evidence of some “green shoots” of electoral participation. For example, The BNP forum and Conservative’s Blue Blog offer some tentative signs of progress in terms of policy discussion, and the election campaign did see a large amount of public (non-elite) use of the web to comment on the campaign and key events, particularly the televised debates, as well as on the resulting hung parliament and how the parties should respond.’

Lilleker & Jackson, 2010, p92

Outside the UK, other studies have revealed a similarly mixed response to Web 2.0 at the national level, with seemingly little disruption to business as usual in Korea (Lee,
2009), Norway (Kalnes, 2009) and France (Lilleker & Malagon, 2010). A study of German campaign sites between 2002 and 2009 found little evidence that campaigners were becoming more interactive, finding mobilising and participatory elements taking a back seat to information providing and presentational features (Schweitzer, 2011). This however is contradicted to some extent by a comparative study of party websites in European elections utilising an extremely detailed content analysis framework. It concluded that to some extent interactivity was becoming a greater component in party websites (particularly in the UK) (Lilleker et al, 2011).

Despite these limited findings, one high-profile case stands out in the web campaigns literature as suggesting that the arrival of Web 2.0 will make a difference to campaigning by allowing users to play a greater role and take greater ownership of campaigns. The 2008 Obama candidacy was noted in the press for using Web 2.0 tools to great effect. Although the process has yet to be thoroughly analysed by academia, preliminary reports suggest that Web 2.0 played a central role in the Obama campaign (Anstead & Chadwick, 2009, Lilleker & Jackson, 2010). Furthermore, the use of Web 2.0 was thought to be one of the factors that so engaged the younger voters (McKinney & Banwart, 2011; Castells, 2009). Castells (2009) identifies a range of behaviours engaged in by the Obama campaign online:

‘Obama for America used the Internet to disseminate information, to engage in political interaction on social networking sites, to link these websites to the websites of the Obama campaign, to alert supporters of activities in their locale, to provide counter arguments to damaging rumours circulating over the Internet, to feed the mainstream media, to feed debates in the blogosphere, to establish a constant, personalized rapport with millions of supporters, and to provide an easy, accountable method for individual donations to support the campaign.’

Castells, 2009, p392

Castells (2009) account prioritises interactivity and roots the behaviour of the Obama campaign firmly in the candidate’s background as a community organiser in Chicago. But as comparative analysis of web campaigns in the UK and the US shows, there is a
theoretical gulf between the Obama machine and a constituency level UK campaign, and between the UK and the US in general (Anstead & Chadwick, 2009). In particular the scale of endeavours is completely different. Clearly the Obama campaign, no matter how big it was, could not hope to instigate personal interactions with every one of the 69 million who eventually voted for him, whereas for many constituency campaigns in UK this a more realistic possibility through the development of local campaign networks (Castells, 2009, p407). This suggests that there are greater possibilities for direct candidate-voter interactions through Web 2.0 within the context of UK constituencies. Equally donations and media coverage are less of an issue for a UK campaigns, most notably ones that rely on local volunteers rather than capital intensive techniques. The Obama campaign, and the 2004 Dean primary campaign (Hindman, 2005, 2009; Chadwick, 2006) that preceded it, have done much to integrate new technological developments into established campaign methodologies but, they should be accepted as being very different kinds of campaigns to those on offer in the UK in 2010, in particular at the constituency level.

As it stands, the role of Web 2.0 in promoting interactivity in political campaigning is unclear, but to date there has been little empirical evidence to overturn previous findings that have presented web campaigns as static and one directional. The literature has suggested that campaigns will shun interactivity in favour of maintaining control of their messages and keeping out burdensome and potentially disruptive public comments. However these findings need to be tempered by the relative immaturity of Web 2.0. There is every reason to expect that as Web 2.0 products mature and develop, and as campaigners gain more experience and confidence with them, that interactivity may still come to play a bigger role in online campaigns. In addition, these studies once again concentrated on national level campaigns and transposing them to a constituency level may offer some deeper insight into interactivity, in particular offering an opportunity to study interactivity in a range of campaign types, many of which will be far less concerned with controlling their campaign message than modernised national level campaigns. The debate on interactivity in political campaigns is still far from complete, and the proliferation of interactive features must be re-evaluated as technologies change. As well as extending and broadening this debate, this work also offers important methodological innovations in capturing interactivity in constituency
campaigns through the use of a specifically developed and pared down content analysis schema that encompasses not only the new interactive features offered by Web 2.0 but also the established interactive techniques of Web 1.0.

This section ends the first part of this review which has addressed the first part of the research question. In both these operationalisations of interactive web campaigning this work sets out to expand and further existing knowledge by measuring the adoption of interactive web campaigning in terms of Web 2.0 sites and specific interactive features. These analyses are important in that they set the baseline level of interactive web campaign adoption which is a precursor to the second part of the research question - explaining the levels of adoption uncovered through part one.
CONSTITUENCY LEVEL CAMPAIGNING & COMPARATIVE APPROACHES TO CAMPAIGNS

The second part of the research question develops a more analytical approach to the question of interactive web campaigning - asking specifically how the adoption of interactive web campaigning (as measured above) can be explained. This moves the research from a largely descriptive and exploratory approach to measuring interactive web campaign adoption, to a more analytical and theory testing approach. In effect, the first part of the research question provides the dependent variables - in the form of Web 2.0 site adoption, and the adoption of interactive features - required for analysing why campaigns have chosen to adopt interactive web campaign tools as they have. As this review has already made clear, this thesis puts forward and then tests the argument that there will be a connection between traditional styles of offline campaigning at the constituency level, and the adoption of interactive web campaign tools. This is based on three propositions supported by the available literature: that Web 2.0 is built to encourage interaction between developer and user; that constituency campaigns in the UK can be conceptualised as being, to different degrees, traditional and modern, and finally and most importantly the body of literature that presents web campaigning and more general party use of ICT as socially shaped phenomena. This section will develop these points and support them with relevant literature. That Web 2.0 campaign tools are built around interactivity is covered by the earlier discussion of Web 2.0 adoption in this chapter. The chapter will then go on highlight the contribution of this thesis by showing how identifying possible drivers of web campaign adoption will further the current literature.

As a starting point to answer this question we can look at the general comparative campaigns literature, which has focused on trends in campaigning globally, including the modernisation of campaigning discussed in the introductory chapter as a contributing factor to party decline. The comparative literature offers some idea of a role for interactive web campaigns, mainly as a way to gather information and better target campaigns messages, but it is too general to be of use in the more nuanced analysis of constituency level campaigns. There is however a more detailed literature
that deals specifically with constituency level campaigning in the UK that offers a number of useful frameworks for analysis.

NATIONAL LEVEL CAMPAIGNS

Campaigning in the UK dates back to 1467, when potential voters were first treated with alcohol in exchange for votes (Denver & Hands, 1997a). Since then, campaigns in the UK have undergone a significant transition, going from the traditional, locally focused and ad-hoc constituency campaigns, to highly polished PR performances played out on the national stage. Local party organisations first became involved in campaigns towards the end of the 19th century when the 1883 Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act imposed spending limits on campaigns for the first time, and banned the used of paid canvassing. It was necessary for candidates to rely heavily on local party support in order to get elected (Denver & Hands, 1997a). Campaign organisation in this era was largely ad-hoc and informal, with little long term strategic planning, and with the last word resting with the local party organisation (Norris, 2000).

The main activities of these local workers were in handing out leaflets, canvassing voters on the doorstep and organising transport to the polling station (Denver & Hands, 1997a). In addition, the public meeting, although often reported as being in decline in the modern era, was a key part of electioneering. As recently as 1968, accounts of constituency elections described candidates as eager to meet as many people as possible, even if it meant addressing hostile crowds or attending private engagements. On the doorstep the candidates would face the voters directly (Holt & Turner, 1968). One account describes canvassers filling in ‘action cards’ for addresses that the candidate should make personal visits to in order to resolve some particular thorny issue. Another tactic was to announce the candidate’s presence via loud hailer, inviting voters to come and ask questions (Holt & Turner, 1968). The key element of the traditional campaign is the reliance on direct discussion between campaigns and voters. Norris (2000) terms this period the pre-modern campaign and argues that campaign tools were focused on direct interpersonal communication between campaigns and voters. For candidates, success meant meeting as many people as possible and building
strong local networks that would come out to support them on election-day (Norris, 2000).

This conception of the historic, locally focused campaign reliant on developing local support networks embedded in the accounts of Holt & Turner (1968), Denver & Hands (1997a) and Norris (2000), is in essence the traditional constituency campaign as it remains today. However, the emergence of a unified national campaign layer, on top of the constituency campaigns, has added a further level of complexity. Over time, the expansion of democratic franchises and the evolution of mass media, in particular television, saw local level campaigns subsumed under centralised national level campaigns that were able to reach millions of voters in a single television broadcast or printed speech (Denver & Hands 1997a). In the post-war era it was the standpoint of many political scientists that the local campaign had become largely irrelevant in the face of the emergence of co-ordinated, national campaigns, reduced to the status of mere ritual in academic accounts (Pattie et al, 1994; Denver and Hands, 1997a). This point was heavily contested by those studying the local level campaigns (see below).

Descriptions of contemporary national level political campaigns vary, from Americanized (Scammell, 1995), Phase III (Farrell, 2006), Post-Modern (Norris, 2000) and Professionalization (Gibson & Rommele, 2009). Despite the contrasting approaches, many writers acknowledge the shifting balance between local and national campaign. Some (Scammell, 1995; Denver & Hands, 1997a) point to the 1979 Conservative manifesto as the watershed moment in the UK, with advertising company Saatchi and Saatchi not just testing the ideas within the manifesto, but also being used to inform and generate policies. The idea that the marketers were not only in the room, but also held substantive sway over policy formation marks a departure, even from the centralisation and unification of ‘modern’ campaigns that occurred post-war in the television era. In addition, a substantial literature has developed around the permeation of commercial marketing thought into the conduct of political parties. Building on the work of writers such as Kircheimimer’s Catch-all party model (1969) and Panebianco’s ‘electoral professional party’ (1988) a political marketing literature has grown up that now sees parties as effectively offering products to consumers in a similar (but not
identical) way to commercial organisations (Scammell, 1999; Lees-Marchment, 2001; Stromback, 2008).

Along with the shift in approaches, there was an accompanying shift in campaign techniques towards those more associated with the modernised campaign model. Gibson and Rommele (2009) developed an index of campaign methods (CAMPROF) aimed at measuring the professionalization of campaigning that included both phone canvassing and direct mail by political parties, both departures from the established model of local network development. However, the concept of professionalization itself has drawn criticism, with the term professional being used seemingly to embrace anyone with any semblance of media management skills (Lilleker & Negrine, 2002). Other researchers however have identified modernised campaign techniques increasingly in evidence at the constituency level varying with the target status of the seat (Fisher & Denver, 2008, 2009). Relatedly, Norris (1997) describes her interpretation of the ‘post-modern campaign’:

‘Postmodern campaigns are characterised by more focused communications which allow different messages to be tailored to different groups of target voters, such as the elderly or women. The focus of professionalised campaigns is strategic marketing, finding a clear space the party can contest which ’promotes’ a 'product' identity which maximises support’

Norris, 1997, p210

Campaign modernisation seemingly leaves little room for constituency campaigns to remain as autonomous and locally focused as they traditionally were. The modernisation of campaigning has altogether altered the balance between national and local campaigns in favour of the national campaign. The traditional campaign was built on the bedrock of grassroots party members (Norris, 1997). But as campaigns modernised they also centralised, taking more control over local level campaigns.

‘What has emerged over the past 10 years, however, is a new relationship between national and local campaigns. National party professionals now seek to exercise much greater control over local campaigns by managing key
constituency campaigns in crucial respects and integrating them much more closely into the national effort'

Denver, Hands, Fisher & McAllister, 2003, p542

Smith (2009) exhibits a similar sentiment in their analysis of the transformation of UK parties towards Kirchheimer’s catch-all model, suggesting that where party members had previously provided the information a party needed to run its campaigns, this role is now being filled by often non-partisan professionals:

'It [polling] brings into the election campaign a new set of professional practitioners whose firms are independent – organizationally and, to a very considerable degree, financially – of the political parties, and who, in the UK, are not even generally viewed as partisans. It amounts to a functional displacement of parties’ previous information sources: most centrally, the active membership and those parts of the staff organization concerned chiefly with the voluntary side.’

Smith, 2009, p565

A further example of this level of central party control can be seen in research involving Labour constituency candidates in the 2001 General Election, when the ‘Mandelsonian’ model was at its peak in the Labour party (Lilleker & Negrine, 2003, p58):

‘In order to rebrand the party and make it attractive to the electorate, control over all aspects of communication passed into the hands of the leadership and their public relations campaigning experts. The candidate had little space in which to define their agenda or appeal to their own constituency electorate.’

Lilleker & Negrine, 2003, p58

Accounts of national level campaigning tend to be non-specific about the role of the web in the process of campaign modernisation and are somewhat divorced from much of the web campaigns literature. However, there is a sense from much of the literature that the role of the web in the modernised campaign is that of information collection and rationalisation - allowing national level campaigns to target potential voters more
effectively. This role is concurrent with accounts such as Howard’s (2006) concept of the ‘hypermedia’ campaign as well as his earlier descriptions of the possibilities of the modernised campaign in the digital era:

‘Digital technologies make possible a very refined science of campaigning, a science that permits ever more predictable electoral or legislative outcomes. Of course, the specific ratios between campaign funding, advertising reach, and response rates vary by issue area. For example, even though about one in ten people who view a solicitation to join a campaign will join the campaign (regardless of the issue area), and one in ten of those members will be passionate enough to write letters on behalf of the campaign, these response rates are slightly higher for issues that appeal to retired adults. What makes this modelling possible is the relatively new informational product: digital political information. Political campaigns have always invested in good data, but data records of surprising detail can be quickly collected and distributed over digital technologies, and these data have become the means of creating and sorting political messages.’

Howard, 2005, p 156

There is also good reason to see the web and Web 2.0 in particular as a potential tool for providing information to campaigns. Using the established Von Neumann architecture of memory and processors that underpins computing itself, Ghel (2011) argued that Web 2.0 had effectively created a situation where companies such as Facebook simply act as a repository for users’ information and the users themselves, through tools such as subscriptions and ‘likes’ actually sort through and process their own data. The resulting data is of course then available for further analysis, providing the company with an unprecedented level of detail about users’ preferences that can then be exploited commercially. The lack of control over data held by Web 2.0 services has also been highlighted as a matter of concern against the backdrop of Web 2.0 interactivity as being seen to discipline a user to be ‘an entrepreneurial citizen of neo-liberalism’ (Jarrett, 2008, p5). Similarly, Chadwick (2012) rounds on the possibilities of Web 2.0 for expanding the political use of personal information suggesting that social networks offer the potential for collecting and organising data and targeting voters. Concerns over
privacy for users and ownership of data have dominated public debate over Web 2.0; a search of the BBC archive for the terms ‘Facebook’ and ‘privacy’ finds 13 stories in 2011 alone, more than one a month. The availability of personal information online through Web 2.0 tools is, at first glance, tailor-made for the modernised national campaign.

Undoubtedly issues around voter targeting and the use of personal information in political campaigning will be a key part of the research agenda in this area in the coming years. However, they are unlikely to be issues in this project. In the first instance, the associated technologies and techniques were in their infancy during the 2010 election; there is little to suggest that parties in the UK will have been able to fully exploit these techniques at the time given that the commercial sector is still uncertain of the possibilities of this type of marketing. In the second instance, this is a study of constituency rather than national campaigns, and the skills and resources required to exploit this kind of ‘big data’ are unlikely to be found widely at the constituency level. Although this does not preclude national parties stepping in to help constituency campaigns, exploiting Web 2.0 data is far more likely to occur at the national rather than the constituency level in the immediate future.

In summary, the comparative campaigns literature has discussed national level campaigns in a global context, making broad generalisations about the direction of campaigning. This is useful in placing this research within the wider context of campaign modernisation, but the predicted role of the web as a tool for data collection and targeting is unlikely to be applicable at the level of a UK constituency campaign. Overall, the comparative literature is too general to provide a compelling framework for analysis of constituency level campaigns; in order to do so we need to tap the more specialised British constituency campaigns literature.

CONSTITUENCY LEVEL CAMPAIGNS

There have been elements of moderation in the wider narrative of campaign modernisation that still leave a role for constituency level campaigning. For instance,
Norris’s concept of the post-modern campaign carves out a role for the local - suggesting that whilst campaigning would be overwhelmingly national, the local level would still be of significance with parties focussing efforts on key seats and areas. For those in strategically important constituencies, according to Norris, the postmodern campaign would mean more, not less contact with campaigners (Norris, 1997). This is supported by more UK specific accounts of parties and their campaign practices. Whiteley and Seyd (2003) analysed the 2001 Labour campaign and stressed how important a targeted approach had been to the strategy. 148 priority seats were identified and given access to technological and organisational support as well as access to a national telephone call centre (Whiteley & Seyd, 2003b). The Conservatives were noted as being slower than Labour to respond to the new possibilities of constituency level campaigning given the parties electoral dominance in the preceding years. Whereas Labour had begun to rationalise its campaign strategy as far back as 1992, the Conservative campaign strategy only began to go down the same path at the 1997 election (Denver et al, 2003). The Liberal Democrats are a notably smaller party and central organisation than either Labour or the Conservatives and consequently they only began to show evidence of prioritisation of key seats in the 2001 election, providing a small amount of financial support to key seats (Denver et al, 2003).

It is clear that not all constituencies received the same level of attention or had the same access to modernised campaign techniques, for those not in priority seats the constituency campaign was likely to be relatively unchanged. As a result of this, there is good reason to expect that at the constituency level there will be a large degree of variation between constituencies with some seats remaining largely traditional and others getting access to more complex modernised campaign techniques required to specifically target voters such as direct mail and telephone canvassing. Certainly, this interpretation of increasing national level focus on certain battleground local seats tallies with accounts of the 2010 campaign:

‘Given the majority of seats are considered ‘safe’ for one or the other of the parties the party strategists have increasingly concentrated their resources on what are called, variously, marginal, key or battleground seats. Within these
seats the party strategists concentrated their political messages, via polling, direct mail, phone calls and visits on the voters who are undecided.’


For the most part specific constituency campaigns literature is devoted to demonstrating the value of local campaigns to the overall outcome of general election by measuring the local campaign and its impact on the overall vote share. Approaches have varied in how researchers have gone about measuring the campaign, including work based on measuring campaign spending data (Pattie et al, 1994; Johnston & Pattie, 1995; Johnston & Pattie, 1997; Pattie & Johnston, 2009), membership data (Whiteley & Seyd, 1994; Whiteley et al, 2003a,b, Whiteley et al, 2006), secondary surveys of electoral agents (Denver & Hands, 1992; Denver et al, 2003; Fisher et al, 2006; Fisher & Denver, 2008, 2009) and the wider British Electoral Survey (Clarke et al, 2006). There have also been approaches to combine this data together in a single analysis (Cutts & Fieldhouse, 2008) and more qualitative approaches to the issue (Lilleker, 2005). Overall, researchers in this area are adamant that constituency campaigning remains an important component in the overall electoral equation and has a significant impact on the final share of the vote.

From the perspective of this work, the focus on the outcome of the election is not of interest as in this instance we are concentrating on the adoption of specific campaign techniques (interactive web campaigns) with wider theoretical ramifications for parties. There are a number of frameworks used in the constituency literature that can be appropriated for distinguishing between campaigns and therefore may shed some light on the use or non-use of interactive web campaigning. Again these mostly reflect the bias in the literature for measuring the effectiveness of the campaign, dealing with concepts such as: campaign intensity (Denver & Hands, 1992), campaign expenditure (Johnston & Pattie, 1995) and campaign centralisation (Denver et al, 2003). Each of these frameworks has merit, but they do not speak directly to the kinds of techniques used by campaigns but instead concentrate more on reflecting the circumstances of the campaign. Given the theorised mechanic in this instance is the similarity of techniques between the traditional campaign and those on offer from Web 2.0, then the best framework available is that of Fisher and Denver’s (2009) analysis that identifies
concepts of traditionalism and modernity in campaigns by measuring the use of specific campaign techniques.

As well as the targeting of specific seats and the expanding control of constituency level campaigns, the local campaigns literature has also discussed the implementation of modernised campaign techniques at the constituency level (Denver et al, 2003; Fisher & Denver, 2008; Fisher & Denver, 2009). Denver et al (2003) used agent survey data to show that traditional campaign activities and resources (campaign workers, polling day workers, public meetings, level of doorstep canvassing and the percentage of the population canvassed) were all in decline between 1992 and 2001. The mean percentage of the electorate canvassed on the doorstep fell from 28% in 1992 to 17% in 2001. In contrast, over the same period modernised techniques and resources were on the increase (use of computers, computerised electoral register, party software, computerised ‘knocking up lists’, and telephone knocking up). There was less conclusive evidence for techniques such as direct mail and telephone canvassing which saw a very slight drop-off between 1997 and 2001 (figures for 1992 were not available). Furthermore, Denver et al suggest that modernised techniques were concentrated in target seats, as were traditional techniques to some extent, but that traditional campaigning was also strong where the party was incumbent but not necessarily in a target seat. They also point to a longer-term trend in declining levels of traditional campaigning.

The themes of campaign modernisation and traditionalism were revisited as part of a wider analytical framework which showed continuing trends in declining traditionalism and increasing modernisation but with significant variation between the parties (Fisher & Denver, 2008). Fisher and Denver (2009) is a more focused approach that deals mainly with the impact of traditional and modern campaigning, again as a way to evaluate the impact of constituency campaigns on vote share. Using the same dataset as before, Fisher and Denver (2009) set out twin indices of traditional and modern campaigning to describe the different approaches to campaigning that they were encountering. These took the form of indices derived from principal components analysis (PCA) a data reduction technique designed to combine a number of related variables (Field, 2009).
Table 2: Original Measures Of Traditional And Modern Campaigning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionalism</th>
<th>Modernisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of posters distributed per elector</td>
<td>Use of computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of leaflets delivered per elector</td>
<td>Use of computerised electoral register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% electorate canvassed on the doorstep</td>
<td>Used party software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of public meetings</td>
<td>Rough level of telephone canvassing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean numbers of campaign and polling-day workers</td>
<td>Used computers for knocking up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of manual activity on polling day (including delivery of last minute leaflets, knocking up, proportion of the electorate covered by last minute number-takers)</td>
<td>Use of direct mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% electorate canvassed by telephone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The measure of traditional campaigning chosen reflects labour intensive, shoe-leather based campaigning. Crucially for the purposes of predicting the adoption of web campaigning, these techniques embody Norris’s concept of the local campaign network, and result in a large number of personal contacts between campaigners and the electorate on the doorstep and in the street. In contrast the measures of modernisation chart an approach to a constituency campaign that is in line with the wider modernisation narrative contained within the comparative campaigns literature. These variables show a campaign designed to identify and target specific voters using software, telephone canvassing and direct mail. Based on these measures Fisher and Denver found that local level campaigns in the UK increasingly emphasised modernised rather than traditional campaigning. In contrast to this they found that traditional campaign techniques were the most effective in terms of encouraging electors to vote for that party, however, in the face of declining party memberships, modernised campaigns were increasingly becoming the best the parties had to offer (Fisher & Denver, 2009). It is important to note that Fisher and Denver (2009) did not treat these measures as being mutually exclusive, in fact they found that in high profile target seats, both traditional and modernised campaigning were likely to be prevalent, whilst in seats that were neither held by the party nor targets both were likely to be lower (Denver et al, 2003). These measures then, do not represent discrete campaign types, but two
separate approaches to campaigning, one traditional, built on face-to-face contact, the other modernised, built on arms-length campaigning. The lack of mutual exclusivity is key in interpreting later results.

To some degree, Fisher and Denver’s measures suffer from the venerability of the survey on which they are based, and reflect a prevailing interest in the computerisation of political campaigning and the effects of the changing availability of labour in constituencies. Given the proliferation of personal computers and the focus of this work, these aspects are of less interest. With some repurposing however, the conceptualisation of traditional and modern still remains relevant. Fisher and Denver (2009) have provided a useful way to distinguish between local level campaigns in the UK, based on the techniques employed in their offline campaign. This provides an excellent way to begin differentiating between local campaigns, and thinking about how the web may play a different role in differing campaign types. For the purposes of analysis the exact measures used were altered substantially in order to tighten the focus on the offline campaign style and to remove the computerisation element that, in an analysis of web adoption, would introduce an unacceptable element of co-linearity (see Appendix A). Nevertheless, the emphasis that campaigns place on these differing campaign styles creates a useful framework for exploring the use of web campaign techniques and their organisational impact in different campaigns.

Traditional campaigning can be characterised as relying on face-to-face campaign techniques that involve campaigners on the ground, knocking on doors and distributing leaflets by hand. This reflects a tried and tested form of campaigning in which campaigns are locally focused and attempt to mobilise and persuade local populations through personal contact, creating local support networks. As Web 2.0 is built around developing networks between users, based on interaction and user contributed material, then interactive web campaigning can be seen as a natural extension of the traditional campaign techniques; creating a digital doorstep for traditional campaigns to exploit. In contrast, modernised campaigns reflect a more recent approach to campaigning which is linked more closely to the national campaign. In this form of campaigning workers and candidates have access to tools such as direct mail and telephone canvassing. These tools do not encourage face-to-face meetings but instead rely on targeting specific
groups of voters to maximise the resources available. There is a prima facia case for suggesting a connection between interactive web campaigning and modernised campaign techniques, but this is likely only to be true at the national level and the knowledge and experience required to exploit this information are thought as yet unlikely to have filtered down to constituency campaigns.

The constituency campaigns literature provides a vital starting point and empirical basis to answer the research question - a way to quantify and represent offline campaign techniques in further analysis. The first part of the research question essentially identifies the dependent variable in this analysis, the use of interactive web campaigns; the local campaigns literature above provides the independent variable required to test the theorised traditional - interactive connection. Furthermore, the current constituency level campaigns literature has not addressed the web campaign specifically, which is a crucial gap in existing knowledge. Answering the research question and identifying any relationships (or lack of them) between the type of constituency campaign and the adoption of interactive web campaign tools would add a layer of detail to this literature that is currently (conspicuously) missing, showing where new technological developments fit in this schema. This work offers a valuable synthesis between the current constituency campaigns literature and the web campaigning literature. In addition, this work is also able to innovate methodologically by re-tooling an existing analytical framework to fit more recent data and to be used in an analysis of web campaigning.

As well as speaking to the constituency campaigns literature, answering the second part of the research question will speak to the broader comparative campaigns literature that the constituency campaigns literature is nested within. It needs to be stressed that this work is focused on the constituency and not the national level. However it can still contribute to the wider comparative literatures. Mainly this comes from challenging the role of the web as implied by the comparative literature. Although undoubtedly the web has potential for boosting modernised campaign methods at the national level, the comparative literature has thus far made little of the potential of the web for developing relationships between campaigns and voters in a way more consistent with traditional campaigning. Investigating the connections between different constituency campaign
types and the use of interactive web campaigns (measured either as sites or features) will go some way to showing that despite campaign modernisation local campaigning is still influential and a worthy field of study. Furthermore, if the direction of the relationship is confirmed as being traditional-interactive web campaigning, then there is good reason believe that the view of the web contained in the comparative campaigns literature is not the only possible scenario, that true to its roots and design, the web may well make (some) campaigns more interactive.

The next section goes on to outline the final element of the overarching argument: that the adoption of new campaign technologies by campaigns is likely to be driven by existing factors rather than by the availability of technology itself. This is the final component of the argument expressed here.
EXPLAINING THE ADOPTION OF INTERACTIVE WEB CAMPAIGNS

The final element considered in this review is the literature concerned with explaining the adoption of the web as a campaign tool. Thus far the review has looked at the literature concerning the first part of the research question - measuring the use of the web. The second part of the research question calls for a more analytical, theory driven, approach, and this work has put forward the argument that constituency level campaigns can be conceptualised as being to varying degrees traditional and modern and that the web and Web 2.0 in particular are built on allowing users to interact with content posted by others and that this is a natural extension of the campaign strategy pursued in traditional campaigning. This final section details literature that covers the reasoning behind the adoption of new technologies by political parties and campaigns, and shows the prevailing view in literature that parties will behave strategically, selecting and developing technologies that fit with their existing campaign circumstances. This further strengthens the theorised traditional-Web 2.0 argument. In addition this literature also contains a number of empirical studies that show previous attempts to explain adoption, mostly based on the adoption of Web 1.0 sites. These offer useful starting points for developing sets of control variables to include alongside traditional and modern offline campaigning in the analysis of interactive web campaign adoption. This section also sets out how answering the research question will further the literature in this area.

Theoretically there are a number of approaches to the adoption of technologies by political parties that have assumed that the driving factors for the adoption of technology is not the technology itself, but instead comes from established social factors. In the field of party adoption of technology both Rommele (2003) and Lofgren and Smith (2003) have offered frameworks for the adoption of technology based on party strategy. Rommele (2003) identified four distinct party goals: vote-maximising, office maximising, intra-party democracy and policy-seeking. Information communication technology, she argued, would be used differently according to party goals. Rommele (2003) identifies this position as falling somewhere between technologically and socially determinist views, acknowledging specific political
properties of new technologies, but also arguing that a party’s goals will be key in determining how they will use them. Lofgren and Smith (2003) eschew party goals in favour of taking classic models of party organisation and strategy as the basis for their framework: mass party, cartel, consumerist (close to electoral-professional or catch-all) and finally grassroots. But again, this typology forms the basis for different approaches to the adoption of information communication technology. They maintain:

“Institutions’, understood as (party) traditions, norms and habits, play a significant role in the way new technology is adopted and used. Concurrently, the parties’ adaption of new ICTs mirrors the changing character of political parties in contemporary liberal democracies and the structural changes of political parties’ linkage functions.’

Lofgren & Smith, 2003, p44

Both these arguments reflect an institutional perspective on the question of technology adoption: that campaigns will make decisions on their use of technology through the filter of their existing norms and practices. This links these accounts with wider schools of thought on the importance of institutions in determining outcomes and behaviour (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Such a perspective is also in line with the idea of socially shaped explanations of technology that reject the idea that technological progress is a teleology and that machines of technologies have their own political values. For instance McLuhan’s argument, that the ‘medium is the message’, suggests that the role of social factors in shaping technology is minimal (McLuhan, 1964, p15). McLuhan Argues that the social impact of technologies such as automation was a product of the machines themselves rather than of what humans chose to do with them: ‘It matters not in the least whether it [the machine] turns out cornflakes or Cadillacs’ (McLuhan, 1964, p15).

In contrast, social shaping argues that technologies are influenced by the social circumstances that surround them and how they are used:

‘SST [the social shaping of technology] stands in contrast to post-Enlightenment traditions which did not problematize technological change, but limited the scope of enquiry to monitoring the social adjustments it saw as being required by technological progress. SST emerged through a critique of such
'technological determinism'. SST studies show that technology does not develop according to an inner technical logic but is instead a social product, patterned by the conditions of creation and use.'

Williams & Edge, 1996, p866

The influence of the socially shaped perspective can also be seen in the wider normalisation arguments. Margolis and Resnick (2000) in their key study *Politics as Usual* were initially optimistic about the web as a tool for political change, seeing the pre-commercial web as being far more egalitarian than the later phase of development which they argue came to entrench existing relationships. In the field of inter-party competition they saw the web not as allowing minor parties to compete on the same level as major parties, but instead further entrenching the dominance of the major parties (Margolis & Resnick, 2000, 2003). Although the normalisation - revolution frame has since been critiqued as an unhelpful polarisation, there remains a strong sense that despite the innate properties of the technology, social factors are a major influence on the use of technology by institutions (Wright, 2011). Technology itself has no politics, rather these approaches maintain that human use of technology gives it meaning. This is by no means a dichotomy and hybrid positions exist. Rommele’s (2003) middle ground for example, or Winner’s argument that whilst to some extent technology does have political ramifications, for example he links nuclear power with surveillance, that these technologies are often considered uncritically with the result being what he terms ‘technological somnambulism’ (Winner, 1986, p10). Despite this, the prevailing theoretical framework gives good reason to expect that social factors will be a key determinant of the adoption of interactive web campaigning by constituency campaigns.

In the context of traditional and modern constituency level campaigns in the UK this argument suggests that rather than using newly available Web 2.0 tools to radically alter the direction of their campaigns, or because they can, campaigners will try instead to extend and expand their existing practices. In terms of the data, the patterns of adoption should reflect the differing institutional circumstances of campaigns. Thusly, traditional campaigning can be seen as using interactive web campaigning as part of their existing campaign strategy of establishing local networks and face-to-face campaigning. In
contrast, assuming we discount the possibility of the use of Web 2.0 data to develop more sophisticated targeted communications at the constituency level, modernised campaigning can be seen as being a poor fit for the interactivity inherent in Web 2.0,

Previous empirical study of web adoption has also followed the same argument, testing the influence of a variety of factors, all of them based on the same logic - that technology will be adopted to meet the campaigns needs, not dramatically alter the campaign itself. The factors considered in empirical studies can all be grouped under the heading of social factors to different degrees, but can also be further divided into: organisational, electoral, socio-economic and candidate factors. Candidate factors in particular are an uncomfortable fit for social shaping explanations and may in fact represent more deterministic attitudes to technology (see below). It is noteworthy that no previous studies have considered an integrated measure of offline web campaign techniques such as traditional and modernised campaigning and in doing so this work provides a synthesis between an established constituency campaign analytical framework and studies of web adoption.

**ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS**

Historically, major parties have adopted new technologies at differing speeds, consequently it seems self evident that parties may have differing approaches to the use of the web. This may in part be down to pure pragmatism, such as the UK Conservative party being a noted innovator in the field of developing new campaign techniques for UK political campaigns (Scammell, 1995). There is also evidence that the Conservative party have been trying to learn the lessons of the successful online portion of the Obama campaign in the US, although there is an obvious question as to the extent that this filtered down to the local level (Crabtree, 2010). As well as practical however, the adoption of new technology at different speeds may be due in part to party ideology. The federal structure of the Liberal Democrats seems a good fit for the kind of decentralised organisations that the web is often associated with, and Web 2.0 especially. Recent experiments such as the Freedom Bill seem to support a more generalised ideological affinity for the web (Lilleker et al, 2010).
In addition, campaigns literature from the UK stresses the differing approaches to campaigning taken by parties, in particular the campaign practices of the Liberal Democrat party which are presented as locally focused and often based on the establishment of continual party presences in campaign areas (Whiteley et al, 2006; Cutts, 2006). The Labour party, in contrast, is noted as having a more centralised and controlled campaign style (Seyd & Whiteley, 2002; Whiteley & Seyd, 2003b; Lilleker & Negrine, 2003). Evidence for the Conservative party is more mixed and suggests that despite the modernisation agenda that local Conservative Associations retain some independence (Whiteley et al, 1994). Different levels of constituency autonomy and approaches to campaigning may well offer different circumstances for candidates considering the use of interactivity. Different rates of adoption based on different party affiliations can be seen as the most explicit influence of institutions on the adoption of web campaigning.

Empirical study has found a mixed picture for party affiliation as a predictor of web site adoption. Ward et al (2005) found a marked differential between the three major UK parties, with the Conservative Party rolling out substantially more websites than either Labour or the Liberal Democrats. Gibson and McAllister's (2006) analysis of the 2004 Australian election found some limited effects for party affiliation, with candidates from the far right One Nation party significantly less likely to have a personal campaign website than the reference category (the Liberal/National party). A less significant effect was found for the Democrat party also (10% threshold as opposed to 5%). A subsequent comparative analysis focusing on Britain and Australia found that mainstream right wing parties (the Conservatives in the UK) were more likely to field a website in the 2005 UK general election (Gibson et al, 2008b). The right wing bias in web 1.0 has also been supported by studies from Finland (Carlson & Djupsund, 2001). At the US at the state level, Herrnson et al (2007) found no effect from party affiliation (Republican or Democrat) on candidates’ likelihood of adopting a website. In summary, previous work has given a mixed impression of Web 1.0 adoption by party therefore party affiliation remains a likely important variable to take into consideration in an analysis of the adoption of Web 2.0 sites. On balance it is possible that party affiliation will play some role in determining the adoption of interactive web campaigning and as
such needs to be controlled for in further analysis before any offline campaign effect could be supported.

**ELECTORAL FACTORS**

Beyond the party as institution, campaigns also need to be contextualised within their own circumstances and in a sense they constitute their own collection of norms and expectations. Incumbents are likely to have a very different set of cost-benefit calculations to non-incumbent candidates, having being established in the seat often for a longer time than challenging candidates and consequently being able to establish wider social networks. This may be particularly relevant for the adoption of technologies that rely on pre-existing connections between users such as Facebook. Incumbents however will also have campaigned previously, which may put them off the idea of trying newly available campaign techniques. Challenging candidates may be more willing to try new ideas and new techniques and at the same time may be more open to the political risks involved in opening up campaign web presences to the general public. The idea of online interactivity has been noted in the past as being anathema to running a well-disciplined election campaign, requiring time, information candidates are unwilling to give and creating the potential for embarrassment (Stromer-Galley, 2000). In addition, the closeness of the race will alter the levels of media exposure and scrutiny for all the campaigns involved, even those in a distant third.

Several empirical studies have found significant results from electoral factors. In Finland, Carlson and Djupsund (2001) reported a strong bias towards incumbent candidates in the adoption of websites, a variation they attributed to the fear of being left behind by challenging candidates. Zittel (2009) in a study of German candidates found incumbency not to be a significant factor, nor was the chance of victory. Gibson et al (2008b) considered marginality of individual campaigns as a possible influencer of website adoption, and found a positive influence (the 20% most marginal seats) for Britain, but not Australia. Herrmson et al (2007) does not consider incumbency or marginality explicitly in their analysis of US state level candidates, but does account for the length of time ‘in politics’ or since the candidate’s first race, and finds a significant
negative effect on the likelihood of candidates sponsoring a website. Additionally Herrmson et al find that a ‘competitive election’ significant boosts the likelihood of candidates establishing web presences. In contrast, Gibson and McAllister’s (2006) study of Australia finds no effect for years of legislative experience. A number of authors have considered the impact of electoral factors on the likelihood of candidate’s adopting a website. Each has made different choices about the best way to represent electoral factors as independent variables in statistical analysis. A number of significant findings suggests that some consideration of the electoral circumstances of a campaign is an important element to include in later analysis.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Perhaps the most well-known group of factors to consider in the adoption of any Internet related development is the Digital Divide. The concept, described in the book of the same name, postulates that access to the Internet is riven with socio-economic division, not only between individuals within societies but also internationally (Norris, 2001). For campaigning literature the main area of interest is the variation within societies, some groups are expected to be less likely to be online, thereby lowering the return on a web campaign for any prospective representative. The 2009 Oxford Internet Institute survey confirms that disparities in Internet use are still widespread in the UK. 97% of Households earning over £40,000 per year report using the web compared to only 38% of households earning less than £12,500. Those who attended higher education report 42% higher web use than those with only a basic education, and A and B social grade households report 88% access to the web whilst only 46% of D and E grade households have access. Age is also a potent factor, there is a 72% fall in web use between the youngest (<18) and oldest (>75) respondents (Dutton et al, 2009). These represent social factors to the degree that they could constrain the actions of campaigners as they have to tailor their campaign to meet local needs but they differ from the other factors considered here in that they are exogenous to the campaign and reflect more the question of demand than supply.
Carlson & Djupsund (2001) examined the adoption of websites during the 1999 Finnish Parliamentary election campaign, finding that the level of development and education were of some relevance in the Finnish case. Herrnson et al (2007) reported similar findings in a large-scale study of US campaigns on a mixture of levels (state-wide). The findings bear out the assumptions of the Digital Divide, with constituencies that feature a higher number of black voters and voters over 55 having a significant negative effect on the likelihood of candidates establishing a website. A higher percentage of college-educated electors however increased the likelihood (Herrnson et al, 2007). Based on this literature, it is expected that the Digital Divide will play a role in determining the adoption of Web campaign tools. Better-educated, wealthier areas with younger populations are likely to encourage campaigns to adopt web campaign tools. An older, less educated, worse-off population is likely to act as a disincentive for campaigns to adopt websites. However, given the levels of broadband proliferation in the UK and the expanding role of mobile internet through cellular phones, the impacts of these factors, or more importantly their perception by campaign decision-makers, may be less relevant.

**CANDIDATE FACTORS**

Further to the Digital Divide argument, candidates themselves are also likely to be subject to the same biases as their constituents (Herrnson et al, 2007). Older, less well educated and worse-off candidates can be expected, much like their electors, to be less likely to adopt a website. In practice, these effects are likely to be limited by some level of uniformity in candidates’ backgrounds, for example, the majority of Parliamentary candidates in the UK can be expected to have some level of higher-education. There is additional value to considering these factors at the candidate level however, not because of any direct connection between a candidate’s age or gender and the adoption of interactive web campaigning, but more for what these factors can reveal about candidates’ likely attitudes towards and experiences with new campaign techniques and ideas (something that can be explored more explicitly though qualitative data, see Chapter Six). A younger candidate is more likely to have a profile on a social network and have friends that do; therefore they are more likely to try and use the medium as a
campaign tool. In this instance the candidate’s age makes them closer to the user demographic of a tool like Facebook, but the real effect is coming from the candidate’s attitudes and experience. Older candidates may hold similar attitudes, diluting the effect of age, however attitudes and personal experience are difficult to capture and systematise in surveys whereas age can be represented by a simple number.

Candidate factors stand someway apart from the other factors considered in this analysis in that they cannot be easily grouped under the heading of social shaping. Rather, candidate factors are products of the candidates themselves and the experiences and biases they bring to the consideration of web campaigning. These internal biases may also include the influence of symbolic factors; the perception that the use of technology is in itself valuable for what it says about the campaign or the candidate. This sits more comfortably under the heading of technological determinism, but this cannot be considered fully with the quantitative data available. Candidate factors are included in quantitative analysis as previous studies have done so and the intention is to be as comprehensive as possible in this analysis. However to fully understand the mechanisms at work requires the qualitative data (see Chapter Six).

A candidate’s age has been found to have conflicting levels of significance in models of website adoption. In the Australian example a candidate’s age was not found to have bearing on their adoption of the web (Gibson & McAllister, 2006). In the Finnish case however, age was found to be a factor, with ‘a clear cut pattern with regard to a candidates’ age and presence on the web’, with younger candidates more likely to use the web (Carlson & Djupsund, 2001, p.73). In the German case, candidates born after 1965 were far more likely to have a personal website (Zittel, 2009). Candidate educational attainment has also featured as a variable in the Gibson & McAllister (2006) model, in that instance it was not shown to be a relevant factor either for or against the adoption of the web. In addition to a candidate’s age and experience, a number of studies have added gender into the model, although it is not clear if this is as relevant as it might once have been given the apparent reduction in the divide between male and female access to the internet in society at large (Dutton et al, 2009). Either way the picture is mixed, in one case it was not found to be factor in campaigns (Gibson & McAllister, 2006), in another it was observed that female candidates were actually
more likely to use the web, although no statistical significance was attached to this (Carlson & Djupsund, 2001).

In effect this literature reveals four groups of factors that have been previously considered in analyses of web campaigning, and need to be included alongside traditional and modern measures in any subsequent analysis attempted here. All four groups of factors to varying extents conform to the same basic interpretation of technological adoption - the adoption of technology will be influenced by social factors, with the assumption that campaigns will use technologies that best fit their circumstances. This is most explicitly represented by party affiliation, which expresses a direct connection between a campaign and an institution, but this can be extended through the electoral circumstances of the campaign as a set of norms and practices that will likely influence behaviour to the effect of the Digital Divide. Personal factors bear the weakest relationship to social explanations, but are intended as a proxy for some of the more nebulous aspects of candidate’s backgrounds that are difficult to capture in survey data. This work both extends and challenges the institutional interpretation of web campaign adoption. The inclusion of offline campaign techniques into this mix allows for the testing of the central argument advanced by this thesis - that traditional campaigns will be more likely to adopt interactive web campaigning as they are similar techniques to those already used offline and compliment the overarching network building strategy. This argument similarly relies to a large extent on the logic of institutions to support it i.e. that campaigns will use technology as a continuation of existing practices rather than to disrupt them. So, while not deviating from the arguments set out above, the inclusion of traditional and modern campaigning as conceptualised by Fisher and Denver (2009) offers a chance to consider a variable more explicitly linked with campaign techniques than in previous analysis i.e. adding a new dimension to the analysis. In contrast, the later parts of this analysis provide scope for campaigns to explain why they campaigned online - allowing campaigners and candidates to offer their own interpretation. It may well be the case that this account tallies exactly with the factors such as those considered in the literature. However, there is also the possibility that accounts may challenge the conventional interpretation, showing that campaigners and candidates may actually be driven by a desire to do new things and that they may be non-strategic in their use of interactive web campaigning. In
either case, challenging or supporting, this work will contribute significantly to the existing literature that attempt to explain campaign’s use of technology.
CONCLUSIONS

This chapter set out to do a number of things: set up and justify the research question, linking it to the problem of party decline detailed in the introduction; advance an argument to test for the analytical portion of the research question; identify relevant literatures; and finally to demonstrate how answering this research question would contribute to existing knowledge in this field.

The research question chosen - Is constituency campaigning becoming more interactive as a result of the availability of interactive web campaign tools and how can this be explained? - can be broken down into two parts. The first part asks if constituency campaigning is becoming more interactive, i.e. are they exploiting interactive web campaign tools? This is answered through the measurement of web adoption in constituency campaigns, this is further divided between the adoption of Web 2.0 sites and the adoption of interactive features. In effect these are dependent variables for the second part of the research question that asks how patterns of adoption can be explained. This is a more analytical question and consequently requires the advancement of an argument to test in empirical analysis (i.e. the basis for hypotheses).

The argument advanced by this work is that the adoption of interactive web campaigning by constituency level campaigns can be explained by the techniques and resulting strategy of the offline campaign. In particular, the argument tested here is traditional campaign strategies that emphasise face-to-face campaign techniques will be more likely to adopt interactive web campaigns. This is based on three main points: that traditional campaigning relies on interactive techniques offline to cultivate relationships and build networks to win campaigns; that Web 2.0 makes possible a new level of interactivity online, building on the potential contained in Web 1.0; and that, in line with existing research in the area, campaigns will adopt technologies that best compliment their existing campaign practices.

Testing this argument, and answering this research question will result in a great deal of new data, and following interpretation this will hopefully result in new concrete findings. Measuring the adoption of interactive web campaigning will contribute by
updating the available literature on the adoption of websites. Although Web 1.0 is now near-universal, Web 2.0 is a far more recent phenomenon and there is value in charting the development of both Web 2.0 sites and the adoption of interactive features as a campaign tool. In addition, this thesis harnesses new datasets and new methodological approaches to measuring these phenomena at the constituency level, making a substantive contribution to the debate. The later, analytical portion of the research question also offers opportunities to contribute to existing literature. The choice of framework for measuring offline campaigning in constituency campaigns was developed by re-tooling an existing approach to fit more contemporary data, integrating the local and web-campaigns literatures, previously separate, in the process. Using the local campaigns framework to focus on the adoption of web campaigning also widens the focus on an area that traditionally concentrates its effort on the effectiveness of constituency campaigns in the face of a wider comparative literature that generally threatens to diminish the role of the local. Also in the comparative literature, the theorised connection between the modernisation of campaigns and the role of the web as an information gathering and targeting tool is challenged by the argument in this work that presents the web also as a tool for establishing dialogue and interaction between campaigns voters. Should this argument be supported, then future comparative literature may be forced to be more nuanced in its treatment of the web as a campaign tool. The final literature extended by answering this question is the web adoption literature. Thus far, the overwhelming interpretation of web adoption by these writers has been based on the idea of socially driven technology use - that campaigns and parties will use the web to meet existing strategic needs. The argument presented here extends this interpretation by introducing the traditional and modern measures as a way to represent campaign strategy and techniques. However, this work also allows for the possibility that there may be wider factors at work beyond social circumstance. With reference to the initial question of party decline that sparked this research, should the anticipated connection between traditional offline campaigns and interactive web campaigns be supported, then there is evidence that the arrival of Web 2.0 will support and reinforce the use of traditional techniques by constituency level campaigns. Consequently Web 2.0 could be seen as helping to rebuild connections between parties and voters that have been eroded by the emergence of modernised campaign techniques.
Overall, this chapter has summarised the available literature and shown how the research question fits with and extends existing knowledge. The next chapter is the data and methods section which aims to operationalise the research question by developing specific hypotheses and outlining sources of data and methods used to interpret them.
The introductory chapter outlined the issue of party decline and suggested that a web campaign may be a way for parties to rebuild connections to their electorates. The literature review developed this further identifying the main research question of the work which addresses the issue of the web as a response to party decline by asking about the extent to which online and offline campaigning were connected at the 2010 election. In order to answer this, the literature review specified a two-part research question:

**Is constituency campaigning becoming more interactive as a result of the availability of interactive web campaign tools and how can this be explained?**

The first part of this question asks: is constituency campaigning becoming more interactive as a result of the availability of interactive web campaign tools? This is answered by measuring the adoption of interactive web campaigning at the 2010 campaign. The concept of interactive web campaigning is defined and operationalised in two ways. Firstly as the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, secondly as the wider adoption of interactive features within campaign web presences. Data to answer this question comes from two sources: the 2010 electoral agent survey (EAS) and content analysis data of campaign websites in the North West of England collected during the short campaign preceding the 2010 election. The methods used to analyse this data are descriptive statistics covering the levels of adoption in the 2010 campaign.

The second part of the question asks for an explanation of why campaigns are adopting these tools. This is a more analytical and hence more complex question and the answer is based on a deductive approach to analysis. The literature review has put forward the argument that the adoption of interactive web campaigning will be linked to the techniques used in the offline campaign and that the online campaign will mirror the offline campaign and the goal of the analysis is to test this hypothesis. Offline campaigns are measured as using, to various extents, traditional and modernised campaign tools as measured by a revised traditional and modernised campaign index.
based on the work of Fisher and Denver (2009). Data to test this hypothesis comes once again from the 2010 EAS and content analysis data as well as a number of publically available datasets (e.g. the 2001 census). An additional dataset, the 2010 Comparative Candidate Study (CCS) was used to further supplement the available data. Analysis of interactive web campaign adoption was carried out using a variety of statistical techniques that took the level of interactive web campaigning as the dependent variable, including multivariate logistic regression to determine the likelihood of a campaign adopting a Web 2.0 site, and Poisson regression to determine the impact on the adoption of specific interactive features.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, further qualitative work was carried out in order to better interpret and contextualise the findings of the statistical analysis. This was accomplished by interviewing a series of candidates and campaign workers, mainly from the North West of England, following the election. Subjects were asked about their web campaigns and why they undertook them, with the aim of clarifying the factors that influenced their behaviour online. The resulting transcripts were then analysed and their reasons grouped under broader headings in a process akin to grounded theory analysis.

This chapter aims to outline the data sources and methods used in each of these analysis chapters. It is structured in three parts. The first part explains the overall methodological standpoint of this thesis, rooting it in the behaviouralist traditional of political science but also that the analysis here falls some way short of identifying true cause and effect and limits itself to identifying associations rather than causal relationships. The second part provides details on the specific datasets and methods used. In contrast to the analytical chapters, this section is structured around the research question rather than the breakdown of the dependent variable. As a consequence the first portion of this section sets out the data and methods used to measure the adoption of interactive web campaigning, both in the form of Web 2.0 sites and of specific interactive features. The second portion then sets out the additional data needed and methods used in the analysis of why campaigns used web campaigning as they did. Finally, this section then provides

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3 It is important to note that this is not true grounded theory analysis given that the texts of the conversations were grouped around themes pre-determined by the interview questions, which in turn reflected the researcher’s own bias and preconceptions. See Appendix B for interview questions. Also see Bryman (2008 p.541) for a further discussion of grounded theory analysis.
details of the data and methods used in the analysis of the qualitative data. The final section considers the ethical ramifications of this analysis. Mostly these stem from the use of datasets that contain personal information and so measures taken to protect the identity of subjects are the central concern. However there are also issues associated with on-going consent of interview subjects and the preservation of confidentiality of interview subjects.
METHODOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

This section outlines the methodological standpoint of this thesis; placing it in the behaviouralist tradition of political science as it seeks to apply an element of rigour to the study of political behaviour and derive causal explanations. The commitment to a causal explanation of web campaign adoption needs to be tempered to some extent by the empirical realities of dealing with web campaigning as a subject matter. The factors that underpin web campaigning are likely to be extremely complex with campaigners subject to a range of influences that they are both conscious and unconscious of. As a result, no model (or data) could hope to capture all the possible variables at work, control for every conceivable situation, or provide proof of causal links between factors. Additionally, key variables considered in this research are latent, meaning that they are not directly observable, but need to be inferred from a combination of other variables e.g. the traditional and modern indices used as independent variables would be an example of latent variables as the concept of traditional or modern campaigning cannot be directly observed. This adds a further layer of complexity that while allowing for the identification and measurement of theoretically valid concepts, adds additional scope for error into analysis. Finally, the web is a constantly changing environment, and for researchers it represents a moving target. Whilst many of the relationships identified may be significant today, future campaigns are likely to be built on different platforms and influenced by different factors. In culmination these factors mean this work must be cautious with any findings; significant results in the models do not represent definitive causes, but are associational and need to be treated as such in any wider inferences made.

This study is rooted firmly in the behaviouralist tradition in political science, the origins of which Robert Dahl places in the growing uneasiness in the US with the apparent disconnection between theoretical approaches to political science and the empirical reality many academics were asked to deal with during the Second World War. This, he argued, coupled with the advancement of surveys and statistical techniques, spurred researchers to adopt a more scientific outlook (Dahl, 1961).
“The developments underlying the current interest in political behaviour imply two basic requirements for adequate research. In the first place research must be systematic... This means that research must grow out of a precise statement of hypotheses and a rigorous ordering of evidence... In the second place, research in political behaviour must place primary emphasis upon empirical methods...”

Dahl, 1961, p767

The strategy described by Dahl, in particular the adherence to precise hypotheses, represents the beginnings of the application of critical rationalism to the social sciences. Founded by Karl Popper, critical rationalism is a school of thought that rejects the basis of inductive strategies that favour the use of researcher observation and pattern explanations of phenomenon, arguing that researchers cannot be trusted to dispassionately observe patterns and arrive at explanations. Contrary to inductive thinkers such as Bacon, Popper believed that truth was not manifest and could often be obscured by the prejudices of even the most objective researcher.

“The simple truth is that truth is often hard to come by”

Popper, 1963, p10

Critical rationalists advocate the use of hypotheses in social science: the goal of research should be to falsify and as a result improve these hypotheses, not arrive at explanations based only on observation. This study makes every effort to be as systematic as possible, but it is located at some mid-point on the spectrum short of developing a direct cause and effect explanation of web campaigning.

The first stage of the analysis process is exploratory in that it is the reporting of researcher observation, rather than theory testing. Following the mapping of dependent variables in stage one, the second stage becomes more methodologically complex, testing the idea that offline campaign practice affects the adoption of online campaign techniques. This hypothesis is tested through the use of an independent variable that represents the prevailing contextual factors in a campaign (traditional and modern indices) and a relevant dependent variable (either site adoption or use of interactive
features). If there is support for the argument there should be a relationship between the independent and dependent variables. However, as the literature review has speculated, this is unlikely to be a completely one-way relationship. In all likelihood web adoption is driven by multiple and interrelated factors, so developing a causal explanation of this phenomenon is difficult, in particular as there is no temporal element to the study (de Vaus, 1995). Additional control variables can be used to account for additional variation in the sample and see if the independent variables remain significant, but these can only go as far as the data permits. Variables not present in the data e.g. the novelty value of new campaign techniques, cannot be included in statistical analysis and needs to be included in a separate qualitative analysis. As a consequence, the conclusions of this work can look at associations between variables, but needs to be cautious about describing causes and effects.

As a further complication however, the core independent variables, the measures of traditional and modern campaigning, are latent variables, they cannot be directly observed but are represented by indices that aggregate several different variables. Again this limits to some extent causal claims as the independent variables are in effect proxies for many different factors, some which may be related, or themselves driven by other external influencers. For example, the Labour party has in the past been associated with an extremely rational and modernised style of campaigning (Seyd & Whitely, 2002), so whilst modernised campaigning may have some link with web adoption or none adoption, this may have been inflated to some extent by the extended use of modernised campaigning in the Labour party. Furthermore controlling for the variation explained by a campaign being Labour may not control for the inherent bias of being more modernised because a campaign is affiliated with Labour. This does not mean that traditional and modern campaigning as independent variables are irrelevant; the concepts of traditionalism and modernisation in constituency level campaigns are strongly grounded in earlier theoretical and empirical work in this area (Fisher & Denver, 2009). However, care must again be taken with interpreting results not to over-claim on the basis of statistical association.

Finally, the study of web campaigning remains a volatile field thanks to the pace of technological change. Campaigners in the UK have had access to Web 1.0 for close to
15 years and so literature has had time to codify and analyse its adoption (see Literature Review). Web 2.0 however is a more recent development and so there is still a great deal of room for trial, error and experiment by campaigners before the space settles down to a predictable pattern. Additionally, the use of Web 2.0 is likely to be closely bound up in the use of Web 1.0 to the point that previous research may be superseded.

The use of the web in campaigns is still evolving and consequently this research should be considered a snapshot of campaigns at the early stages of development of a new technique rather than the finished picture. The web develops so quickly that most research having to do with online phenomena is effectively aiming at a moving target.

In summary, this research is located firmly within the school of behaviouralism, seeking to systematically test hypotheses in a bid to explain the phenomenon of web based campaigning. Given the data available and the state of the web campaign field, this represents a highly rigorous approach to analysis, but there are some inherent limitations in the available data and the research design that require some caution in the interpretation of the results. Rather than seek to argue that there is direct cause and effect between independent and dependent variable, this thesis only argues that there are systematic patterns of linkage, or association, between them.
MEASURING ADOPTION OF INTERACTIVE WEB CAMPAIGNING

The first part of the research question asks if the availability of Web 2.0 is leading to the use of interactive web campaign techniques in the 2010 election. In order to answer this question it is necessary to measure the use of interactive web campaigning. This was achieved through the use of two datasets, each corresponding to a different operationalization of interactive web campaigning. The 2010 Electoral Agent Survey (EAS) which shows the level of Web 2.0 site adoption and content analysis data which allows for the measurement of the use of specific interactive features. This section profiles both of these datasets, showing how in each case the measures of interactive web campaigning were operationalised.

MEASURING ADOPTION OF WEB 2.0 SITES (EAS)

Operationalising interactive web campaigning as the adoption of Web 2.0 sites represents the widest possible interpretation of the concept of interactive web campaigning. At the same time however it offers the greatest scope for large and systematic analysis as it can be sourced from a large secondary data set, the 2010 EAS. Subsequent analysis is more detailed and focused, but the measurement of Web 2.0 site adoption is an opportunity to begin the analytical portion of the thesis with the widest possible focus.

The 2010 EAS is sent out to election agents in the aftermath of every General Election in the UK since 1992. The choice of election agents rather than candidates is done to maximise accuracy of responses about the day to day running of campaigns. The survey is sent to every local campaign agent in England, Scotland and Wales (not Northern Ireland) for the three main political parties (Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat) as well as the two largest nationalist parties (Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru). For the first time in 2010 respondents were sent paper surveys, but also given the option to fill the survey out online in the hopes of boosting response rates.
The 2010 EAS survey contained 61 questions, primarily focused on campaign techniques. The questions were split across seven sections:

- Your role and experience (note, this refers to agents not candidates)
- Preparations for the campaign
- Campaign organisation and strategy
- Campaign activities
- Polling day activities
- Your assessment of the campaign
- Personal details

The EAS has been conducted since 1992 giving it a level of reliability and longevity that makes it a highly useful resource. The questions have been honed over time and by this point can be seen as good measures of campaign techniques. The EAS survey is also closely associated with the local campaign literature in the UK, forming the basis for several studies, including the paper that developed the concept of traditional and modern campaigning making it ideal for further investigation of the area (Denver & Hands, 1992; Denver & Hands, 1997b; Fisher & Denver, 2009). In 2010 the survey was updated to include a number of questions relevant to this study, including items about the use of Web 2.0 sites.

As with any survey data, careful attention must be paid to the validity of the sample. As the sample was self-selecting there may well be some bias introduced by differences between returning and non-returning campaigns. In particular it was important that the data represented a good cross-section of campaigns by party, incumbency and marginality. There were 1079 responses to the 2010 EAS out of a theoretical maximum of 1995 making a return rate of approximately 55%. The Conservative party was underrepresented in the overall sample, with only 26.7% (n=288) of cases being Conservative campaigns, with 36% (n=388) Labour and 32.6% (n=352) Liberal Democrat. Only

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4 This figure is a theoretical maximum and is based on each of the three main parties standing in every constituency in the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) and one candidate from each of the nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales.
4.7% (n=51) of responses were from nationalist parties but given the lower starting point of only 99 constituencies in Scotland and Wales this is to be expected and represents a comparable response rate to the EAS as a whole. 33.4% (n=360) responses were from candidates incumbent before the 2010 election leaving 66.6% (n=719) challenging candidates. 25.9% (n=280) of responses were from campaigns in marginal constituencies where the incumbent had a majority of less than 10% of the vote. 74.1% (n=799) of responses came from campaigns in constituencies where the margin of victory was greater than 10%.

A further breakdown of the sample can be obtained by cross tabulating incumbency and marginality with party affiliation (Table 3). There is a clear disparity in the number of incumbent candidates between party affiliations, with the Lib Dems responding from far fewer incumbent candidates than either Labour or the Conservatives. There were no nationalist incumbents responding to the survey. This is somewhat consistent with the composition of incumbent candidates in the UK prior to the last election. The Conservative figure of 42% incumbents over-represents the 29.7% of seats held by the Conservatives, whilst Labour and the Lib Dems are closer to the actual levels of incumbency returning 51.8% compared to 53% of seats held and 10.2% compared to 9.7% of seats held respectively. The lack of nationalist incumbents is again unsurprising given that only 1.5% of seats were held by nationalists (seven by the SNP and three by Plaid Cymru). Of the 650 seats contested 26.9% (n=170) were marginal (<10%), so in terms of proportion size each of the three main parties is well represented while the nationalists were competing in comparatively few marginal seats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incumbent (%)</th>
<th>Marginal (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con 123 (42.7)</td>
<td>72 (25)</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab 201 (51.8)</td>
<td>101 (26.0)</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD 36 (10.2)</td>
<td>99 (28.1)</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat 0 (0)</td>
<td>8 (15.7)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the EAS data provides a good cross-section of the UK prior to the last election, with responses by party broadly consistent with the national levels of incumbency and marginality. The major concern is the under representation of the Conservative Party in...
the data. Proportionally, the Conservatives make up fewer of the cases in the data and they include a greater number of incumbent campaigns. This could partially skew the results in that challenging Conservative campaigns will have less influence. This is unfortunate given the overall strategic situation in the UK at the time – the Conservative Party attacking a defensive Labour majority – as challenging Conservative campaigns would be likely to receive a great deal of attention and would provide a key element in this work’s wider theory on how interactive web campaigning is adopted. Despite this however, the EAS is the best data available on this subject at the time, allows for the detailed specification of both dependent and independent variables, and (despite under representing Conservative campaigns) represents a viable cross-section of campaigns in the UK.

MEASURING ADOPTION OF WEB 2.0 SITES

In the context of this study interactive web campaign sites include the sites commonly thought of as being ‘Web 2.0’: Facebook and other social networks, Twitter, and video and image sharing sites such as Flickr and YouTube. The adoption of these Web 2.0 sites was measured through a combination of three variables derived from the EAS: Twitter use, Social Network effort and Video/Image sharing effort.

Twitter adoption was measured through an item with a three-point ordinal scale where 0 = no use, 1 = a little and 2 = a substantial amount.

“During the campaign did you make use of Twitter to communicate with voters?” (Q28)

A second question measured social network use and video/image sharing use were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

“Here is a list of activities which frequently form part of a constituency campaign. Please indicate on the scale shown how much effort was put into
each of them during your campaign, whether very little or no effort (1), a very substantial amount of effort (5), or somewhere in between”

Option 12 – “Social Network sites (e.g. Facebook)

Option 13 – “Video/image sharing sites (e.g. YouTube/Flickr) (Q32.12 and 37.13)

In addition to looking at responses on individual sites, the measure of Web 2.0 site adoption was also used subsequently as a dependent variable in later analysis of why campaigns adopted Web 2.0. This meant that the adoption of Web 2.0 sites by a campaign also needed to be condensed into a single measure of Web 2.0 adoption. Given that the response scales were not the same, some standardisation was required to allow for the combination of the variables into a single dependent variable measuring interactive web campaign sites adoption. All three variables were recoded into binary responses with responses of ‘a little’ or ‘a substantial amount’ for Twitter re-coded as 1 and any response over 1 for social network sites and video sharing recoded as 1. The three variables were combined into a single variable whereby any score of 1 on any item = 1 as Web 2.0 site use. This process is summarised in the table below.

Table 4: EAS Questions and Web 2.0 Site Adoption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EAS Question</th>
<th>EAS Response Value</th>
<th>Dependent Variable Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the campaign did you make use of Twitter to communicate with voters?</td>
<td>0 (no use)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (a little)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (a substantial amount)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort put into Social Network sites (e.g. Facebook)</td>
<td>1 (very little or no effort)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (a very substantial amount)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort put into Video/image sharing sites (e.g. YouTube/Flickr)</td>
<td>1 (very little or no effort)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (a very substantial amount)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While this did mean a loss of some of the variance contained in the original EAS questions, such as the level of effort, it was consistent with the wider approach of the
thesis, and this stage of the analysis in particular that was looking at the adoption of
sites. A more nuanced view of interactive web campaign adoption is pursued in
subsequent analysis (looking at specific interactive features) through the use of content
analysis data.

Web 1.0 sites were not included in the analysis of Web 2.0 sites. In part this was down
to the subject of the study, interactive web campaigning, and Web 1.0’s (not entirely
justified) reputation for being non-interactive, ‘brochure-ware’. More importantly than
this however are the levels of Web 1.0 adoption found in the EAS dataset. The 2010
EAS contains a question on the use of a ‘local party or campaign website’ during the
campaign to which 79.3% of campaigns (n=856) replied positively. Therefore,
including Web 1.0 in a binary measure of interactive web site adoption would vastly
reduce the level of variation in the sample, making for a less useful analysis. The level
of conventional websites is likely to be even higher when additional sites that represent
campaigns but are not under the control of the campaign are included in the analysis.
Such sites include directories hosted by central party organisations within their own
web campaign spaces that include pictures, contact details and biographical details.
Web 1.0 has effectively become part of the standard make-up of constituency
campaigns and is therefore not included in this analysis, although the more interactive
elements of Web 1.0 sites are included in the consideration of specific interactive
features.

MEASURING ADOPTION OF INTERACTIVE FEATURES (CONTENT
ANALYSIS)

The second approach to operationalising the concept of interactive web campaigning is
through the measurement of specific interactive features, which was achieved by using
content analysis data collected during the 2010 campaign. For a long time the main tool
available for developing an in-depth understanding of political websites has been
content analysis. Broadly speaking, content analysis has undergone three main
iterations, beginning with qualitative approaches rooted in ethnography (Margolis et al,
1997). These approaches were slowly superseded by more quantitative projects,
although for the most part these have relied to a large extent on researcher observation and time-consuming manual coding (Ward et al., 2002). Recently, automated approaches have become available which dramatically increases the potential of this kind of content analysis, allowing for a large number of sites to be coded, relatively quickly. In some cases, this development has been linked with hyperlink network analysis (HNA) to give a picture of both the structure of a particular network and the content. Hindman (2009) put elements of this approach into practice looking at political websites using Support Vector Machine Classifiers (SVM) that were able to automatically classify the crawled websites. Although in future the cost and expertise needed for machine classifying is likely to decrease, for the foreseeable future it remains out of reach for most researchers, including this project. As a result, data for Chapter Five was identified and coded manually.

Candidates and their campaigns were identified using the website UK Polling Report\(^5\) which acts as a useful repository of election statistics and results from several previous elections. Identification was done shortly before the dissolution of Parliament, and so the majority of candidates were known, although a very few late declaring candidates were missed from the sample. The aim of the process was to identify sites that were readily linked to the campaign, so only conventional tools were used to search for sites, principally Google and in-built social media search tools, although a number of Twitter accounts were traced using the website Tweetminster\(^6\) which acts as a clearing house for sitting MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates’ (PPCs) Twitter accounts.

There was an issue of whether or not blogs should be recorded as a separate presence. Initially this was the case, but as data was collected it was found to be common practice for MPs to use blog platforms as an easy way to create what was essentially their main website. Additionally many blog services now offer the ability to construct static pages, essentially rendering the descriptions blog and website as interchangeable in some cases. A note was made whether or not a website was identifiable as a blog, but the highly customisable nature of blog templates meant that in some cases a distinction was

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\(^5\)http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/
\(^6\)http://tweetminster.co.uk/
impossible. Coupled with the proliferation of continually updating news sections on many campaigns websites, the distinction between blogs and conventional websites has practically disappeared. In cases where there were multiple presences aligned with the same campaign, for instance where local party site and a candidate site exist simultaneously, then priority was given to the site that could be identified most closely with the candidate. For each identified web presence, the following information was recorded:

- The URL
- If the site used a template (websites only)
- The number of followers or friends (social networks only)
- If there was any evidence of public dialogue on the site e.g. @replies on Twitter, conversations on Facebook, comments sections or forums
- The focus of the site candidate or party
- If the site contained a link to the national party
- If the site contained a link to national Web 2.0, a national campaign network, local party Web 2.0
- The number of posts made on the site in the last seven days and if they were nationally or locally focused
- If the site contained any of the following: a local policy section, national policy section, calendar, map, news about the national party, news about the leader, campaign poster, leaflet, video, poll, petition, news feed from the central party, a specific request for action such as to donate or volunteer.

This wide-ranging information was later narrowed down to a more specific schema that measured only interactive features (see below). Content analysis of this type carries with it a number of benefits. Mostly the attraction lies in allowing the researcher to act as an unbiased observer and record information directly, which can offer improved reliability over that of subject responses to surveys. Observation also offered the possibility of going into far greater depth than was possible with established surveys, which had limited space for questions about online campaigning and may be being filled out by an agent with only second hand knowledge of the web campaign.
Manual content analysis also gives the researcher a great deal of control over the sample frame. The sample consisted of all the campaigns that could be identified in the North West of England. A sample was used rather than the population as a whole due to the time and other resource constraints. The North West was chosen as it was an area in which the three major UK parties (Con, Lab and LD) dominated, so would provide a good fit with the EAS data which had lower response rates for nationalist parties. It also provided a number of urban constituencies that were known to have high student populations, which was thought to be a possibly influential factor in how web campaigns were conducted. There were 75 constituencies in the North West making it the second largest region in terms of seats after the South East; 59 of these seats were held by Labour, but there were further contingents of Conservative and Liberal Democrat seats available for analysis.

Table 5: Seats Won in England, Scotland and Wales at 2005 General Election and Number of Marginal Seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Lib-Dem</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Marginal Seats (&lt;10%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. Midlands</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. of England</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Midlands</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No single region in the UK provides a perfect representative sample of the UK and there are some aspects of the North West that are likely to bias the results including the relative dominance of the Labour party (therefore many incumbent Labour campaigns) and the high number of urban seats. These limitations do need to be considered when interpreting results, but the North West nonetheless offers as good an opportunity as any other region to generalise to UK web campaigns in the UK as a whole. In addition, there were practical benefits to focussing on the North West region exclusively. Most
importantly it kept the number of cases to a manageable level; content analysis is labour intensive but also needs to be concluded within a specific timeframe: the election. As the project was based at the University of Manchester, the focus on the North West also allowed the researcher to exploit local connections and the proximity of campaigns to secure face-to-face follow up interviews. All but one of the interview subjects are drawn from campaigns in the North West.

All local candidates from the North West with an identifiable web presence were included in the analysis. This included campaigns from the three main parties plus three minor parties of interest (BNP, UKIP and Green) resulting in a total of 319 campaigns being included in the content analysis. The decision was made at a later point to only include the three major parties in the analysis in order to manage the scale of the project and to accommodate the merging of the content analysis data with the EAS dataset. Of the 319 campaigns, 222 campaigns were from one of the three major parties (Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat). Data had to be collected within a narrow window of the election campaign, and in order to make for better comparison data was collected in as short a time as possible. Archiving services provide a way round this problem, to some extent, but again the resources required were beyond the budget of this project.⁷

Adding to the time consuming aspect of the data collection was the ambiguity over identifying the websites of interest. Although these distinctions can seem clear on paper, in the chaotic environment of the web, identifying websites as being part of a campaign can be difficult. Campaigns were spread across multiple platforms and various identities. Often campaign social media presences were fronted not by the candidate but by other campaign staff such as managers or designated supporters. It was often difficult to determine which users (and associated accounts) were acting on a campaign’s behalf. Some candidates had a private Facebook page and Twitter account, as well as an official campaign one, others had their own personal homepages and blogs that competed or sometimes replicated content from campaign sites. At all times, the researcher gave priority to the sites and profiles that were judged to speak for the

⁷ The Comparing Online Democracy and Elections (CODE) Project made extensive use of archiving in their data collection. At the time of writing this had yet to be analysed or published, but the raw archive of websites is available at: http://drupals.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/ipol/?q=node/7
campaign, but this often involved judgement calls and so exact replication may be difficult, and these results may differ slightly to other accounts of the same campaigns. The final test used for finding material was simply, ‘what would an ordinary web user be able to find?’ This meant relying on commonly used tools, Google, and the search functions of the two social networks - Twitter and Facebook. Some campaigns were difficult to find due to confusion in the search results. If a candidate shared a name with a famous personality, then searches were quickly overtaken by spurious results. It was also common to be referred to national party campaign sites, particularly if a candidate was a sitting MP, and particularly if they were or had been a minister. Often campaign sites were nested within national party websites. To build on the points above, the search process was to some degree organic rather than mechanical, despite attempts to make it as consistent as possible.

Despite some limitations the final results of the content analysis provides the most detailed accounts of web campaign interactivity within a national election possible and contains more than enough information to populate the research design above. The following section offers more detail on how this data was used to measure the provision of interactive features.

**MEASURING INTERACTIVE FEATURE ADOPTION**

Building on the literature review, this study conceptualises two overall types of interactive feature available through web campaigns: personal and automated. Automated interactive features are the shallowest level of interactivity. These features are contingent on users interacting with sites and other systems rather than with other users or the candidates and campaign workers. These features are equivalent to Stromer-Galley’s concept of media-interactivity (2000). Examples of these features are: providing materials for download, joining organisations online, or subscribing to email newsletters of following campaigns on social networks. In the modern campaign environment, these are tools that can be seen as being geared towards voter identification and information gathering, in particular capturing email addresses through polls and petitions. At the constituency level these features are likely to be fairly basic
and certainly nowhere near the levels of information that could possibly be extracted by more capable national campaigns that are far better placed to capture complex information about their users. However, there is scope for constituency campaigns, particularly better-resourced ones, to make use of these features to find out more about electors in their constituency. These are seen as being interactive in that they provide a more sophisticated experience beyond simple information provision, but they offer little opportunity for meaningful dialogue between people.

The second group of features are termed personal interactive features. These are features that allow direct exchanges between users and users or users and campaigns. These features are akin to Stomer-Galley’s concept of human interaction (2000). Personal interactive features were initially sub-divided into two further categories, public and private. Public personal interactive features were those where users were able to enter into dialogue with campaigns in public through forums, comment sections or social networking tools. Crucially, to be coded as using a public feature there had to be some evidence of participation by the campaign in the form of a reply (@reply on Twitter). This distinguished to some extent the mere provision of features from a campaign’s actual behaviour and excludes situations where campaigns establish accounts on social media services but then do not respond to contributions made by electors. As well as responding in public however, a myriad of channels exist in campaign web presences for users and campaigns to engage in personal interactive features privately. Private features were difficult to evidence in the same way however, as the researcher cannot access private communications. As a result private features represent potential channels for personal interactivity, but there did not have to be explicit evidence of their use. Examples of private features include the provision of email addresses on campaign websites and the internal messaging systems built into tools such as Facebook and Twitter. A notable component in this schema is the inclusion of several features that are in-built into campaigns’ use of social media. For example, having a Twitter profile means users are able to send a direct message to the campaign by default, whereas a similar feature on a conventional website, email, represents campaigns making an active decision to allow users to contact them. Equally,

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8 In the case of Facebook campaign profiles often took the form of groups rather than personal profiles. In this context private messaging was considered to be between users and the group administrator.
Facebook comes with built-in private personal interactivity features, either in the form of sending a message to a candidate through their profile, or contacting the administrator of a campaign group. The final content analysis schema used is summarised in the table below.

### Table 6: Content Analysis Schema For Measuring Interactivity In Local Campaign Web Presences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Conventional website</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Personal Interactivity</strong></td>
<td>Forum or comment section in which the campaign was actively replying to comments</td>
<td>Replies on a Facebook wall</td>
<td>@replies in timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Personal Interactivity</strong></td>
<td>Email address</td>
<td>Able to send a Facebook message</td>
<td>Able to send a direct message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Automated Interactivity</strong></td>
<td>Download a poster</td>
<td>Download a poster on Facebook</td>
<td>Download a poster on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Download a leaflet</td>
<td>Download a leaflet on Facebook</td>
<td>Download a leaflet on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete a poll</td>
<td>Complete a poll on Facebook</td>
<td>Complete a poll on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sign a petition</td>
<td>Sign a petition on Facebook</td>
<td>Sign a petition on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make a specific online organisational request</td>
<td>Make a specific online organisational request on Facebook</td>
<td>Make a specific online organisational request on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donate money</td>
<td>Donate money on Facebook</td>
<td>Donate money on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sign up to email list</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>‘Follow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Join the party</td>
<td>‘Friend’</td>
<td>Link to join the party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This schema offers a parsimonious and practical approach to assessing the interactivity of campaign web presences over multiple websites. The results of this schema were reported using descriptive statistics and offer a breakdown of how campaigns are using
their web presences and the degree of interactive features on offer. In subsequent analysis, this schema forms the basis for two additive variables that measure the adoption of interactive features, one measuring the extent of personal interaction features, the other the extent of automated features offered by campaigns.

**SUMMARY**

This section has profiled how this work responds to the first part of the research question – measuring the levels of interactive web campaigning in constituency campaigns in the 2010 election. The concept of interactive web campaigning is operationalised in two ways: firstly as the adoption of specific Web 2.0 sites such as Facebook and Twitter, secondly as the use of interactive features in web campaign presences more widely. The measurement of Web 2.0 site adoption is based on campaigns’ responses to the 2010 EAS. The measurement of interactive features requires more detailed information and is consequently based on in-depth content analysis data collected from web campaigns in the North West region of England during the campaign. The next section details how these measures were used as the basis for explanatory analysis of the levels of interactive web campaigning – in effect these measures form the dependent variable in the more complex analysis that follows.
EXPLAINING THE ADOPTION OF INTERACTIVE WEB CAMPAIGNING

Having now measured the levels of adoption of both Web 2.0 sites through analysing the 2010 EAS, and the levels of specific interactive features through analysis of manually collected content analysis data, the research question now asks that we explain why the levels of adoption vary, in other words, why some campaigns choose to adopt interactive web campaigning and others do not. The measures of interactive web campaigning described above now become the dependent variables in further analysis. Again, the analyses are separated depending on their operationalisation of the concept of interactive web campaigning. Analysis of the adoption of sites is reliant on the 2010 EAS data, whilst analysis of specific interactive features uses the 2010 content analysis data. In both cases additional data from the 2010 Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) is required to complete the models.

The literature review has put forward the argument that the adoption of interactive web campaigning will be related to the levels of traditional and modern campaigning reported by the campaign. Given the interactive nature of Web 2.0 tools, the face-to-face nature of traditional campaigning and the theoretical arguments that suggest that campaigns’ use of technology will be constrained by existing social factors, it is expected that score on the traditional index will be more positively linked to the adoption of interactive web campaigning than the modernised campaign. This argument is broken down into two specific hypotheses H1 and H2 which correspond to different operationalisations of the dependent variable. The following sets out the data and methods used to test these hypotheses: firstly H1 which tests the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, and then H2 which deals with the adoption of interactive features.

EXPLAINING THE ADOPTION OF WEB 2.0 SITES (EAS)

The literature review has put forward the argument that firstly, interactive web campaigning based on Web 2.0 allows for greater direct interaction between the campaigns and voters. Secondly, that campaigns differ in their use of campaign
technique and that traditional campaigning is based more on face-to-face interaction whilst modernised campaigning is based on maintaining distance between campaigners and voters. Thirdly, that campaigns’ technological adoption is based on continuing existing strategies and working within existing constraints rather than radically altering their approaches to campaigning, i.e., is socially shaped rather than technologically determined. Based on these three points, this work expects that Web 2.0 will contribute to constituency campaigns by supporting traditional campaigning rather than modernised. This argument is encapsulated in H1, specified below, which predicts that traditional campaigning will bear a greater positive relationship to the adoption of Web 2.0 than modernised campaigning.

**H0** There will be no association between offline campaign style and web based campaigns.

**H1** Campaigns that score highly on the traditional index will be more likely to adopt interactive web campaign sites than campaigns scoring highly on the modern index.

Support for H1 would indicate that more traditional campaigning is related to the adoption of interactive web campaign sites, and this in turn suggests that Web 2.0 may be being used in support of more traditional campaigning rather than as a continuation of modernised campaigning. Support for the null hypothesis would suggest that there is no relationship between the offline and online campaigns.

Data to test this hypothesis comes from a number of sources. The dependent variable is a binary measure of the adoption of Web 2.0 sites provided by the 2010 EAS which is detailed in the previous section. The independent variables are the indices of traditional and modern campaigning which are also provided by the 2010 EAS and are detailed below. In addition to making the case for the indices of traditional and modern campaigning as influential variables, the literature review identified a number of additional variables that were seen as possible influencers of a campaigns adoption of web campaign tools: party affiliation, campaign marginality and incumbency, socio-economic characteristics of the constituency and factors relating to the candidates.
Before it is possible to support H1, these other possible influencers must be accounted for as control variables.

This analysis represents the broadest possible interpretation of interactive web campaigning and is based on the broadest possible dependent variable in the form of Web 2.0 site adoption. This is not as detailed as measures used in subsequent analyses, however it provides an opportunity to test the argument put forward in this research using the maximum number of cases possible. Subsequent, more detailed analyses require more data which reduces the number of cases that can be considered.

MEASURING MODERNISED AND TRADITIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Testing H1 requires independent variables that can represent the style and practices of campaigns offline - the framework of traditional and modernised campaigning used by Fisher and Denver (2009) identified in the literature review. The indices resulting from this framework are used as the independent variables of principal interest in this analysis. In their paper Fisher and Denver (2009) gave an account of how they had developed the traditional and modernised indices based on campaigns’ responses to questions on the EAS. Although some key details are missing, Fisher and Denver chart their use of the data reduction technique, principal components analysis (PCA) to map the component variables of each concept onto indices. These indices were then standardised on a mean of 100, so campaigns scoring above 100 were considered above average, less than 100, below average. The original Fisher and Denver indices used 16 overlapping variables and had been designed to chart the computerisation of local level campaigning since the early 1990s. In composing their measures, Fisher and Denver were not aiming to develop traditional and modern campaigning as an independent variable i.e. as a way to classify campaigns or measure campaigning. Instead, traditional and modern indices were the output of their analysis as a way to chart the rise of the modernised form of campaigning at constituency level, in particular the use of computers. To this end the construct of traditional and modern campaigns worked well, identifying clear distinctions between different campaign forms (Fisher & Denver, 2009).
In this work the aim however is to use the traditional and modern indices as a way to measure offline campaign practices. This marks a significant departure from Fisher and Denver’s original intention, so whilst the constructs are still valid, the specifics of measuring traditional and modern campaigns have altered significantly. This work replicates the Denver and Fisher measures as far as possible using the 2010 EAS data, however, some adjustments were necessary as the 2010 data did not load onto two distinct components as it had done in Fisher and Denver’s analysis. Instead the PCA resulted in multiple components that did not clearly identify a traditional or a modern approach to campaigning. The attempt to replicate and the subsequent adaptation of Fisher and Denver’s work is fully documented in Appendix A. In addition to the problems with loadings, including measures of computerisation in the indices that form the independent variable in a research that had web use as a dependent variable invites correlation between the variables. Campaigns with computers are more likely to be online. Equally, given the spread of personal computers it seemed highly unlikely that a significant number of campaigns would not use computers. As a result an alternative approach was adopted that both simplified the indices and updated them. The revised indices are presented in Table 7 below. These indices retain the initial conception of traditional and modern campaigns, but are measured in a simplified and more robust way. In particular they do not include questions about the computerisation of campaigns. The result is that the data naturally identifies two indices, termed here the indices of traditional and modern campaigning.
Table 7: Variables Used To Compose Revised Traditional And Modern Campaign Indices (2010 EAS Question Number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Index</th>
<th>Modernised Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Electorate Canvassed (21b)</td>
<td>Use of special leaflets to target groups (22a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort canvassing to intro candidate (37.3)</td>
<td>Use of Direct Mail (23a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort canvassing to identify supporters (37.2)</td>
<td>% Electorate telephone canvassed (24b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort distributing leaflets (37.1)</td>
<td>Effort telephone canvassing (37.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effort targeting groups (37.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These variables were then used as the basis of a PCA. To aid interpretation the results were rotated using a promax solution. Rotation is a common approach to interpreting the results of PCA and various rotations as well as a non-rotated solution were seen as theoretically justifiable in this instance. However, a promax rotation was found to provide the most accurate picture as other forms of rotation significantly distorted the indices (see appendix A). The results of the PCA gave two distinct components and the resulting regression scores were then used to measure the extent of traditional and modernised campaigning undertaken by a campaign. The scores were standardised to a mean of 100 to aid interpretation. This index was then used to represent the extent of modernised and traditional campaigning undertaken by campaigns. The distribution of the indices is shown in Figure 2 below.
There are a number of features to note on the distribution. There is some positive correlation (0.569 p<0.05) between the two indices as is to be expected from using an oblique rotation solution such as promax. This is expected as the indices represent to some extent campaign activity, so the more active a campaign is the more likely it is to use both traditional and modern campaign techniques. Fisher and Denver (2009) themselves noted that traditional and modern campaigning modes were not mutually exclusive and that high profile seats tended to generate both. Combined, these indices are likely to be driven to some extent by how intense a campaign is. However, the two indices allow this intensity to be split between traditional and modern activities. There is also a notable floor on the modern index, with a number of campaigns scoring around 87 on the modern index. This represents to some extent the rarity of some of the techniques included in the modern index as compared to the more common traditional techniques. All campaigns are likely to use canvassing to some extent whilst far fewer can afford to implement direct mail and telephone canvassing.

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9 Oblique rotations such as Promax and Direct Oblimin allow for some correlation between factors whilst orthogonal rotations such as the more common Varimax maintain zero correlation between the resulting factors. In this instance, there is good reason to expect a degree of correlation between the factors i.e. that the more active a campaign is on one measure the more they are likely to be active overall.
METHODS

In order to test H1 this work explores the connection between the adoption of Web 2.0 sites and both the traditional and modernised indices. This was done through the use of binary logistic regression, a statistical technique that estimates the probability of a given case falling into one of two outcome categories, in this case the adoption or non-adoption of Web 2.0 sites. Following on from the model looking only at the relationship between offline campaign practice and interactive web campaign tool adoption a number of additional models were run. Initially there was some concern that as non-mutually exclusive measures, traditional and modernised campaigning may exert an interaction effect on the adoption of Web 2.0 sites. It was plausible that campaigns with combination of both high traditional and high modernised scores would be more likely to adopt Web 2.0 than those with only a high traditional score. This was tested in an additional model (this was found to be non-significant and as a result is not reported). The model was then expanded to include a number of additional control variables based on factors previously identified as being significant in the literature review (Carlson & Djupsund, 2001; Gibson & McAllister, 2006; Herrnson, et al, 2007; Dutton et al, 2009; Zittel, 2009).

CONTROL VARIABLES

In testing for a relationship between existing and new types of campaigning this work employs multivariate binary logistic regression. To account for other factors beyond the independent variables, this model needs to control for other possible influential factors identified by the literature and summarised below:

Organisational - That different parties have different campaign styles and are a better ideological and organisational fit for web based campaigning and so will be more likely to adopt web campaign tools. This is represented as a categorical variable.

Electoral factors - That campaigns will respond differently to different circumstances. In a tight race for instance an incumbent campaign may be willing to do more than in a
safe seat where victory is assured. Equally, however, experienced incumbents may be less willing to adopt new campaign techniques. Marginality is represented as a single binary variable at the 5% level, note this reflects the marginality of the constituency as a whole rather than just the individual campaign. Incumbency is represented as a categorical variable with categories representing challenging campaigns, new candidates in constituencies where the party is incumbent i.e. replacing a sitting MP and campaigns where the candidate and party are incumbent.

Socio-economic context - That campaigns will behave differently in different constituencies based on the socio-economic context that they are operating in. So candidates in poorer areas or areas with older populations where voters are less likely to be online will be less likely to be online in response or vice versa for more prosperous or younger areas. Levels of internet connectivity were unavailable for the 2010 constituencies at the time of analysis, however a number of demographic variables representing education, age and affluence are included. These were not considered separately but as indices developed through PCA. The variables included are: percentage of the population with no qualifications, percentage retired, percentage students, percentage of owner occupied housing, percentage of those employed in agriculture, manufacturing and non-manual occupations. These break down along two components (based on a promax rotation) roughly corresponding to indices of rural retirement communities and urban deprivation. In addition, the percentage of non White population was also included as a separate variable (it loaded onto neither component). These three broad groups of factors are broken down further in the table below along with a description of the source of the data.
Table 8: Control Variables Used In Chapter Four Analysis (EAS Analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable type</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party affiliation</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>EAS</td>
<td>Party affiliation: either Conservative, Labour or Lib Dem. This was included as a dummy variable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electoral</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbency</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>2010 British General Election Constituency Results</td>
<td>Whether the candidate was an incumbent, a new candidate replacing a sitting MP in a constituency where the party is incumbent. This was included as a dummy variable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginality</td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>2010 British General Election Constituency Results</td>
<td>Marginal constituency with less than 5% majority for winning campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-economic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural/Retirement</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>2001 Census</td>
<td>Index based on PCA variables: % retired, % owner occupied, % agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban/Depravation</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>2001 Census</td>
<td>Index based on PCA variables % no qualifications, % manufacturing, % non manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White population</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>2001 Census</td>
<td>% non-White population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are a number of further points of clarification to make in relation to the treatment of control variables. 2010 was an unusual election in that it featured a large number of retiring candidates as a result of the on-going expenses scandal that broke in late 2009. Rather than resign a number of MPs chose to step down at the next election. This led to a large number of seats where candidates were effectively being parachuted into seats that the party already held. These were thought to represent a different set of circumstances for candidates and so were included as an extra category. In the models this is treated as two dummy variables, incumbent candidate and party, and incumbent party not candidate, with the reference category representing campaigns where neither the party nor the candidate were incumbent i.e., challenging campaigns. This distinction was not included in the CCS model and later models of interactive features as there were insufficient campaigns in which MPs were stepping down.

Marginality was included as a single binary variable covering the entire constituency. Originally it had been thought that a campaign specific measure of marginality that differentiated between second and third place campaigns might have been appropriate, but a constituency level variable was included as it was felt to better represent the context of the race as a whole. Media and party attention both locally and nationally are likely to differ in tightly contested constituencies, even for third place campaigns. Marginality was also based on notional rather than actual majority figures from 2005. Notional majority figures are a tool for taking into account the changing electoral boundaries between 2005 and 2010 campaigns. This is an on-going process and despite the Boundary Commission being nonpartisan, demographic changes such as population movement from urban to suburban areas, favour the Conservatives. The new boundaries for the 2010 campaign created 13 new seats and abolished nine, reducing Labour’s majority from an actual 66 seats to a notional 48 (Rallings, et al, 2008, p.83). To account for these changes notional majority figures were created for use with the 2010 campaign based on voting patterns in the constituent wards within the boundaries of the new seat (Rallings & Thrasher, 2007).

To some extent this analysis has multi-level rather than single level data. So while the majority of the variables relate to individual campaigns, the socio-economic variables along with marginality relate to constituencies. In including area level variables such as
these in a single level analysis there is a chance of getting a ‘false positive’ as some observations are included multiple times and others only once depending on the number of cases from within that area. So for example, where all three campaigns in a constituency have returned a questionnaire, the corresponding area level variable will be included in the analysis three times, but if only one campaign returned the area level variable would be included only once. Despite this problem however a single level approach (logistic regression) is used. This is justified for a number of reasons. Firstly because it is consistent with previous studies in this area (Hernnson et al, 2007) and so introducing a multi-level component would make contextualising this work in the existing literature difficult. This work aims to differentiate on theoretical (the hypothesised traditional-interactive link) rather than methodological grounds. Secondly, the area level variables are found to be of only limited significance in this analysis – findings further confirmed in qualitative interviews with candidates and campaign workers. Therefore taking a multi-level approach would yield little additional information and would add an additional layer of complexity to the analysis. Thirdly, there is a strong argument that campaigns and constituencies do not represent two levels of data but are in fact a single level of data, with constituency level variables affecting all campaigns in a constituency. Finally, a pilot multi-level analysis on this data showed no significant results. This does not mean that a multi-level approach might be attempted in future, although this may be best attempted with a bespoke dataset designed for the purpose rather than relying on the existing surveys.

**CONTROLLING FOR CANDIDATE FACTORS (CCS)**

The literature review also suggests that the adoption of interactive web campaigning may be linked to the personal characteristics of the candidate. As a result, it was necessary to include information about candidates that was not available from the 2010 EAS data including candidate’s age, gender and educational background. In order to do so an additional dataset was used: the 2010 Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS).

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10 The EAS does include information about a candidate’s gender, but the CCS measures were used in order to preserve the grouping of candidate factors.
Due to the strict confidentiality restrictions governing use of the EAS data it was not possible to link it with the CCS (see the ethical considerations). This stopped candidate factors only available on the CCS from being included in the same model as those derived from the EAS (the dependent variable and measures of traditional and modernised campaigning). To mitigate the effects of this, candidate factors were analysed using a separate CCS based model, run parallel to the EAS model. The CCS model was able to use much of the same data as the EAS model, including party affiliation, electoral data and census data. The dependent variable could be reconstructed from questions on the CCS itself. The CCS questionnaire did not allow for the replication of the indices of traditional and modern campaigns. Proxy measures were identified from the CCS in the form of questions on doorstep canvassing and direct mail, however these were problematic, and represented a simplified alternative to the indices based on the EAS. As a result, the findings of the CCS model should be thought of as an addition to, rather than as a substitute for, the more fully specified EAS measures.

2010 COMPARATIVE CANDIDATE SURVEY

The underpinning methodology of the CCS differed considerably to the EAS in that it was targeted at all candidates across the UK, where the EAS targeted only the three major parties, two nationalist parties and did not include Northern Ireland. The CCS is addressed to candidates rather than agents. It covers some of the same ground as the EAS, but with a greater focus on the candidates themselves. Overall it contains 91 questions related to the campaign. Candidates were mailed a hard copy of the survey in either May or June 2010 and also given the option of completing the survey online in a bid to boost return rates. These were also followed up with email reminders where email addresses were available and further postal reminders. The return rate for all candidates was 43.7% of candidates (reported by the Principal Investigator).

The data made available contained information on the three major parties as well as a number of minor parties: UK Independence Party, The Green Party and The British National Party. To maintain comparability with the EAS only major parties were
considered in the data. There were 600 responses for the three major parties: 21.2% (n=127) from Conservative campaigns, 34% (n=204) from Labour and 44.8% (n=269) from the Liberal Democrats. 21.8% (n=131) of responses were from incumbent candidates. 29.7% (n=178) of responses came from marginal constituencies.

As before a further breakdown was obtained by cross-tabulating incumbency and marginality by party affiliation. Responses by incumbents are under-represented in all three parties: the Conservative figure of 24% compared with 29.7% of seats at the close of the 2005 Parliament held by Conservatives, Labour 41.2% compared with 53% of seats and the Liberal Democrats 5.9% compared with 9.7% of seats held. Of the 650 seats contested 26.9% (n=170) were marginal (<10%). Only the Conservatives are close to the national average of marginal seats at (26%) whilst both Labour and the Liberal Democrat responses are disproportionately drawn from safe constituencies.

Table 9: Incumbency And Marginality By Party Affiliation In The 2010 CCS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Incumbent (%)</th>
<th>Marginal (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con</td>
<td>31 (24.4)</td>
<td>33 (26)</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>84 (41.2)</td>
<td>64 (31.4)</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td>16 (5.9)</td>
<td>81 (30.1)</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both the EAS and the CCS reflect sample bias to some extent. In the case of the EAS this was an under-representation of challenging Conservative campaigns. In this instance incumbent campaigns more generally are under-represented, with marginal campaigns over-represented in both the Labour and Liberal Democrat sub-groups. As already discussed, some level of sample bias is almost inevitable in any self-selecting survey and so this must be accounted for when interpreting results where possible whilst at the same time recognising that no survey dataset can perfectly represent reality. The bias in the CCS seems more pronounced than the EAS, and working with this data will to some extent produce less compelling evidence than the EAS analysis. Indeed, the EAS analysis should be seen as taking precedence in the ensuing analytical chapters. However, the CCS adds an interesting missing dimension, that while it must be interpreted conservatively, nevertheless adds to the level of understanding provided by this work.
The EAS is responsible for providing the dependent variable in the analysis: the adoption of interactive web campaign sites. To include this measure in the CCS model required an alternative measure of interactive web campaign site adoption. This was measured through responses to two questions:

*Did you use Twitter during the campaign?*

*Did you campaign using social networking sites?*

Campaigns that responded positively were coded as 1. These questions were then combined into a single binary measure as in the EAS. It should be noted that the CCS derived dependent variables did differ slightly from the EAS version. In particular, the CCS did not ask about video/image sharing sites. This is consequently lost from the CCS derived variable although video/image sharing was not a big factor in site adoption in the EAS data. The distribution of site adoption differs considerably between the EAS and CCS datasets. The CCS reports a notably greater proportion of campaigns adopting sites. There is also a variation in the level of representation between the parties between the EAS and CCS, both in terms of the absolute number of cases, but also in the proportion of campaigns. These inconsistencies are great enough to be of concern, however, this is the best data available for this model and so there is little choice but to work with the revised dependent variable.

**Table 10: Frequency Of Interactive Web Campaign Site Adoption Reported In CCS And EAS Datasets (% Of All Responses)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CCS</th>
<th>EAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con</td>
<td>82 (64.6)</td>
<td>130 (48.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>133 (68.6)</td>
<td>213 (57.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td>192 (74.1)</td>
<td>204 (59.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>407 (70.2)</td>
<td>547 (55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is as important to control in the CCS analysis for the expected effect of offline campaigning, both traditional and modernised. Again this was derived from the EAS so a suitable replacement had to be found from within the CCS. This was harder to replicate in the CCS as it features less detail about the internal workings of campaigns than the EAS. Consequently, only simplified measures of traditional and modern campaigning could be identified. Instead of using indices, two questions that were felt to best represent traditional and modern campaigning were chosen to use as control variables.

Traditional campaigning was measured with the question:

\[ \text{How much time was spent canvassing door to door?} \]

This was answered on a scale of one to five, from no time at all to more than 20 hours.

Modernised campaigning was measured with the question:

\[ \text{How much time was spent direct mailing?} \]

Again this was answered on the same scale of one to five ranging from no time at all to more than 20 hours.

It should also be noted that where the CCS asks about time spent, the EAS asks about effort. So whilst campaigns may spend only a small amount of time on some activities, this might represent a large amount of their effort if the campaign has fewer total resources. Compared with the index approach used for the analysis of the EAS this is an oversimplification, but the CCS lacks the specific questions required to take this kind of index based approach. The inclusion of these single questions represents a compromise, a way to include an element of traditional and modern campaigning into the CCS model allowing access to candidate specific factors, but one that sacrifices a level of detail on the core independent variable, offline campaigning.
METHODS

As with the EAS, the analysis of the CCS dataset follows a pattern of increasing detail and the incorporation of additional details. Given the longevity of the EAS survey and its close integration into the local campaigns literature in the UK it is given priority in reporting. The CCS is not intended to be used as a way to re-evaluate the findings based on the EAS, only as a way to incorporate the candidate level variables missing from it. Analysis of the CCS proceeds in a similar manner to that of the EAS data. Beginning with an analysis based only in the relationship between the offline campaign practice and the adoption of interactive web campaign tools. Control variables are then added to place the relationship in context. As none of the three groups of factors used above were sourced from the EAS data, they can be added into the analysis without fear of identifying participants. The final groups of control variables were the candidate factors outlined below.

CONTROL VARIABLES

The control variables to populate the CCS dataset are largely the same as those used in the EAS model with the addition of four variables: candidates’ age, gender, profession and education. These are summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Age</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>The age of the candidate in years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Gender</td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Candidates’ gender (0=male 1=female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Profession</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Candidates’ profession grouped into three categories: professional/managerial, service and manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Education</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Candidates’ educational attainment grouped into: post-graduate, graduate and sub-degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This section has described the data and methods used in the analysis of the adoption of Web 2.0 sites. The dependent variable for the analysis has come from the 2010 EAS data and is a binary measure of the adoption of Web 2.0 sites. The independent variables considered in this analysis are the levels of traditional and modern campaigning, also derived from the 2010 EAS. These are tested in a statistical model using multivariate logistic regression. Additional control variables are included to account for the influence of a variety of factors found likely to influence campaigns’ use of the web in previous work: party affiliation, electoral factors and socio-economic factors. In addition, candidate factors were also considered. As these were not available from the 2010 EAS data, and the principal investigator of the EAS did not give permission to link the EAS data to other data sets, a separate model was constructed to test candidate factors using data from the 2010 CCS. This was not a replacement for the more detailed EAS, but as a way to evaluate the effects of candidate factors only. This analysis is summarised in the table below. The results of this portion of the analysis are reported in Chapter Four. The next section sets out the same information – data and methods – but for the analysis of the adoption of interactive web features which is reported in Chapter Five.

Table 12: Model Used For The Analysis Of Web 2.0 Site Adoption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional and Modern Campaigning</td>
<td>Web 2.0 Sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Factors</td>
<td>Measured as a binary: adoption or non-adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Factors (tested in an additional model)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Variables of principal interest are shown in bold
EXPLAINING THE ADOPTION OF INTERACTIVE FEATURES (CONTENT ANALYSIS DATA)

The next stage of the analysis was to attempt to explain the levels of interactive web campaigning adoption through modelling the adoption of a more detailed dependent variable: interactive features available in candidates’ web presences. The dependent variable in this analysis was the measure of automated and personal interactive features made available in campaign web presences derived from the content analysis data reported above. The independent variable in this analysis was the level of traditional and modern campaigning derived from the 2010 EAS data also reported above. This analysis sets out to further test the argument put forward in the literature review that traditional campaigning will be positively linked to the adoption of interactive web campaigning. This was specified in H2:

**H0** There will be no association between offline campaigning and web-based campaigns.

**H2** Campaigns that score highly on the traditional index will be more likely to adopt personal interactive web campaign features than campaigns scoring highly on the modern index.

The main independent variables of interest in this analysis are the same as in the previous analysis of Web 2.0 sites – offline campaign practice as measured by two indices, one corresponding to traditional campaign practices, the other modern. To include this variable in the analysis it was necessary to merge the 2010 EAS and content analysis datasets. This was only done with the express permission of the principal investigators on the EAS who provided the required constituency details on condition that the final results were anonymised. Combining the datasets reduced the number of cases available for analysis in the resulting models considerably as to be included a case had to be present in both datasets. This overall pool of cases available for analysis was reduced to 101 and this was lowered further for the CCS model (n=65). The small n, while still statistically valid, limited the explanatory power of the resulting models, producing far weaker models than in the analysis of sites. However, the measures of
offline campaign practice offered by the EAS dataset were a key part of the research design and so it was necessary to work with a lower overall number of cases to incorporate them.

**METHODS**

The analysis then proceeds to test H2, evaluating the relationship between offline campaign practices and the adoption of interactive web campaign features, both automated and personal. However the methods used to achieve this goal deviate considerably from the analysis of sites. In this analysis the dependent variables are two negatively skewed continuous variables (the number dialogue and site-based behaviours) in contrast with the single binary measure of site adoption. To account for this, Poisson regression is used as the basis for analysis rather than logistic regression, on the grounds that the desired outcome is to predict the number of interactive features rather than the likelihood of a binary outcome.\(^\text{11}\) As in Web 2.0 sites analysis the controlling for personal factors in the model required additional data from the CCS dataset.

There are limitations associated with the choice of a continuous dependent variable. Firstly this treats interactive features as cumulative. This is an assumption; a campaign that offers three dialogue features is not necessarily engaging in more dialogue behaviour than a site that only offers one. Although public personal interactivity features can be seen as corresponding to some extent to the use of interactive features, private features and automated features are more circumspect. Secondly there is an issue with mixing measures based on usage (public personal interactive features) and potential usage (private personal interactive features) into a single scale measure. However both these issues were overcome by considering the resulting measure as a more aggregated measure of automated and personal interactive features; the number of features, and to the extent possible, the usage of them is indicative of the campaigns approach to interactivity more generally as represented by the index. A continuous

\(^{11}\) A negative binomial regression was also considered but this was found not to be necessary as analysis showed a significant alpha statistic indicating that a Poisson regression was a better fit for the data.

118
dependent variable represents a compromise, but this is acknowledged in the conclusions and supplemented with further evidence from qualitative data.

**CONTROL VARIABLES**

There is little in the online campaign literature that looks specifically at interactive features as a dependent variable. As a result the independent variables in this analysis replicate those used in the models of Web 2.0 site adoption, drawn from the web campaign adoption literature. In the absence of more specific information there is good reason to expect that the same factors that are likely to influence whether or not a campaign adopts web campaign tools are likely to influence the features it uses when it does go online. They are summarised in Table 13 for the sake of completeness. As with the analysis of sites, the incorporation of candidate factors into the model requires the addition of a parallel CCS model.
Table 13: Control Variables Used In The Analysis Of Interactive Web Campaign Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable type</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party affiliation</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>EAS</td>
<td>Party affiliation: either Conservative, Labour or Lib Dem. This was included as a dummy variable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electoral</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbency</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>2010 British General Election Constituency Results</td>
<td>Whether the candidate was an incumbent, a new candidate replacing a sitting MP in a constituency where the party is incumbent. This was included as a dummy variable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginality</td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>2010 British General Election Constituency Results</td>
<td>Marginal constituency with less than 5% majority for winning campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-economic context</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural/Retirement</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>2001 Census</td>
<td>Index based on PCA variables: % retired, % owner occupied, % agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban/Depravation</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>2001 Census</td>
<td>Index based on PCA variables % no qualifications, % manufacturing, % non manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White population</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>2001 Census</td>
<td>% none-white population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Age</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>The age of the candidate in years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Gender</td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Candidates’ gender (0=Male 1=Female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Profession</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Candidates’ profession grouped into three categories: professional/managerial, service and manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Education</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Candidates’ educational attainment grouped into: post-graduate, graduate and sub-degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY

This section has described the data and methods used in the analysis of the adoption of interactive features. Whereas the analysis of Web 2.0 site adoption used wide-ranging secondary datasets, this analysis expands on this to develop a more in-depth dependent variable, the use of interactive web campaign features by campaigns. So whilst the dependent variable in the analysis of sites was based on uptake of particular sites considered to be more interactive, this chapter looks at the range of interactive features on offer from campaigns across their web campaign presence, drawing a distinction between different forms of interactivity. The independent variables in this analysis remain the same as for the analysis of site adoption – traditional and modern campaigning. Finally, the same control variables used in the analysis of Web 2.0 sites were also used here in order to control for other factors thought to influence the adoption of interactive web campaigning. The final model is summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional campaign index</td>
<td>Automated Interactive Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern campaign index</td>
<td>Personal Interactive Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Affiliation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Factors (included in a separate model based on CCS dataset)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Variables of principal interest are shown in **bold**

This analysis concludes the quantitative portion of this work. The aim has been to offer two different but complimentary approaches to the concept of interactive web campaigning: Web 2.0 sites and interactive features. The results of these analyses are reported in Chapters Four (Web 2.0 sites) and Five (interactive features). Chapter Six moves beyond the quantitative analysis and gives campaigners the opportunity to...
explain their approach to web campaigning in their own words based on a series of interviews. So while the quantitative provides the ‘big picture’, what follows enables a more granulated and thicker explanation at the cost of the ability to generalise the results beyond the cases considered.
WHY CAMPAIGN ONLINE? QUALITATIVE DATA

So far this thesis has considered the research question through a quantitative approach: the level of and the factors underlying adoption of Web 2.0 sites using a national level secondary dataset (the EAS) and researcher collected data in the form of content analysis. Using more detailed data has reduced the number of cases available for analysis, but allowed for a more detailed dependent variable, focussing not on sites as a whole, but the use of specific, interactive features. This analysis aims to triangulate and extend the findings of the previous analyses by exploring campaigners’ own opinions on the adoption of interactive web campaigning. Unlike the previous analysis, this analysis does not test specific hypotheses, but instead it seeks to follow up the key relationships of interest uncovered in previous analyses. Pending the findings about an association of traditional campaigns with higher levels of interactive campaigning, this chapter looks for cases that allow further exploration of these relationships. Should those expectations not be supported this work then seeks to select cases that allow us to probe more deeply the relationships of interest that are observed. In the first instance, however, this work is interested in those campaigns that adopt Web 2.0 sites and demonstrate some level of interactivity. In addition to offline campaign factors, other control variables are also included in the questionnaire that formed the basis of interviews: party affiliation, electoral factors, socio-economic factors and candidate factors. During interviews subjects were encouraged to extemporise and give their own interpretations of the factors that led them to use interactive web campaigning. The questionnaire is available as Appendix B. The following section sets out the parameters of the qualitative data used, including: case selection, questionnaire design and the methods used in the analysis of the data.
INTERVIEW DATA

The interview data collected was designed to add a fresh perspective on the research question dealing with the levels of adoption of and the factors underpinning the adoption of interactive web campaigns by campaigns. Much of the value of qualitative data rests on the theoretical basis for the selection of subjects. Interviews with subjects can only illustrate the circumstances of that particular case and it is difficult to generalise from specific instances to wider findings. A strong case selection method can help mitigate this limitation by offering up cases that can represent specific campaign types. The overarching aim of case selection was to identify cases that:

- Provided examples of the different campaigns suggested by the analytical framework: predominantly modernised, predominantly traditional or examples of mixed or high-intensity campaigns.
- Had used interactive web campaigning in some form during the 2010 campaign (either on the basis of self-reported tool use or had been identified as using interactive features through content analysis data).
- For which potential subjects could be identified and were cooperative.

The subjects of interest were those that had been candidates at the 2010 General election, or those that had worked on campaigns in an organisational role. In practice the first point of contact with a campaign was usually a candidate as they were the most readily identifiable. Subjects were then asked to suggest further possible interview subjects following the interview, allowing the selection of subjects to ‘snowball’. In total six campaigns participated to some extent in the study. In two cases additional interviews were secured with campaign workers. To protect the identity of participants, campaigns are represented by a letter. The list of selected cases is summarised below along with their political affiliation, their score on the traditional or modern index and the individual subjects interviewed.
Due to the need to make informed case selections, based on the results of the quantitative analyses, the interviews were conducted over a seven-month period in 2011/12. This of course may have introduced some inaccuracies with accounts due to recall problems. However, given the subjects were candidates and the questions focused on reasoning and motivations for web use rather than the practicalities and logistics of the campaign this was not seen as a fundamental problem. The interviews were based around a 34-point questionnaire (Appendix B) but were semi-structured and deviated from the questionnaire substantially depending on the subject and how much time was available for the interview. In each case every effort was made to cover the salient points. The questionnaire was in three sections dealing with: the subject’s background and role in the campaign, the subject’s knowledge of the campaign offline and on the web and finally the subject’s perception of the campaign organisation. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

### Methods

The main focus of this analysis was the justifications for and reasoning behind the adoption of interactive web campaigning by campaigns, either in the form of Web 2.0 sites or the use of interactive web campaign features. In particular this chapter set out to approach the findings of previous analysis from a different perspective, supporting or challenging the findings of statistical analysis. This was done through an analysis of the justifications given by campaigns for their online activities. Data was not as structured as in previous analyses as a result of working with qualitative rather than quantitative data but this did not mean that analysis was not rigorous or systematic. Rather than let

### Table 15: Case Selection For Chapter Six

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Trad.</th>
<th>Mod.</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>LD</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Candidate and campaign worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>LD</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Candidate and campaign manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Con</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Con</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the analytical framework be dictated entirely by the conversation (requiring a non-structured interview) the questionnaire employed provided a level of structure to the data as it included direct references to the factors of interest: party affiliation, electoral factors, socio-economic factors and candidate factors. However, the reason for addressing the research questions using interview data is to provide subjects with the opportunity to add their own voices to the data, possibly to add new perspectives and offer up new explanations for the adoption of interactive web campaigning not accessible through (the available) quantitative data. To enable this, subjects were given space within interviews to offer up their own explanations for the web campaign without prompting by the researcher. Despite the presence of a number of factors already thought of as being important, there was every likelihood that the subject would offer up factors not previously considered. As a result analysis of the qualitative data was done through a process akin to grounded theory analysis (Bryman, 2001). Different explanations were extracted from the data and grouped under headings only after the data had been analysed. This should not be considered wholly a grounded theory approach as the questions themselves were set up in such a way as to speak to the hypothesised relationships between the independent and dependent variables set out above, so this was not solely an inductive process. In addition to socially-shaped and candidate factors included in quantitative analyses, this approach offered up a further group of factors beyond the social factors already considered, termed here technological determinist. These were further grouped into two sub headings, instrumental and symbolic. These are described more full in the reporting of this analysis in Chapter Six, but are précised here for convenience.
Table 16: Analytical Framework For Chapter Six

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Shaping</th>
<th>Technologically Determinist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offline campaign</strong>: either traditional or modern as measured by the traditional and modern indices</td>
<td><strong>Instrumental explanations</strong>: opportunities that the technology brings to focus on new voter outreach methods that were not previously priorities for the campaign such as the way it allows them to bring in a more participatory aspect to the campaign, or to reach certain voter groups they had not targeted before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Party affiliation</strong>: including the party’s ideological outlook and relative size</td>
<td><strong>Symbolic arguments</strong>: adoption of interactive web campaigning as an end in itself, i.e. it affords the campaign with a particular outlook or the appearance of modernity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electoral factors</strong>: incumbency, marginality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constituency factors</strong>: the socio-economic profile of the constituency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate factors</strong>: the personal background of candidate including previous campaigns and work experience (note this is considered to be distinct from social shaping, see literature review)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main limitation of working with qualitative data is that each case can only tell us about itself, it cannot be used as the basis for wider generalisations in the same way that quantitative analysis can; any conclusions reached on the basis of this analysis will be limited by this. In addition, the case studies chosen here will reflect a similar bias to the EAS and CCS datasets in that subjects are self-selecting. Candidates and campaigners that chose to respond to interview requests may have different qualities to those that do not. In particular, subjects that agree to be interviewed about web campaigning are likely to be those already interested in web campaigning. These subjects cannot be considered ‘typical’ and this limits our ability to generalise from the data. However, the qualitative data is the best possible way to get the kind of detailed information required in order to understand the factors influencing campaigns that cannot be represented quantitatively, in addition it enables the re-evaluation of earlier analytical frameworks and the re-testing of previous findings.
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All research involving human subjects at any stage comes with an attached ethical responsibility to the well-being of subjects and the researcher. This project was granted ethical approval by the University of Manchester Ethics Committee on 17 May 2010 subject to a number of conditions. Following the completion of these additional conditions final ethical approval was received 12 August 2010. Further minor amendments were made 29 November 2010 to reflect changes in to the research. As part of this process a detailed statement of ethical considerations was made to the committee. Salient points of this have been summarised below grouped by the type of data used.

SECONDARY DATA

The ethical considerations of the use of secondary data are mainly concerned with preserving the anonymity of survey respondents both during the research and subsequent publications. Both the 2010 EAS and 2010 CCS datasets released to the researcher contain no personal information relating to the respondents. However, details of election agents are a matter of public record, so any geographic references in the data, combined with party affiliation, can be traced back to individual agents. As a result, the data set was treated as being confidential despite the lack of personal identifiers in it. The data set was not shared with other researchers, the data was kept securely in a locked draw in the researcher’s office, and specific cases were not identified in reporting, except where absolutely necessary, and then only to the researcher’s immediate supervisory team and not in published work. In addition, the researcher respected all limitations placed on the use of personally identifiable information placed on the dataset by principal investigators, e.g. in not linking EAS and CCS datasets.
Online campaign web presences are publically available, and so there can be no expectation of confidentiality in reporting them. However, combing the content analysis data with measures from the EAS and CCS added a layer of complexity. As with secondary data, any geographic information about a constituency combined with party affiliation, could, with enough effort, be traced back to the specific agent who responded. In recognition of this, and to maintain consistency with other analyses, specific constituency information has not been reported in this work.

INTERVIEW DATA

The use of interview data has a number of ethical concerns in that it deals directly with human subjects as opposed to using either secondary data or data collected by the researcher from publically available sources. Of paramount concern in this portion of the work was ensuring the wellbeing of both participants and the researcher, this took the form of: obtaining consent ensuring the anonymity of participants, secure storage of sensitive data, and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of both the subjects and the researcher. Firstly, as the interview process dealt directly with human subjects, informed consent was required before it could go ahead. This was obtained by way of a participant information and consent form reprinted here in blank form (Appendices C and D). The data collected was anonymised. Personal details were left out of the transcribed conversations, as were geographical locations and any other information that could personally identify the subject. The recorded conversations were stored securely on a password protected USB drive encrypted using the University of Manchester’s specified encryption software, and was not made available to other researchers.\footnote{The University of Manchester recommends sensitive information be encrypted using TrueCrypt, free, open-source disk encryption software. See \url{http://www.truecrypt.org/} for more information.} The majority of the subjects interviewed were either former candidates, sitting MPs or experienced campaigners, and as such are used to interview situations and unlikely to be adversely affected by questioning. All were made aware of the research and its goals as
well as their right to withdraw their consent at anytime. As a further measure to ensure the comfort of subjects, they were allowed to review transcripts of conversations and delete (but not amend) any information they felt to be in error. Although this is obviously less than ideal from a research standpoint, it is a better option than subjects withdrawing consent post interview. Consideration was also given to the researcher’s safety; the researcher’s supervisory team was kept informed of where and when the researcher would be meeting subjects. Following each interview the researcher informed the supervisory team that he was safe.
CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has built on the arguments made in the earlier Literature Review to create a solid basis for inquiry. This chapter has set out the methodological standpoint of this study, locating it firmly within the behavioural tradition of political science, seeking to develop a rigorous and systematic understanding of web campaigning, at the constituency level in the UK. At the same time this chapter has also recognised that web campaigning is a dynamic field and is still developing. In particular the emergence of Web 2.0 is a continuing process and research, and the available data, is struggling to keep up with technological change.

The central research question is in two parts: measuring the adoption of interactive web campaigning and then explaining it. Measuring the adoption of interactive web campaigning is done in two ways. Firstly data from a survey of electoral agents (2010 EAS) is used to measure the use of Web 2.0 sites by campaigns during the 2010 campaign. This offers a wide-ranging approach to interactive web campaigning, incorporating a large number of cases. Following this, a more detailed measure of a campaign’s use of specific interactive features is developed based on content analysis data taken from the North West region of England. This is a more focused analysis as the addition of a more detailed measure reduces the number of cases that can be considered.

The explanatory portion of the research question uses the measures established above as the dependent variables in further analysis of why campaigns use interactive web campaigning. The measure of Web 2.0 sites is a binary measure and is used as the dependent variable in a multivariate logistic regression. In order to test H1, the independent variables in this analysis are the traditional and modernised indices of campaigning which are based on campaigns’ responses on the 2010 EAS data. Further control variables are included based on publically available data such as the census and electoral data. Candidate factors were not available either in the 2010 EAS or publically, and so the 2010 CCS dataset was used to account for the influence of these factors on Web 2.0 site adoption. As these datasets could not be combined, this took the form of a separate analysis of candidate factors, although every effort was made to
include additional factors to match the EAS model so as to place the influence of candidate factors in context.

Explaining the adoption of interactive features was approached using a similar mix of independent and control variables. The principal difference between the analysis of sites and of interactive features was the dependent variable. Rather than a binary variable, the measure of interactive features was in the form of two negatively skewed count variables, one of automated interactivity, another of personal. This required a Poisson regression for analysis to account for the negative skew. A negative binomial regression was considered but this was found not to be necessary.

Finally, the study of explanations through statistical analysis is limited to factors that can be represented numerically. Both as way to triangulate the results of statistical analysis but also to allow for factors not included in the data, qualitative data was also included in the analysis. This was collected from a series of candidates and campaign workers that took part in the 2010 campaign. They were asked a variety of questions about the digital campaign and the reasons for it. These were semi-structured interviews and so subjects were encouraged to expand on their answers or go off-topic where they felt it appropriate. The interviews were transcribed and analysed in a similar manner to grounded theory analysis in order to identify common themes.

In addition to setting out the design of this research project, this Chapter has also summarised the ethical considerations of this research, including the need to preserve confidentiality both in day-to-day research work and finished publications.

Overall, this provides a robust approach for dealing with the research question identified in the Literature Review by drawing on a range of data and methods. In the first instance it will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the levels of interactive web campaign adoption by looking at sites, features and descriptions of web presences offered by campaigns themselves. Secondly, this design will allow for an evaluation of the factors that drive interactive web campaigning and for the testing of the central argument of this work: that the web campaign will be moulded by campaigns to meet their existing needs and that this will lead to an association between offline campaign
practices and the web campaign. In testing this hypothesis, this work will deploy a newly developed framework for measuring the extent of traditional and modernised campaign practices in constituency campaigns. In addition it controls for several additional variables offered up by literature, including factors linked to campaigning as an institution and those linked to candidates themselves.

These analyses are reported in the following three analysis chapters (Four, Five and Six). Chapter Four deals with the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, addressing both parts of the research question: measurement and explanation. Chapter Five repeats this for the adoption of interactive features. Chapter Six concentrates mainly on the factors that drive the adoption of interactive web campaigning through the analysis of qualitative data.

### Table 17: Reporting Of Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Operationalisation</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Measurement &amp; explanation</td>
<td>Web 2.0 sites</td>
<td>2010 EAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2010 CCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Measurement &amp; explanation</td>
<td>Interactive features</td>
<td>Content Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2010 EAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>201 CCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Web 2.0 sites &amp; interactive features</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next chapter (Four) begins to implement this outline and forms the starting point for the analytical portion of this thesis. Chapter Four addresses the central research questions through the use of secondary data collected in a number of surveys. The dependent variable is a binary measure of the adoption of Web 2.0 sites and provides scope for analysis based on a large number of cases.
The central research question in this work is in two parts. Firstly, it asks about the levels of interactive web campaigning, secondly, it asks why campaigns are adopting interactive web campaigning. This chapter addresses both parts of this question by operationalising the concept of interactive web campaigning as the adoption of Web 2.0 sites. Web 2.0 sites are defined here as services based on the architecture of participation; with content provided by users rather than developers. In the context of constituency level campaigns in the 2010 UK General Election this means the use of services such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube. The aim of this chapter is to firstly measure the levels of Web 2.0 site adoption amongst constituency campaigns and then, by way of explanation, to test H1, which predicts a relationship between the adoption of Web 2.0 sites and the index of traditional campaigning.

H0 There will be no association between offline and web based campaigns.

H1 Campaigns that score highly on the traditional index will be more likely to adopt interactive web campaign sites than campaigns scoring highly on the modern index.

For H1 to be supported, the findings of this analysis would need to show both a positive relationship between the traditional index and the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, and that this relationship was stronger than for the modern index. If the findings do not show this then the null hypothesis, that there is no relationship, will be supported. If H1 is supported it would suggest that traditional campaigning is being supported by interactive web campaigning to a greater extent than modernised campaigning. This in turn provides evidence to answer wider research questions about interactive web campaigning as a remedy to party decline and the relationship between offline and online campaign forms.

The data used to measure the use of Web 2.0 sites and to test the hypothesis come from a variety of sources. The initial measurement of Web 2.0 site adoption is derived from the 2010 EAS data, which is a survey of electoral agents carried out in the aftermath of
the campaign. This measure is then used as the main dependent variable for the subsequent analysis. The main independent variables of interest are the levels of traditional and modern campaigning as represented by the indices outlined in the data and methods chapter above. These are also derived from the 2010 EAS. Control variables come from a variety of sources, including the 2001 Census and publicly available information on campaign performance (e.g. marginality, incumbency and affiliation). Further personal information about the candidates comes from the 2010 Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS), although the use of this data was limited by ethical considerations.

Analysis in this chapter follows two stages: measuring the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, testing the independent variables and the addition of control variables. It begins by addressing the first portion of the research question with a descriptive analysis of Web 2.0 site adoption by campaigns as reported in the 2010 EAS data. This is the first opportunity to assess the scale of Web 2.0 use by campaigns during the election and will hopefully provide a baseline for further research in this area. Following the exploratory analysis the chapter addresses the explanatory portion of the research question by testing H1 through statistical analysis focused on the relationship between the traditional and modern indices and the adoption of Web 2.0. The binary dependent variable lends itself to the use of logistic regression, a form of analysis designed to predict the influence of independent variables on the likelihood of a case falling into one of two categories (Field, 2009). Following testing of the main independent variables, a number of control variables are then considered. These consist of factors identified previously in the literature and thought to be influential on the adoption of web campaigning more generally, although they have not been applied specifically to Web 2.0. These include: party affiliation, the electoral situation, constituency factors and various factors related to the candidate. Candidate factors were not available from the EAS dataset and so are drawn from the CCS data and tested in an additional model (see Data and Methods).

The advantage of an approach based on secondary data with a streamlined dependent variable is the large number of cases and the opportunity for broad based systematic analysis using statistical techniques. This chapter forms the first part of the wider work
and should be viewed as a starting point for answering the research question. Chapter Five develops the methods used in Chapter Four but looks at the concept of interactive web campaigns in greater detail, creating a more nuanced dependent variable. Chapter Six will explore the reasoning behind web campaigns in greater detail.
MEASURING WEB 2.0 SITE ADOPTION

The starting point for this thesis is an exploratory approach to web campaigning in the 2010 election campaign designed to measure the levels of adoption of Web 2.0 sites. This takes the form of a descriptive analysis focusing primarily on the adoption of Web 2.0 sites by constituency campaigns, although it starts with a brief analysis of Web 1.0 adoption to provide greater context.

WEB 1.0 IN THE 2010 GENERAL ELECTION

The EAS data shows use of Web 1.0 sites, sites not built on the architecture of participation, was common at the local level during the 2010 general election with 79.3% of EAS respondents reporting that they used either a local party or a candidate website over the course of the election. This can be compared with the results for the same question on the 2005 iteration of the EAS, showing an 18% increase in the use of campaign websites between 2005 and 2010. Despite the high levels of adoption Web 1.0 is not considered further in this chapter for a number of reasons. Firstly, the focus here is on the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, which are designed around contributions from users; Web 1.0 sites do not fit into this definition. This is not to say that Web 1.0 sites cannot be used interactively, only that this possibility is not considered in this chapter. A more in-depth measure of interactive features, including Web 1.0, is developed in the following chapter. Secondly, the level of adoption is very high, and while the 20% of campaigns without a Web 1.0 presence is an interesting sub-group it may present difficulties for analysis. Finally, there is a strong likelihood that this figure underrepresents website use by campaigns. Each of the three main parties maintained online directories of candidates that in many cases appeared to be autonomous of the campaign, so the actual level of website use may be higher than reported by agents, leaving even less variation to analyse.
A more nuanced measure of website use is also available, although only for the 2010 data, recording the level of effort that went into operating and maintaining websites both prior to and during the short campaign. Responses were given on a five point Likert scale ranging from ‘very little/none’ to ‘very substantial’. Comparing the two time points, there are two trends. Firstly, the number of campaigns reporting very little or some effort increased between the inter and intra-campaign periods, indicating that as the short campaign got under way some campaigns that were not doing much before began to expend more effort on their websites. At the same time, some of the highly active campaigns dedicated less effort to their websites. The figure for those campaigns expending ‘none/very little effort’ on their websites remains relatively constant, suggesting that these are campaigns without a Web 1.0 presence. This figure is also

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13 NB: The short campaign is the period in between the dissolution of Parliament and the election-day considered to be the formal campaign period. In many cases candidates will be aware of an election far in advance as was the case for the 2010 election, but this may not be the case in the event of a snap election. In 2010 Parliament was dissolved on 12 April, and the election took place on May 6 giving a short campaign period of 24 days.
close to the number of campaigns reporting that they did not have a website, further supporting this idea.

Figure 4: Campaign Effort Maintaining A Website Pre-Campaign And During The Campaign (Pre-Campaign N=1060 During Campaign N=1026)

Conceptually, email differs significantly from both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, principally because it is not a web-based application, but an internet-based one. Sending email requires access to the internet but not the web; the web is a separate application. The increasing prevalence of webmail services such as Hotmail and Gmail have blurred this distinction, but email needs to be considered as a separate technology. Most importantly, the availability of email pre-dates the availability of the web, leading to a different process of socialisation between users and the technology that may lead it to fulfil a very different role in campaigning from either Web 1.0 or Web 2.0 sites. Nevertheless, including email at the exploratory stage does offer a wider perspective on which to base conclusions. Based on the EAS, around a third (32.1%) of respondents used email as a tool to contact voters, with far more using email as a tool for contacting campaign workers (68.3%). This suggests that email is more a tool for organisation than it is for campaigning, but still represents an important component of campaigns.
In summary Web 1.0 campaign tools were extremely common during the 2010 election, with nearly four out of every five campaigns having used Web 1.0. This marks a considerable increase from 2005. There was some evidence of variation between the pre- and intra- campaign periods, suggesting that campaigns normalised their efforts around a middle point as the campaign went on. There was also evidence to suggest that email, whilst different from the web, was an important tool for campaigns but was used more for organisation inside campaign organisations than for campaigning.

WEB 2.0 SITE ADOPTION IN THE 2010 GENERAL ELECTION

Web 2.0 is a more complex tool than Web 1.0, consisting of a number of services rather than a single identifiable platform. To some extent analysis was constrained by the questions included in the EAS which covers three areas that can be considered Web 2.0: a question on social networks, a question specifically on Twitter and finally a question covering the use of video/image sharing services such as Flickr and YouTube.
The EAS did not ask a yes/no question on the use of social networks, but instead asked respondents to rate their effort on a five-point Likert scale. Overall, 48.4% of respondents rated their effort using social networks as ‘little effort’ or greater (i.e. scores of 2 and above). This question was asked for both inter and intra-campaign periods. Compared to Web 1.0 there is a relatively uniform drop off in the transition from pre-campaign to during the campaign, with an increase in the proportion of respondents reporting ‘very little/none’ effort and a reduction in all other effort categories. This suggests as the campaign progressed over time some campaigns reduced the effort they expended on social media, presumably to invest it in activities seen as more beneficial.

**Figure 6: Effort Using Social Media: Pre-Campaign And During The Campaign**
(Pre Campaign N=1057 During The Campaign N=1035)

![Effort using social networking services](chart)

The EAS also included a separate item on the use of micro-blogging service Twitter that was recorded separately on a three-point scale (no use, a little, substantial use). This variation in scale makes a direct comparison with social networks difficult, but grouping the ‘little’ and ‘substantial’ categories together indicates that 26.7% of respondents had some kind of a Twitter presence, far lower than social networks.
Video and image sharing sites were also reported on a Likert scale. Overall they were less popular campaign tools than social network sites, but comparable with Twitter, with less than a quarter of respondents indicating any effort level above ‘very little/none’. The proportion of responses also tails off towards the higher categories, with only 2.4% of campaigns ranking video and image sharing effort as ‘very substantial’.
In summary, Web 2.0 services are more complex than Web 1.0, with a number of elements measured through the EAS questionnaire. Social networking is by far the most common activity, followed by Twitter and video and image sharing services. Given the novelty of Web 2.0 sites, the level of adoption has been substantial, and Web 2.0 sites are playing some role in a large number of campaigns, although the exact nature of this role is still to be investigated. On the basis of these measures, Web 2.0 is indeed leading to the presence of more interactive websites within campaign web presence, although this is far from conclusive evidence of interactive web campaigning.

Aside from measuring Web 2.0 site adoption at constituency level, this exploratory work forms the basis for further analysis designed to test H1. Crucially it provides the dependent variable: Web 2.0 site adoption. For this analysis Web 2.0 adoption is a binary variable, and so the three Web 2.0 questions on the EAS were reduced to a single binary variable. Any answer that indicated some level of Web 2.0 use (‘little effort’ or higher for social networking and video/image sharing and ‘a little’ or higher for Twitter) was coded as a campaign being positive for Web 2.0 adoption. Using this method, 52.7% of respondents had some element of Web 2.0 in their web presence. The next step was to begin to model Web 2.0 adoption in relation to the two independent variables: traditional and modern campaigning, thereby testing H1.
EXPLAINING WEB 2.0 SITE ADOPTION

The exploratory analysis of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 adoption by campaigns in 2010 is encouraging as it shows that Web 2.0 was common in 2010, but by no means universal. There is sufficient variation in the sample to make further analysis worthwhile. The second portion of the research question calls for a more explanatory approach to the question of interactive web campaigning; asking why campaigns use these tools. This section addresses this by testing the hypothesis (H1) set out earlier, and compares the influence of score on traditional and modern campaign indices on the adoption of Web 2.0. H1 predicts a positive relationship between the traditional index and the adoption of Web 2.0 sites. It also states that this relationship should be stronger than for modernised campaigning. This can be tested through the use of logistic regression, which can be used to show the influence of the traditional and modern indices on the likelihood of a case adopting Web 2.0. These results are reported in table 18 below.

The expected relationship between traditional index and Web 2.0 adoption is present, with every additional point on the traditional index increasing the likelihood of a campaign adopting Web 2.0. Based on this, there is a connection between traditional campaigns and Web 2.0 in line with the argument advanced in the Literature Review. Crucially however, the same relationship is present for modernised campaigns and is slightly stronger (coefficient is .04 compared with .02). Both are significant, at the <0.5 level for traditional <0.1 for modernised. So there is better support for a modernised - Web 2.0 connection. For example, based on this model a hypothetical campaign with a high traditional index score of 130 and an average modern index score of 100 would have an approximate 69% probability of adopting Web 2.0. A campaign scoring high on the modern index (130) and average on the traditional (100) would have an 80% probability of adopting Web 2.0 in some form. On the basis of these findings it is not possible to fully support H1.
Table 18: Logistic Regression Of Web 2.0 Adoption (Traditional And Modern Indices) In The 2010 General Election (N=969)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B (S.E.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>0.020 (.008)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernised</td>
<td>0.040 (.008)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.814 (0.787)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2 log likelihood 1270.454
Cox & Snell R² 0.064
Nagelkerke R² 0.086

* p<.1 ** p<.05 ***p<.01

A further concern was that, as traditional and modernised campaigning indices were not mutually exclusive, that their effect may be in combination with one another rather than related to each individual index. Principal Components Analysis shows that there is good reason to treat these indices as distinct phenomena (see Appendix A) but as a further check to ensure that this analysis is not underestimating their influence in combination with one another a further analysis was run with an interaction term between the traditional and modernised indices. This was not significant and so the influence of the traditional and modernised indices can indeed be viewed as separate and distinct from one another rather than as part of a combined intensity effect.

Before it is possible to fully interpret these results, further analysis is needed. The overall explanatory power of the model is low as shown by the low R² values (ranging from .08 to .06). Including just the traditional and modern campaign indices explains only a fraction in the variation of the adoption of Web 2.0. It may still be the case that Web 2.0 adoption can be explained by another factor suggested by the literature. The next stage of the analysis was to incorporate additional control variables to the model to account for this possibility.
INCLUDING CONTROL VARIABLES

There is evidence to suggest that a more fully specified model may better predict the adoption of Web 2.0. Firstly, the low residual values ($R^2$) suggest that there may be other factors at work. Secondly, it is not clear that the significance of offline campaigning will persist when other factors are controlled for. The literature review identified four groups of factors that could possibly influence the adoption of Web 2.0: organisational factors, electoral factors, socio-economic factors and candidate factors. With the exception of candidate factors (see below) these were added to the model using a hierarchical entry method (Field, 2009). This method requires a choice be made about the relative importance of each of the variables that reflects their perceived theoretical importance. In this instance organisational factors were felt most likely to be the strongest predictor, followed by electoral factors and socio-economic factors. This resulted in the following models. Model 1 is identical to the model considered above and includes only the traditional and modernised campaign indices. Model two incorporates party affiliation, model three electoral factors and model four socio-economic factors.
Table 19: Logistic Regression Of Web 2.0 Adoption (Traditional And Modern Indices And Control Variables) In The 2010 General Election (N=969)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>.020 (.008)**</td>
<td>0.033 (.009)***</td>
<td>.039 (.009)***</td>
<td>.039 (.009)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernised</td>
<td>.040 (.008)***</td>
<td>0.038 (.009)***</td>
<td>.041 (.009) ***</td>
<td>.040 (.009)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>.389 (.179)**</td>
<td>.445 (.183)***</td>
<td>.431 (.184)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib-Dem</td>
<td>.840 (.189)***</td>
<td>.730 (.195)***</td>
<td>.735 (.195)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalists</td>
<td>-.037 (.323)</td>
<td>-.235 (.334)</td>
<td>-.287 (.339)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenger (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent candidate</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.554 (.185)***</td>
<td>-.565 (.186)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent party only</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.296 (.336)</td>
<td>-.312 (.340)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe seat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal seat (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.372 (.194)*</td>
<td>.328 (.197)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban deprived</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.097 (.072)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural retirement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.173 (.085)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.016 (.008)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.814 (.787)***</td>
<td>-7.319 (.872)***</td>
<td>-8.075 (.946)***</td>
<td>-7.947 (.953)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>1270.454</td>
<td>1247.653</td>
<td>1233.665</td>
<td>1227.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox &amp; Snell R²</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke R²</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.1 ** p<.05 ***p<.01
Traditional and modern indices remain at a similar level of significance and size of effect throughout the analysis, although the size of the coefficient does increase for the traditional index with the addition of party affiliation and campaign factors, suggesting that there may be some slight correlation between score on traditional index and campaign position and affiliation. However, this does not substantively alter the findings in the wider analysis. The change in the -2 log likelihood should also be noted. This serves as an indicator of the strength of the model, and the reduction with the inclusion of additional variables shows gradual improvement in the model. The final notable finding is the R² value, which increases with the addition of the control variables, but neither measure (Cox & Snell or Nagelkerke) indicates that the model has strong explanatory power.

**ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS**

Party affiliation was felt likely to have the strongest impact and so was included first in the model. There is good reason to include party affiliation as a control variable from previous empirical study alone with a number finding party affiliation to be a significant factor in the adoption of websites (Carlson and Djupsund, 2001; Gibson & McAllister, 2006; Gibson et al, 2008a). There was also a strong sense historically that parties in the UK have their own distinct style. The Conservative Party was noted as being amongst the first to introduce modernised campaign techniques to the UK (Scammel, 2005). In addition there is some evidence of the Conservatives paying close attention to the Obama campaign’s successful use of the web (Crabtree, 2010). Alternatively, the federal structure of the Liberal Democrats and recent experiments with online policy making (Lilleker et al, 2010) are good enough reason to expect that Liberal Democrat campaigns may be more likely to use Web 2.0 sites. There are additional reasons to include party affiliation as a priority control variable as it will help control for variation introduced by the agents filling out the survey, each of which is a member of a party themselves. It may also reflect variation caused by differing party circumstances, with the Lib-Dems in particular likely to maintain a large number of paper candidates.
The EAS includes data for five parties: Conservative, Labour, Lib-Dem, SNP and Plaid Cymru. There was a far smaller return for the nationalist parties than the other parties (SNP = 30, Plaid = 21) and so they were collapsed into a single category in order to provide a meaningful sample for analysis and to retain the larger party campaigns in Scotland and Wales in the analysis. Party affiliation was included as a categorical variable, with the Conservative Party used as a reference category. Coefficients show the likelihood of Web 2.0 adoption compared to the Conservative Party.

The model shows that both Labour and the Liberal Democrats were significantly more likely to adopt Web 2.0 compared to the Conservative Party. The coefficient is stronger for the Liberal Democrats, indicating a stronger effect. There was no significant relationship for nationalist parties (Plaid Cymru and SNP). The stronger coefficient for Labour and the Liberal Democrats indicates that there is variation in Web 2.0 site adoption by party. The stronger effect in the case of the Liberal Democrats could reflect the federalised structure and the perceived autonomy of candidates. This same argument is unlikely to apply to the Labour Party. It could also be the case that both Labour and the Lib-Dems promoted the adoption more strongly within their own parties than the Conservatives. In either event, this result points to the existence of clear party styles of interactive web campaigning.

**ELECTORAL FACTORS**

The second group of control variables were those related to electoral factors. Previous work has looked at both incumbency status and marginality finding various results, in several cases incumbency and political experience were not a significant factor (Carlson & Djupsund, 2001; Gibson & McAllister, 2006). Other studies have found that a close race was more likely to result in a web campaign (Herrnson et al, 2007; Ward & Gibson, 2003). Sitting MPs can be theorised as having a distinct advantage in local campaigns in that they have easy access to press and mainstream media, in some cases even access to national media beyond the immediate locality. Challengers are at a disadvantage and so the availability of the web as a way to bypass conventional media may make it an attractive option. Equally, challengers are also likely to be less sensitive
to the risks of Web 2.0 for political candidates, and able to overlook the potential for hijacking and gaffes as they may see themselves as having less to lose and as being under less scrutiny. As well as incumbency, tight races may stimulate Web 2.0 use as campaigns will be keen to throw everything they can into the campaign mix, including experimental Web 2.0 tools. Equally, the focus a tight race would generate may give campaigns an easier time generating the critical mass and networks required to get a Web 2.0 campaign off the ground. An increase in mainstream media attention may also result in a rise in online attention. Alternatively, the same scrutiny could be a negative pressure on the adoption of Web 2.0. A close race also leads to greater central party attention and the kind of message centred, risk averse campaign that is a poor fit for Web 2.0 campaign tools and that can be somewhat chaotic. By the same token, this may make less tight races more open to Web 2.0 campaigning as candidates with little to lose in electoral terms see Web 2.0 as a way to tip the balance in their favour.

Electoral factors were included in the model as follows. Firstly, a categorical variable was created to distinguish between incumbent candidates, challengers and new candidates standing in a constituency where the party was already incumbent i.e. replacing a retiring MP. The reference category was challenging candidates. It was thought particularly important to distinguish between existing incumbents and those replacing retiring MPs given the high number of retiring MPs at the 2010 election as result of the 2009 expenses scandal. Secondly, a binary variable was created to represent marginal constituencies, those with a margin of victory in 2005 of less than 5%. This represents a decision to consider marginality at a geographic rather than an individual level, i.e. measuring the marginality of the constituency as a whole rather than that of individual campaigns. This was done to capture the nature of the race as a whole, even third place campaigns in these constituencies would be under greater scrutiny and benefit from greater media attention as a result than in non-close races. An alternative approach would have been to measure the vote share of individual campaigns, creating in effect a combined typology of incumbency and marginality (safe incumbent, vulnerable incumbent and so on). In this instance it was thought more important to capture the wider constituency situation than the situation for individual campaigns. The possibility of incorporating an interaction effect was considered, but
following the limited significance of the main effects of these variables this was not pursued.

The model shows a strong effect for incumbency, with incumbent candidates less likely to adopt Web 2.0 sites than either challengers or seats where the party is incumbent but the candidate is replacing a sitting MP. This supports the idea of a degree of risk aversity in incumbent candidates (Stromer-Galley, 2000; Chadwick, 2006). This was not present for candidates replacing a sitting MP. Marginality shows limited significance (p<.1), but otherwise indicates pressure in the opposite direction, with candidates running in marginal constituencies more likely to adopt Web 2.0. Overall, electoral factors represent competing pressures on candidates’ use of Web 2.0 sites.

**Socio-economic factors**

Model three incorporates socio-economic factors into the analysis. Previous studies have often identified the socio-economic circumstances of an area as being influential in the likelihood of candidates launching a web campaign. Both Herrnson et al (2007) and Carlson and Djupsund (2001) suggested that socio-economic factors were likely to be influential. There is further evidence from UK based research into the effect of the Digital Divide, with age and socio-economic factors such as education and income negatively affecting the connectedness of an area (Dutton et al, 2009; Norris, 2001).

The impact of socio-economic factors rests on the assumption that firstly campaigns are aware how their respective constituency compares in terms of factors associated with internet connectivity. Secondly, that a lower than average online audience is seen as reducing the value of online campaigning to the point that it is no longer worth the cost of resources. If these assumptions are correct then there is good reason to expect that Web 2.0 campaigning will be less prevalent in less prosperous constituencies with older populations. Conversely, prosperous constituencies and those with large populations of ‘digital natives’ will be more likely to feature Web 2.0 campaign tools.

Initially, socio-economic factors were considered as being discrete, but this was discounted as individually they proved to be poor predictors of Web 2.0 adoption. In
order to represent the character of an area, a more general set of factors was considered, with the variables reduced to two indices through the use of PCA. These indices were identified as representing urban deprived constituencies and rural, retirement constituencies respectively. Additionally, the percentage of the population that were non-White was included in order to represent any possible effect from ethic diversity.

The results show a negative influence for percentage of non-White population, but this is of limited significance (p<.1). There was a stronger and more significant effect for the rural retirement index, suggesting that rural seats and seats with a large retired population were less likely to prompt candidates to adopt Web 2.0. There was no significant relationship between adoption and the urban deprivation index, suggesting that high unemployment and urban areas have no influence on a candidate’s decision to campaign online. This contrasts with the expected gap in internet access in poorer communities suggested in the Digital Divide (Norris, 2001). This is likely a sign of the proliferation of internet access, in particular in better served urban areas. The importance of these variables is difficult to gauge given that its theoretical significance relies on candidate’s knowledge of the socio-economic characteristics of an area, and their factoring those into decisions about Web 2.0 use.

**CONTROLLING FOR CANDIDATE FACTORS USING CCS DATA**

The final group of factors considered in this analysis are candidate factors, including candidates’ age, gender and socio-economic background. There is considerable support for the argument that the Digital Divide does not just apply to constituents, but to the candidates themselves (Herronson et al, 2007). So it might be expected that younger or better-educated candidates will be more likely to adopt web campaign tools.

The EAS dataset does not allow for the inclusion of candidate factors: age, gender, employment and education. The CCS data does contain information on candidate factors but for ethical reasons it cannot be linked to the EAS dataset (see Data & Methods); this created difficulty in building a wider model of Web 2.0 site adoption, resulting in a less reliable model. As a consequence, candidate factors were initially
investigated in a single model. The dependent variable is Web 2.0 site adoption as measured by the CCS dataset. Age is represented as a continuous variable. An additional model was also run with age$^2$ but this was found to give a similar result. Employment and education are represented by binary variables, which was necessary given the limited variation in the sample – the majority of candidates were either professionals or employed in service industries, similarly most candidates had a degree. The level of homogeneity led to difficulties developing meaningful categorisations beyond making binary distinctions.

The results show that age is a significant negative predictor of Web 2.0 site adoption, which is as expected given the known profile of internet users as being younger. Female candidates were also found to be more likely to adopt Web 2.0 sites. There is a strong suggestion in research that male and female communication styles differ online, and that by extension, that their use of online campaign tools may also differ (Herring, 2003; Carlson, 2007). Previous studies on gender and campaigning (based on the 2003 Finnish Parliamentary elections) have not found it to be factor either in adoption or the overall style of a web presence (Carlson, 2007). However, these findings must be treated with caution in this context as this work focuses on Web 2.0 specifically, and also as the UK likely offers a different campaign environment from that of Finland. Survey data on the prevalence of social network use in the UK does supports the idea of social networking as being supportive of female communication styles. In 2011 the Oxford Internet Survey reported women surpassing men in the use of social networks, with 63% of women reporting social network use compared with 57% of men. Conversely, men were more likely to engage in forms of online communication outside of social networks such as blogging or running a web page (Dutton & Blank, 2011, p27). If this can be extended to cover political communication by candidates in an election campaign is not clear, but there may well be a case for claiming that Web 2.0 is a better fit for female candidate communication styles over that of male candidates. Alternatively, the significance of female candidates may reflect a more systematic bias, for example the known likelihood of female candidates being selected for unwinnable seats and therefore more likely to use Web 2.0 to compensate for their outsider status or the lack of support from the central party (Campbell & Childs, 2010). The latter argument can also account for the significant negative effect of degree level education, candidates with degrees are
possibly more likely to be selected in priority or target seats whilst less qualified candidates are possibly more likely to be selected as essentially paper candidates and therefore more likely to see Web 2.0 as a way of compensating for a lack of support locally and nationally.

Table 20: Logistic Regression On The Adoption Of Web 2.0 Sites (Candidate Factors) (N=534)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B (S.E.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.065 (.010)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male candidate (ref)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female candidate</td>
<td>.804 (.247)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Professional (ref)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional worker</td>
<td>-.090 (.209)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-degree qualification (ref)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree qualification</td>
<td>-.703 (.275)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Candidate factors by themselves provide a good explanation for the adoption of Web 2.0 sites in comparison to the wider EAS model above. The residual values for both models are similar, indicating that candidate factors in this model form as good an explanation of Web 2.0 site adoption as all the other factors considered from the EAS. However, it is important to note that this model is not contextualised; other variables that could be influencing the dependent variable are not controlled for, not least of which is the absence of any measure of traditional or modern campaigning, the central concern of this analysis. Being unable to link the EAS and CCS data prevents the inclusion of the EAS derived indices of traditional and modern campaigning, and including these indices would likely significantly reduce the number of cases. It is possible to partially overcome this problem by using alternative measures of traditional and modern campaigning. The CCS questionnaire contains two questions that serve as a
simplified version of the more complex traditional and modern indices. Both ask about time spent engaged in a particular activity: doorstep canvassing and direct mail.

There are two problems with the use of these variables as substitutes for the EAS measures. Firstly, doorstep canvassing and direct mail require very different amounts of time to engage in. Doorstep canvassing requires multiple volunteers to visit different addresses over many days, whilst direct mail could involve very few, or even a single campaigner completing the text and sending it to a direct mail service. Equally, doorstep canvassing is a campaign staple, the building block of the campaign, whilst direct mail is more akin to a luxury campaign tool, expensive and therefore only available to a few choice strategic campaigns. This disparity is reflected in the distribution of the measures on the CCS with doorstep canvassing being very ‘top heavy’ whilst direct mail is skewed towards the first and second categories (Figure 9). The second issue is that the measures are simpler than those used in the EAS analysis, and so they do not capture variation in the level of Web 2.0 adoption in the same way. Table 21 reports a logistic regression on the adoption of Web 2.0 with time spent canvassing and engaged in direct mail as independent variables. The results clearly contrast the findings of earlier analysis. Whilst canvassing, which is seen as analogous to the traditional campaign index, demonstrates a clear positive relationship with Web 2.0 adoption, direct mail, seen as analogous to the modern index does not. Furthermore, the strength of the canvassing/Web 2.0 relationship is much greater than that of traditional/Web 2.0 above. It is clear that whilst it may go some way to standing in for traditional and modern campaigning, these measures should not be considered a perfect facsimile.
Despite these problems, the purpose of this analysis is to try and show how much influence candidate factors have in relation to other factors theorised to drive Web 2.0 adoption. The inclusion of these measures helps to do this by controlling to some extent for traditional and modern campaign techniques in the model. Whilst the findings cannot be considered as a continuation of the earlier EAS model, they do at least
provide some idea of how influential candidate factors are. The resulting model is reported below. The dependent variable is the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, the independent variables are time spent canvassing and engaged in direct mail, party affiliation, electoral factors, socio-economic factors and candidate factors. With the exception of the candidate factors and the canvassing and direct mail variables, the source of the variables is the same as in the earlier EAS model. The socio-economic indices rural-retired and urban-deprived were recalculated for the CCS dataset.
Table 22: Logistic Regression On The Adoption Of Web 2.0 Sites (All Control Variables) (N=513)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1 B (S.E.)</th>
<th>2 B (S.E.)</th>
<th>3 B (S.E.)</th>
<th>4 B (S.E.)</th>
<th>5 B (S.E.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canvassing</td>
<td>.246 (.070)***</td>
<td>.315 (.075)***</td>
<td>.365 (.084)***</td>
<td>.363 (.086)***</td>
<td>.339 (.090)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Mail</td>
<td>.039 (.110)</td>
<td>.049 (.111)</td>
<td>.041 (.113)</td>
<td>.041 (.129)</td>
<td>.043 (.122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>.360 (.271)</td>
<td>.425 (.285)</td>
<td>.334 (.294)</td>
<td>.481 (.318)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib-Dem</td>
<td>.797 (.272)***</td>
<td>.652 (.278)**</td>
<td>.602 (.282)**</td>
<td>.979 (.313)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Incumbent (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>-.725 (.287)***</td>
<td>-.681 (.294)**</td>
<td>-.209 (.318)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>.988 (.348)***</td>
<td>.918 (.351)***</td>
<td>1.079 (.367)***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Retired</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.070 (.144)</td>
<td>.001 (.151)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Deprived</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.203 (.107)*</td>
<td>-.128 (.114)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non White</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.017 (.012)</td>
<td>-.011 (.013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.070 (.011)***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Candidate (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Candidate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.658 (.264)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Professional (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.154 (.230)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Degree (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree or higher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.553 (.296)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.003 (.298)***</td>
<td>-.720 (.406)*</td>
<td>-.806 (.411)*</td>
<td>-.597 (.430)</td>
<td>2.694 (.722)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2 log likelihood 599.385 590.256 574.064 569.160 519.522

Cox & Snell R² .026 .043 .073 .082 .166
Nagelkerke R² .037 .062 .104 .117 .238

* p<.1 ** p<.05 ***p<.01
The results mirror the findings of the earlier candidate factors only model, showing that when additional explanatory variables are included, candidate factors are still strong predictors of Web 2.0 adoption, with the only change in significance a change in the p values of female candidates and candidates with degrees. Whilst gender is still significant at the .5 level, the significance of education has gone below the .5 threshold, and given the number of cases in the analysis, this should not be considered a significant finding. Age remains a strong negative predictor of Web 2.0 site adoption. Most notably, the wider model continues support for H1, indicating a positive relationship between doorstep canvassing and Web 2.0 adoption.

The main focus of these models is the candidate factors but with some caution a brief comparison between the EAS and CCS models can be made. The models are similar in some respects, most notably in both models Liberal Democrat campaigns are shown to be more likely than other campaigns to adopt Web 2.0, although there is no significant positive relationship for Labour campaigns in the CCS model. There is a significant change in electoral factors, where the EAS shows a strong role for incumbency and a lesser influence for marginality, the CCS model shows marginality to have a far stronger role and no significant influence for incumbency. The effect of socio-economic factors is also not present in this model. The CCS model is also more successful in explaining the level of variation in the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, showing higher R² values than for the EAS model, although it should be stressed that the CCS model does not contain the same level of detail as the EAS model in representing traditional and modern campaigning.

Candidate factors cannot be integrated directly into the EAS model, and therefore this work cannot be certain about their relevance to the adoption of Web 2.0 relative to the traditional indices. What analysis has been possible by building a parallel model based on a different dataset suggests that candidate factors are relatively strong predictors of the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, indicating that they are at least as important as offline campaign type, organisation factors, electoral factors and socio-economic factors combined. Despite this, there still remains a good deal of variation unexplained by the relationships that this work has been able to model.
CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has set out to address both parts of the research questions: measurement and explanation, through the measurement of the adoption of Web 2.0 sites. This has been based on the analysis of secondary data in the form of the 2010 EAS data and supplemented with additional publicly available data and the 2010 CCS. In terms of the measurement of Web 2.0 site adoption, the evidence from the EAS clearly shows that Web 2.0 sites have become a common part of constituency level campaign presences in the UK. Over half of the campaigns that responded to the survey reported some level of use of Web 2.0 sites. This shows a strong level of growth considering many of the sites considered did not exist as recently as the last general election. In addition, although not the main focus of this chapter, Web 1.0 use has grown since the 2005 election, and there is evidence of email playing a part in both organisational and campaigning activities. Based on this interpretation of interactive web campaigning and the available data, there is strong initial evidence that campaigning has become more interactive as a result of the availability of Web 2.0. This is of course based on the assumption that Web 2.0 sites are used in an interactive way, which is addressed in more depth in the next chapter.

The second part of the research question asks how the adoption of Web 2.0 sites can be explained. The literature review put forward the argument that the adoption of interactive web campaigning, in this case the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, would be linked to the levels of traditional and modern campaigning. This was expressed in H1 which predicted a stronger relationship between the adoption of Web 2.0 sites and the traditional campaigning than for modernised. These results show evidence of a significant positive relationship between traditional campaigning and Web 2.0 adoption, however, this is tempered by the as strong or stronger relationship between the modern index and Web 2.0 adoption; H1 cannot be supported. Whilst the hypothesised relationship has not materialised, the findings still support the idea of a limited connection between Web 2.0 adoption and offline campaign practice, but one going in both directions, with both traditional and modernised campaigning positively related Web 2.0 adoption. This was initially thought to represent an intensity effect, but this was discounted through analysis of an interaction between traditional and modern campaigning that was no better a predictor than traditional or modern campaigning.
Furthermore the principal component analysis used to generate the traditional and modern indices showed a clear distinction between campaigning styles, which strongly suggests that traditional and modern are distinct campaign styles. As a result, the most credible interpretation of the findings is that there is some level of relationship between both the traditional and the modern indices and the adoption of Web 2.0. For some campaigns the traditional/Web 2.0 connection holds true, whilst for others there is a relationship between modernised campaigning and Web 2.0, potentially allowing them to better target voters. This cannot be resolved further without analysis to show exactly how campaigns are using their websites. It should be remembered though that whilst this is a significant relationship, models show that it is only a small factor in a wider decision-making process.

Additional control variables were considered on the basis of arguments uncovered in the Literature Review. Party affiliation is a significant predictor of Web 2.0 adoption, with both Labour and the Liberal Democrats more likely to adopt Web 2.0. This suggests that there could be either an ideological affinity for the web, or possibly practical policies within the party encouraging campaigns to experiment with new online campaign tools like Web 2.0. This is in line with the existing literature that indicates that the Liberal Democrats are more committed local campaigners (Cutts, 2006) and the party’s track record on using digital methods (Lilleker et al 2010). Alternatively, this could be interpreted as a lack of such policies from the reference category - the Conservative Party. So whilst there is evidence of the Conservatives learning the lessons of the Obama campaign (Crabtree, 2010) and of the Conservatives’ history of innovative campaigning (Scammell, 1995) these may have been confined to the national level and not have impacted at the level of constituency associations which have historically been more independent from the central party (Whiteley et al, 1994).

Incumbency was a significant negative predictor of Web 2.0 site adoption, supporting the idea that incumbent campaigns are risk averse and likely to see the loss of control on Web 2.0 sites as a problem when compared with challenging campaigns. There was no effect for candidates where the party was incumbent but they were replacing a retiring MP, but this is likely down to the small size of this sub-group. Marginality was only significant at the 10% level, but indicates a possible positive relationship between the
closeness of the race and Web 2.0. This is most readily interpreted as an intensity boost where campaigns either feel victory is close or threatened by a rival. In such situations campaigns are likely to do everything they can to gain an advantage. This may be better considered as a product of campaign intensity overall than of marginality itself.

The final significant predictor in the EAS model was a socio-economic index measuring the rural retirement score of the constituency. Although this is clearly an aggregation of multiple real-life situations, it does suggest that rural locality and the age of a population is likely to negatively affect the likelihood of a candidate launching a Web 2.0 presence whereas the urban deprived index did not have the same effect. To some extent this challenges the conception of the Digital Divide as expressed by Norris (2001), with urban deprived constituencies not also dragging down Web 2.0 adoption rates by campaigns. As already noted, however, this connection relies on candidates knowing about their seat’s particular socio-economic characteristics and being sufficiently concerned to limit their web campaign activity.

Candidate factors were considered separately due to constraints on the use of data and provided some of the most interesting findings. Modelling candidate factors alone showed a candidate’s age and gender and education all had significant effects on the adoption of Web 2.0 sites. As expected younger candidates were more likely to adopt Web 2.0 in line with the younger user profile more generally. Female candidates were more likely to adopt Web 2.0, whilst candidates educated to degree level or higher were less likely. These relationships are explained primarily by the idea of Web 2.0 as an outsider’s medium, with female and less well-educated candidates less likely to be adopted as candidates in competitive seats. This is partially confirmed by known selection biases (Campbell & Child, 2010) but requires further research before more substantive conclusions can be drawn. Candidate factors were difficult to contextualise given the constraints on the use of data, and the use of a parallel model based on the CCS is far from perfect. The variables modelled in the CCS deviate considerably from the significance of those same or similar variables in the EAS model, suggesting that the two models are at least in some respects at odds with one another. Although this is the best possible way to account for candidate factors, there are differences between them in the effects of both party affiliation and socio-economic factors which indicate that the
population captured in the CCS is different to that of the EAS. As a result, measuring the effect of candidate factors relative to offline campaign style and the other control variables is difficult. However, the modelling that has been possible suggests (with caution) that candidate factors are as important as the other variables considered combined. Despite this significance, the overall residual values of the models still suggest that the factors analysed here leaves much of the variation in the dependent variable unexplained.

In light of these findings it may well be the case that the interpretation of campaigns’ web adoption as being in support of wider strategic goals and the theorised connection between online and offline campaigns needs to be revised. The variables included in this analysis have been derived from a number of previous studies and theoretical analyses of party web use. However, these have all taken a socially shaped view of technology, seeing web adoption as the product of social factors. This has been represented in the data as organisational, electoral, socio-economic and candidate factors, but to some extent these represent factors that can be readily quantified and feature in available datasets. There is an alternative argument that suggests that rather than taking their cue from social factors surrounding them that campaigns are more spontaneous and inwardly driven. In this scenario, social factors might be overridden by candidates’ perception of the web as a way to break away from existing modes of campaigning and to experiment with new campaign methods. Equally, some candidates may view the web as having inherent symbolic value, allowing them to present the appearance of a forward thinking campaign, or even simply to conform to expectations. This is explored more fully in Chapter Six.

Prior to this, Chapter Five addresses the problem by re-specifying the dependent variable. This analysis has specified a dependent variable based on the adoption of websites defined as Web 2.0; however, there is a clear difference between a campaign adopting a site and actively using it in order to provide opportunities to interact with voters. Chapter Five develops a more detailed dependent variable that captures how campaigns use their entire web presences (including Web 1.0) and specifies how interactive they are, and what type of interactivity they are pursuing. This is achieved by
the use of content analysis, a more resource intensive technique producing a smaller overall sample, based on the North West of England.
This chapter seeks to build on Chapter Four by developing a more in-depth measure of interactive web campaigning based on the adoption of specific interactive features rather than Web 2.0 sites. This chapter also expands the focus of the work from just Web 2.0, to looking at the more interactive elements of Web 1.0 (including email). This analysis distinguishes between two types of interactive features: personal and automated. Personal interactive features are those that rely on communication between individuals, whilst automated interactive features are based on users interacting with sites and systems.

As with Chapter Four, this chapter sets out to engage with both parts of the research question, measuring the levels of interactive feature adoption before attempting to explain them. Measurement is achieved through the use of content analysis data collected in the North West of England during the 2010 campaign. The explanatory portion of this chapter uses the measure of interactive features as a dependent variable to test H2, which specifies a relationship between the adoption of interactive features and the index of traditional campaigning. This is based on the affinity between the techniques of traditional campaigning as described by Fisher and Denver (2009) and the characteristics of interactive web campaigning. Interacting online is thought to better enable campaigns to build local support networks. This is thought a more likely scenario than the use of interactive web campaigning to continue the modernised campaign.

**H0** There will be no association between offline campaigning and web-based campaigns.

**H2** Campaigns that score highly on the traditional index will be more likely to adopt personal interactive web campaign features than campaigns scoring highly on the modern index.

If there is support for H2, then this would be evidence of a relationship between the adoption of traditional offline campaigning and the adoption of more interactive
campaigning (either automated or personal interactive features) online, suggesting that the web is being used in a traditional role i.e. in support of building campaign networks.

Data for this analysis was taken from a variety of sources. The dependent variables, the adoption of interactive features, were based on content analysis of campaign web presences in the North West of England during the 2010 campaign (see Data & Methods). The independent variables are sourced from the same data as in Chapter Four: the measure of offline campaign style was again based on responses to the 2010 EAS and additional independent variables were taken from publically available sources of data except variables included in candidate factors that were taken from the 2010 CCS data.

The first stage of this analysis focuses on measuring the use of interactive features by campaigns. This required a good deal of work given the conceptual complexity of interactivity. This section begins by recalling the content analysis schema used to measure the numbers of interactive features, both personal and automated. The end result is an outline of the level of interactivity on offer to users of constituency campaign web presences and two dependent variables for subsequent analysis, one measuring the number of dialogue features used, the other site-based interactivity features. Both variables were continuous but negatively skewed. The relationship between traditional and modern campaigning and the adoption of personal and automated interactive features was then explored through the use of Poisson regression. This is the first test of H2. The model was then further developed by adding in a number of control variables to account for other possibly influential factors: organisational, electoral, socio-economic and personal. As with Chapter Four ethical restrictions on merging the data files prevented the linking of the CCS and EAS datasets, so separate models were developed in order to incorporate candidate factors.

This chapter builds on the previous analysis in Chapter Four by developing the dependent variable. Chapter Four did not find support for H1, but that both traditional and modern campaigning had a positive impact on the adoption of Web 2.0. By further developing the dependent variable in this analysis to look at interactive web campaign
features, both automated and personal, the hope is that this analysis will lead to a more complete understanding of how campaigns are using their web presence.
MEASURING INTERACTIVE FEATURES

The main interest of this analysis is the level of adoption of interactive features, but as the literature on the subject has shown, interactivity is a complex and multi-faceted concept (Bucy, 2004). Most research in this area draws some distinction between different forms of interactivity. In the main this involves differentiating between interactivity between users and systems and users and other users (Stromer-Galley, 2000; Gibson et al, 2003a). This distinction forms the basis for the two main forms of interactivity used in this analysis: automated and personal. In theory there is an even finer distinction to be drawn by further differentiating between personal interactivity features that are public, referred to as public personal interactivity, and that which takes place in private, referred to in this case as private personal interactivity.

Automated interactive features are web-based interactive features whereby users can interact with a site rather than another person. Examples of this behaviour include submitting email addresses to receive a newsletter, or following a campaign or candidate on a social network. Site-based features tend to be more one-sided, with campaigns often gathering information about users, such as in the case of friendship mechanisms, donation mechanism, polls, petitions and joining mechanisms. Even cases where the flow of information was reversed and users were able to collect information about the campaign such as downloading a poster or leaflet, this was instigated by the campaign for their benefit. For instance, polls on websites may offer users a chance to ‘have their say’ but equally they provide campaigns with access to users’ email addresses and more information for future targeted communications. Several of the features are innate in Web 2.0 sites e.g. Facebook’s ‘friending’ mechanism or Twitter’s ‘follow’.

Personal interactive features are web-based interactive features where users interact with the candidate or campaign staff and also possibly with other users in a conversational or two-way manner. This can be measured in two ways – firstly, by identifying the structural features of a site that allow personal interactivity to take place. This includes features such as an email address or feedback form. These features allow for potential interactivity, although it is not possible to say from this that personal
interactivity has occurred. This measures a propensity or potential for that type of behaviour. These features are referred to as *private personal interactive features*. Secondly, this can be supplemented with a measure of the extent to which tools are actually being used to promote conversation and dialogue and focus on whether there are observable public signs of the dialogue occurring. This includes making use of @ replies on the micro-blogging site Twitter, responding to comments on a Facebook wall or making use of forums and comment sections on conventional websites. These are referred to as *public personal interactivity features*. Public features are recorded only where there is evidence of campaigns engaging in discussion with users in public view online. In early exploratory analysis it was possible to distinguish between public and private personal interactive features, but the number of cases available and the lack of variation in the levels of public personal interactive features made for a problematic analysis and so these two categories were combined to form a single variable in later analyses.

The primary way previous research has sought to categorise websites has been through content analysis based on lists of features referred to as schema (Carlson & Djupsund, 2001; Norris, 2003; Lilleker & Malagon, 2007; Gibson et al, 2008a; Jackson & Lilleker, 2009; Lilleker et al, 2011). Schema can then be applied to web presences in order to quantify the presence or absence of features. One thing to note about preceding schemas is the focus on a single website as opposed to a web presence. This thesis has sought to analyse more than a single conventional website, incorporating profiles on Web 2.0 sites also. One of the most recent and highly detailed schema developed for measuring overall web performance of parties and that incorporates Web 2.0 was Lilleker et al (2011) evaluation of national party sites across European countries in the run-up to the 2009 European Elections which contained 214 features, divided between: information, engagement, mobilisation, interactivity and a general demonstration of technical sophistication, all divided between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. This was a multi-country and author study that focused on 94 sites at the national level and was a third the size of the dataset examined here. This analysis required a schema for content analysis that was pared down and could be applied to a greater number of websites with fewer resources.

The key challenge was then to develop a schema that:
- Focused on and distinguished between different types of interactivity: site-based, public and potential dialogue
- Incorporated both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 platforms, an entire web presence rather than only on a single website
- Could be executed in the timeframe available with the resources available

The result was the schema in table 24 based on three types of interactivity that could be applied equally across multiple platforms.
Table 23: Content Analysis Schema For Measuring Interactivity In Constituency Campaign Web Presences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Conventional website</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Personal Interactivity</strong></td>
<td>Forum or comment section in which the campaign was actively replying to comments</td>
<td>Replies on a Facebook wall</td>
<td>@replies in timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Personal Interactivity</strong></td>
<td>Email address</td>
<td>Able to send a Facebook message</td>
<td>Able to send a direct message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Automated Interactivity</strong></td>
<td>Download a poster on Facebook</td>
<td>Download a leaflet on Twitter</td>
<td>Download a leaflet on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Download a leaflet</td>
<td>Download a poll on Facebook</td>
<td>Download a poll on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sign a petition</td>
<td>Complete a poll on Facebook</td>
<td>Complete a poll on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make a specific online organisational request</td>
<td>Make a specific online organisational request on Facebook</td>
<td>Make a specific online organisational request on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donate money</td>
<td>Sign a petition on Facebook</td>
<td>Sign a petition on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sign up to email list</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Join the party</td>
<td>Make a specific online organisational request on Facebook</td>
<td>Make a specific online organisational request on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Donate money on Facebook</td>
<td>Donate money on Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Friend’</td>
<td>‘Follow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Link to join the party</td>
<td>Link to join the party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following two figures report the frequency with which these features were recorded among campaigns examined in the content analysis data collected in the final week of the short campaign. These figures only refer to campaigns from the three largest parties in England: Labour, Conservative and Lib-Dem. Of the 223 campaigns identified in the North West region, a web presence of some description was found for 204 of them representing an uptake of 91%, which is higher than reported in the secondary data previously analysed. This discrepancy is likely a result of the method used to select campaign sites included in the analysis (see Data & Methods). These figures only include online campaigns and do not include campaigns without a web presence. The percentage figure is expressed as a proportion of campaigns that are online.

**Figure 10: Frequency Of Personal Interactivity Features (% Of Campaigns)**
(N=204)
Only three campaigns demonstrated evidence of public personal interactivity features on their Web 1.0 sites, seven over Facebook and considerably more over Twitter at 25 or 12.25% of campaigns. These figures stand in stark contrast to the EAS data from Chapter Four that showed levels of Web 2.0 adoption of some form at 52%. So despite half of all campaigns using Web 2.0, only a fraction were using it to interact with supporters and potential supporters in public online. This initial finding suggests support for the argument that campaigns were in general adopters of interactive tools without fully exploiting the interactive potential. Whether those more fully using the Web 2.0 tools were predominantly traditional campaigns is investigated further below.

The emergence of Twitter as the medium of choice for public interactivity is also telling. 12.25% of campaigns engaged in public personal interactivity over Twitter, representing a sizeable group, in particular when expressed as a proportion of campaigns that had a profile on Twitter (rather than just being online in some form) when it rises to 35%. Considering the Twitter eco-system the @ reply is the least demanding form of interactivity. It does represent campaigns reaching out to specific individuals, but with a limit of 140 characters, and with possibly only limited prospects of a meaningful dialogue. The data could not record who these @ replies were directed
at (a task better suited to network data) and so it is difficult to know if these replies were
directed to voters, fellow campaigners, other candidates or party elites. When compared
with the more direct and potentially detailed public dialogue possible over tools such as
Facebook, Twitter is certainly the most restrictive of the interactive options considered
under the heading public dialogue. The stark differences between Twitter and other eco-
systems are clearly apparent from looking at patterns of posting on various Web 2.0
platforms reported below.

Table 24: Frequency Of Posts In The Last Seven Days Across Different Social
Media Platforms (N=223)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>16.03</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>26.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across all platforms there were examples of web presences that had been abandoned by
campaigns, with no updates for the previous seven days. For two platforms the median
value was also zero; half (or more) of campaigns had not updated their presences within
the last week. This may be symptomatic of the reduction in effort over the course of the
campaign discovered in Chapter Four. Where campaigns were posting, both Facebook
and regular campaign websites were comparable to one another, with the mean number
of posts in the last week hovering at around one, and similar maximum number of posts.
This may reflect the habit of many campaigns in linking their conventional website
posts to social media, effectively using Facebook as an additional avenue through which
to disseminate information to voters that is already present on Web 1.0 sites. Patterns of
posting on Twitter were considerably different, with campaigns exhibiting a far greater
range of posts in the last seven days, including a single campaign that had made 175
posts in the last seven days. This is an outlier, resulting in a large standard deviation, but
the median number of posts was 6.5, suggesting that unlike websites and Facebook the
majority of campaigns had posted multiple times in the last seven days. This probably
reflects the nature of the services, both Facebook and conventional websites encourage
longer posts with accompanying content such as photographs or links. Twitter
encourages very short messages (140 characters), and it is far less common to include
associated content. As important, Twitter is easily updated when candidates are out and about (including via SMS text message) where websites and Facebook may be more difficult or impossible to update on the move. This ease of use of Twitter may contribute to campaigns’ willingness to stay engaged with it where more demanding media may be quickly abandoned when campaigns get tough.

Email was the most common form of private personal interactivity feature, with 75% of all campaigns with some level of web presence providing an email address. 33% of campaigns with a web presence provided an online feedback form. Additionally, both the Web 2.0 sites included had their own internal messaging systems built in, so these totals correspond to the overall use of the tools by campaigns. This is not the kind of public interaction inherent in the ideas behind Web 2.0, but nevertheless represents opportunities for the exchange of information. The prevalence of potential personal interactivity features, in particular the large number of campaigns that provided email addresses, shows that whilst public dialogue might have been rare, potential dialogue was far more common, with the strong caveat that we cannot know from this data if there was anyone actually using these tools.

The commonest form of automated interactivity was a mechanism or a link to a mechanism to formally join the party through a conventional website. Joining the party was followed by joining an email list and donating money, all of these activities took place through conventional websites. This displays a certain level of sophistication in website design on behalf of campaigns, with technically complex activities such as collecting email addresses relatively common. This is likely facilitated by the use of templates provided by central parties or external web designers. Web 2.0 was not used to encourage automated interactivity. The two most common site-based interactivity features over Web 2.0 were ‘friending’ a campaign on Facebook and ‘following’ a campaign or candidate on Twitter. Both these features are inbuilt in the platforms and are integral to the way they work; these were not optional for candidates using these services. Other forms of site-based interactivity, however, were not replicated over Web 2.0. Based on these measures, Web 2.0 does not seem to have been embedded within campaigns, at least not for the kind of activities we have come to expect from them such as offering literature for downloads or fielding polls. This may be in part down to how
these services are structured, encouraging posts and links, but allowing little else in terms of functionality. Social media may be ill suited to automated interactivity as it is usually seen in political campaigns.

This exploratory analysis shows that public personal interactive features, the features that offer the most direct connection between campaigns and voters, were the least common. A public exchange of dialogue was almost absent from both conventional websites and Facebook, on Twitter it was rather more common, but in a limited fashion difficult to measure. In contrast, potential personal interactivity features were far more common. While campaigns appear to have adopted interactive digital tools, it seems that they have done so structurally, by building in personal interactive features to their web presences, but there is little evidence as yet of campaigns using these tools to build public relationships with voters. Campaigns seemingly offered a multitude of ways for voters to ‘get in touch’ although how many responded to this is impossible to say from the data available, as many of these communications remain private. Despite the lack of public personal interactivity, there remains scope for both traditional and modern campaigns to continue their offline strategies using online tools over these campaign presences. The next stage was to test whether or not the use of these features corresponded as expected to offline campaign style.
EXPLAINING INTERACTIVE FEATURES

Whilst public dialogue was a rare occurrence in the 2010 campaign in the North West, the use of site-based and potential dialogue interactive features was commonplace. The use of these features can now be used to form the dependent variable in further analysis designed to assess the impact of a number of social shaping explanations on the use of both dialogue and site-based interactive features. This is the first opportunity to directly test H2 and addresses the second part of the research question, explaining the adoption of interactive features. There are two dependent variables in this analysis, both of them continuous, the number of personal interactive features used by a campaign and the number of automated features. The low number of cases featuring public personal interactivity necessitated collapsing the public and private categories into one another creating a single personal interactivity measure. It is important to understand the characteristics of these variables. Whilst they treat interactive features as being continuous, this needs to be viewed in context, two personal interactivity features does not mean a campaign is twice as interactive as a campaign that only scores one. Instead these variables should be considered as being indicative of a wider approach to campaigning.

The distribution of these variables is reported in the figures below. Cases had to be present in both the content analysis and EAS data to be included in this analysis, i.e. both the number of interactive features and the traditional and modern index scores had to be known. This limits the pool of cases available for analysis initially to 110, which was reduced further with additional missing responses from the EAS data. The left-hand columns relate to the distribution in the overall sample, the right-hand columns show the distribution only for those cases present in both the EAS and content analysis data i.e. the final pool of cases used in the analysis. To aid comparison distributions are reported as a percentage of campaigns. The results show a relative consistency between the content analysis datasets and the content analysis merged with the EAS datasets, with no change in the distribution greater than about 7%, suggesting that the cases lost in combining the EAS and content analysis datasets do not represent any large systematic loss of cases between the datasets.
Figure 12: Frequency Of Personal Interactivity Features (Content Analysis N=203, Content Analysis & EAS N=110)

Figure 13: Frequency Of Automated Interactivity Features (Content Analysis N=203, Content Analysis & EAS N=110)
An initial analysis of correlation between the traditional and modernised indices and the adoption of interactive features showed significant positive correlations between the levels of personal and automated interactivity .46 (p<.01), personal interactivity and the traditional index .25 (p<.05) and personal interactivity and the modern index .23 (p<.05). There were no significant correlations between automated interactivity and either the traditional or modern index. This indicates that personal rather than automated interactivity is likely to be the area most affected by the offline campaign form, but as with adoption, it may be significantly affected by both traditional and modern campaign indices as both show significant positive correlations.

The above graphs also show that for both automated and personal features, the distributions are not normal. This was further confirmed with a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which showed a significant result, indicating that the distributions were non-normal (Field, 2009). As a result it was inappropriate to use linear regression, which assumes a normally distributed dependent variable, to analyse this data, instead a Poisson regression model was used, which accounts for the negatively skewed distribution. The relationship between the use of interactive features and the offline campaign was tested through two models, one representing personal interactivity, the other automated. Neither model showed a significant relationship between offline campaign indices and the adoption of interactive features, contradicting the earlier bivariate correlation.

Table 25: Poisson Regression Of Personal Interactivity And Automated Interactivity Features (Traditional And Modern Indices) (N=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Personal Interactivity</th>
<th>Automated Interactivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-1.654 (.866)</td>
<td>.791 (.731)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Index</td>
<td>.013 (.010)</td>
<td>-.009 (.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernised Index</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.1 ** p<.05 *** p<.001

14 A negative binomial regression was also explored, although the results of the analysis showed that this was not required in this instance.
The model shows no support for H2; the offline campaign does not appear to be related to the use of specific interactive features. This further contrasts with the wider argument of the thesis that sees web use as strategically embedded in constituency campaigns and connected to the wider offline campaign. Whilst Chapter Four has shown that both traditional and modernised campaigns make use of Web 2.0 sites, the lack of variation in how websites are used, coupled with the low levels of interactivity supported by Web 2.0 shown in the exploratory analysis suggests that the idea of the web campaign as forming part of a coherent strategy shaped by social factors may be incorrect. In effect, the choice of interactive features is shown here to be independent of the type of offline campaign. However, the low residual values in these models suggest that further analysis is required as another factor may better explain the adoption of these features. The next stage was to develop this model through the addition of a number of control variables.

INCLUDING CONTROL VARIABLES

The section above has tested H2, which predicted a relationship between the adoption of interactive web campaign features and the offline campaign style, specifically that more traditional campaigns would be more likely to adopt personal interactive features than modernised campaigns. The findings offer no support for this argument. This section aims to further investigate the relationships between various control variables identified in the Literature Review, and the adoption of interactive features. Current literature on the use of interactive features by campaigns has been mainly descriptive rather than analytical. As a result there is little to suggest what factors may be worth exploring and so the alternative explanations considered here are similar to those considered in Chapter Four, on the grounds that the same mechanisms that affect the adoption of services are likely to affect the adoption of interactive features also. The following analysis considers: organisational factors, electoral factors, socio-economic factors and candidate factors. The dependent variable remains the number of personal and automated interactive features used by campaigns based on content analysis. Data is drawn from both census data and publically available information. As with Chapter Four, candidate factors are drawn from the 2010 CCS and analysed in separate models.
The control variables were included in a wider model of interactive features using a hierarchical entry method (Field, 2009), with the variables thought to be most influential included first. Traditional and modern campaign indices remain part of the analysis given that they remain the main focus, even though they are non-significant. The resulting models (excluding candidate factors), one for personal and one for automated interactivity, are reported below.
Table 26: Poisson Regression Of Personal Interactivity (Traditional And Modern Indices And Control Variables) (N=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Index</td>
<td>.013 (.010)</td>
<td>.015 (.010)</td>
<td>.016 (.010)</td>
<td>.014 (.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernised index</td>
<td>.007 (.008)</td>
<td>.007 (.008)</td>
<td>.007 (.008)</td>
<td>.008 (.009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>-.440 (.191)**</td>
<td>-.392 (.249)</td>
<td>-.388 (.256)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib-Dem</td>
<td>-.225 (.202)</td>
<td>-.235 (.209)</td>
<td>-.204 (.213)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Incumbent (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>-.080 (.236)</td>
<td>-.070 (.243)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Marginal (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>.142 (.339)</td>
<td>.146 (.342)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Deprived</td>
<td>.041 (.097)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Retired</td>
<td>-.006 (.102)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non White</td>
<td>.008 (.012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.654 (.866)*</td>
<td>-1.635 (.945)*</td>
<td>-1.700 (1.026)*</td>
<td>-1.666 (1.028)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pseudo R2: .020  .036  .037  .041  
Log Likelihood: -155.700  -153.103  -152.959  -152.424

*p<.1  ** p<.05  *** p<.001
Table 27: Poisson Regression Of Automated Interactivity (Traditional And Modern Indices And Control Variables) (N=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Index</td>
<td>-.009 (.008)</td>
<td>.001 (.009)</td>
<td>.003 (.009)</td>
<td>.004 (.010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernised index</td>
<td>.008 (.007)</td>
<td>.010 (.008)</td>
<td>.015 (.008)*</td>
<td>.016 (.008)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>-.454 (.190)**</td>
<td>-.226 (.242)</td>
<td>-.220 (.253)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib-Dem</td>
<td>.302 (.178)*</td>
<td>.370 (.184)**</td>
<td>.396 (.189)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Incumbent (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.322 (.221)</td>
<td>-.342 (.233)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Marginal (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.330 (.336)</td>
<td>-.306 (.338)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Deprived</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.134 (.088)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Retired</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.042 (.095)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.009 (.012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.791 (.731)</td>
<td>-.395 (.813)</td>
<td>-1.084 (.904)</td>
<td>-1.300 (.915)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R2</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.0681</td>
<td>.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-190.406</td>
<td>-179.728</td>
<td>-178.113</td>
<td>-176.787</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.1 ** p<.05 *** p<.001
In these models both the traditional and modern indices remain non significant at the 5% level. There is evidence of a small effect of modernised campaigning in the final two models of the analysis of automated features that could be interpreted as a slight positive influence from modernised campaigning. Although this effect is only significant at \( p<.1 \), given the number of cases in this analysis it should be considered a significant finding, although this remains a weak relationship. The fact that the modern index only becomes significant following the addition of incumbency and marginality could be considered to be down to some level of multi-collinearity, but this was not found to be the case in analysis with both tolerance and variance inflation factors (VIF) within expected limits (Field, 2009). More likely the growth of marginality is either down to subtle ‘noise’ within the data, and some small increases in coefficients (in this case a rise of .008 between models 1 and 4) is to be expected, in this case it happens to have tipped the balance between a non-significant and significant result. Finally, the increase in significance could be due to a suppressor effect, with the modern index only becoming a significant variable after controlling for incumbency and marginality. This fits with the characterisation of modernised campaigning as being used in seats that have the attention of the central party and will therefore be linked to marginality and incumbency. In the wider analysis the difference in the significance of modernised campaigning is small and its overall influence is limited at best, but it may indicate some support for the idea of more modernised campaigns adopting greater numbers of automated interactivity features.

The first significant outcome for party affiliation in these models is for the Labour party in the model of personal interactive features at its initial inclusion (in model 2). This effect is quickly obscured by the addition of electoral and socio-economic factors. The lack of significance for party affiliation in the personal interactivity features model suggests that there is little connection between political allegiance and the use of personal interactive features by campaigns. The automated model also shows significant effects for party affiliation. At the stage of initial inclusion (model 2) both Labour and the Liberal Democrats are shown to be a significant influence on the adoption of automated features, the Liberal Democrats positive, Labour negative. The negative effect of the Labour party does not survive to the final model, the influence of being a Liberal Democrat campaign does, and even improves when electoral factors are
included in the model. To explore this further, several additional models were developed to test the effect of including organisational and electoral factors in the analysis. Leaving in or taking out these measures changes the significance of the results. The model without party affiliation reports incumbency to be a strong negative predictor of automated features adoption ($B = -0.649$ S.E. = 0.166 $p< 0.01$), whereas removing incumbency leaves being a Labour campaign as having a strong negative effect $B = -0.461$ S.E. = 0.192 $p< 0.05$). The Liberal Democrats are also still reported as having a significant positive effect on the adoption of automated features ($B = 0.336$ S.E. = 0.187 $p< 0.5$). This suggests that there is a relationship between incumbency and party affiliation, which is causing a change in the results when incumbency is controlled for. This is likely a side effect of the reduced sample size, and the focus on the North West, which has a high number of Labour incumbents. In the data used for this model 37 of the 45 incumbent campaigns were Labour affiliated.

One possible interpretation is that being an incumbent campaign limits the use of automated features, but this makes little sense given the opportunities for data collection presented by automated interactive features, the likely support an incumbent campaign receives to implement automated features and the advantage incumbent campaigns get in driving web traffic. There is a stronger argument for party affiliation playing a role in determining the numbers of automated features used. A lot of automated features were driven by the use of party templates in constructing campaign websites, with complex functions such as storing email addresses, joining the party and making donations often supported by the technical knowledge of the central party rather than left to local campaigns. This is demonstrated by the high number of automated features present on campaign websites reported above. As part of collecting content analysis data a note was made for every campaign website visited on whether or not the site appeared to be based on a party template or a bespoke design. This is a somewhat problematic measure given that it was often difficult to tell how a site had been constructed. Still, the results show an imbalance between the parties with Liberal Democrat candidates judged to be using template sites to a far greater degree than either the Conservatives or Labour. This explains the positive result for the Liberal Democrats, whilst the negative Labour result can be explained by lower use of the templated design than other parties, and the provision of a different, less interactive, feature set.
### Table 28: Use Of Template Sites By Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Template</th>
<th>Non Template</th>
<th>Undetermined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib-Dem</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Socio-economic factors were also considered in this model but were not found to be significant. The wider model provides no reason to believe that socio-economic factors affect the way candidates adopt either automated or personal interactive features.

**CONTROLLING FOR CANDIDATE FACTORS USING CCS DATA**

Chapter Four also considered the role that the candidate’s own personal circumstance plays in the adoption of web campaign tools. This is an extension of the Digital Divide argument. If a Digital Divide exists between connected and unconnected populations, then there is also likely to be a divide between candidates. As in earlier analysis, candidate factors were not fully represented in the EAS dataset, so the content analysis data was linked with the CCS data instead. This provides greater insight about candidates’ backgrounds, at the expense of the number of cases. Even more than with the EAS, linking the CCS and content analysis data reduces the number of cases available, as only 65 were available in both datasets. This correspondingly reduces the explanatory power of models. Additionally, caution should be used in interpreting the results of this analysis as the CCS and EAS models are not perfectly comparable given the different constituencies represented in the dataset and the different approaches to the measurement of traditional and modern campaigning (see Chapter Four).
### Table 29: Poisson Regression Of Automated Interactivity (Traditional And Modern Indices And Control Variables) (N=65)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B(S.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvassing</td>
<td>-.084 (.063)</td>
<td>-.019 (.071)</td>
<td>-.001 (.076)</td>
<td>-.005 (.076)</td>
<td>.115 (.087)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Mail</td>
<td>-.107 (.122)</td>
<td>-.070 (.121)</td>
<td>-.058 (.121)</td>
<td>-.043 (.124)</td>
<td>-.006 (.147)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>-.502 (.239)**</td>
<td>-.325 (.317)</td>
<td>-.291 (.326)</td>
<td>-.244 (.324)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib-Dem</td>
<td>.179 (.226)</td>
<td>.205 (.234)</td>
<td>.226 (.233)</td>
<td>.433 (.264)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Incumbent (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>-.282 (.322)</td>
<td>-.261 (.330)</td>
<td>-.312 (.328)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Marginal (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>-.028 (.371)</td>
<td>.042 (.386)</td>
<td>-.073 (.387)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Deprived</td>
<td></td>
<td>.047 (.122)</td>
<td>.035 (.132)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Retired</td>
<td>.074 (.150)</td>
<td>-.001 (.160)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non White</td>
<td>.024 (.024)</td>
<td>.001 (.024)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.034 (.009)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.362 (.225)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.037 (.060)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.513 (.200)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.260 (.270)***</td>
<td>.059 (.394)**</td>
<td>.789 (.428) *</td>
<td>2.370 (.574)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-119.830</td>
<td>-114.882</td>
<td>-114.480</td>
<td>-113.874</td>
<td>-103.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.1  ** p<.05  *** p<.001
Table 30: Poisson Regression Of Personal Interactivity (Traditional And Modern Indices And Control Variables) (N=65)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
<td>B (S.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvassing</td>
<td>.066 (.073)</td>
<td>.090 (.082)</td>
<td>.080 (.087)</td>
<td>.060 (.089)</td>
<td>.095 (.098)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Mail</td>
<td>.107 (.129)</td>
<td>.129 (.129)</td>
<td>.162 (.131)</td>
<td>.179 (.132)</td>
<td>.133 (.162)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>-.406 (.243)*</td>
<td>-.351 (.341)</td>
<td>-.237 (.347)</td>
<td>-.329 (.357)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib-Dem</td>
<td>-.018 (.253)</td>
<td>-.082 (.266)</td>
<td>-.074 (.268)</td>
<td>.021 (.295)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Incumbent (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>-.192 (.344)</td>
<td>-.176 (.351)</td>
<td>-.108 (.360)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Marginal (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>.538 (.363)</td>
<td>.636 (.385)*</td>
<td>.610 (.387)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Deprived</td>
<td>-.036 (.137)</td>
<td>-.067 (.150)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Retired</td>
<td>.029 (.163)</td>
<td>.005 (.177)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non White</td>
<td>.049 (.027)</td>
<td>.032 (.028)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.019 (.011)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.086 (.217)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>-.066 (.056)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>-.046 (.250)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.114 (.326)</td>
<td>.128 (.431)</td>
<td>.116 (.450)</td>
<td>-.101 (.485)</td>
<td>.844 (.693)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pseudo R2: .009, .026, .041, .064, .092
Log Likelihood: -106.010, -104.203, -102.556, -100.123, -97.092

*p<.1 ** p<.05 *** p<.001
As in earlier analysis, candidate factors represent a better explanation of the adoption of automated interactive features than the social factors considered in the EAS analysis. Again with some caution, the provision of automated interactivity features seems to be predicted by both the candidate’s age and their educational attainment. In contrast, personal interactivity is only significantly predicted by age at the p < .1 level. The negative impact of age fits with the known profile of internet users as being younger, the negative coefficient suggests that with every additional year, candidates are less likely to adopt either type of interactive feature. The negative effect of education can be explained in the same way as in Chapter Four, with less well educated candidates more likely to find themselves selected for hard to win seats and starved of central party support and therefore more likely to adopt interactive web campaigning. However, the fact that this applies to automated features, which earlier analysis suggests are reliant in many cases on central party support in the form of Web 1.0 templates, does challenge this interpretation. However, Web 1.0 templates can be considered to be relatively easy for parties to make available to all campaigns as they are in effect a single investment that can be sent to a hundred campaigns as easily as they can be sent to one.

Despite these significant relationships the model itself is again of limited power, although it is higher than the EAS model. In part this is likely down to the number of cases available for analysis (which further highlights the need for better data in this area), but in addition the weakness of these models also suggests that even more detailed dependent variables have not captured the hypothesised connection between traditional campaigning and interactive features, nor has the inclusion of additional variables offered up a compelling way to explain the adoption of interactive web campaigning more generally.
Chapter Four showed that there was only a limited connection between online and offline campaigning, and that this did not take on the anticipated form of a positive relationship between traditional campaigning and the adoption of Web 2.0 sites. This was attributed to two possible causes, either that there was no connection between the online and offline and the theorised relationship was incorrect, or that the dependent variable was insufficiently detailed to capture the required variation. This chapter set out to test the latter explanation by developing a more detailed dependent variable based on the adoption of interactive features rather than the more general Web 2.0 sites. Campaigns may well have been adopting Web 2.0 sites, but using them in very different ways depending on their offline campaign type. In particular, traditional campaigns were thought likely to focus on the use of personal interactivity in order to develop networks of local voters. The aim of this chapter has been to measure the levels of interactive features and test this argument (specified as H2) using a more developed measure of interactive web campaigning than the adoption of Web 2.0 sites used in Chapter Four. To this end, the dependent variable has been changed from binary measures of Web 2.0 sites to two additive indices based on the numbers of interactive features adopted, either personal or automated.

The most significant finding of this chapter comes from the measurement of interactive features, which shows that, in contrast to the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, the adoption of public personal interactivity features i.e. those features that would allow campaigns and voters to discuss the campaign in public, was rare. Content analysis shows very little evidence of any public discussions online though campaign web presences. The exception to this was a sub-group of campaigns using Twitter @replies, but from the available data it is difficult to be specific as to the intended targets of these messages nor if they were part of continuing dialogue. Given the idea of co-production and the ‘architecture of participation’ underpinning Web 2.0, the lack of public personal interactivity suggests that Web 2.0, in this specific form, is not forming a part of campaign practice at the constituency level and that therefore the theorised connection between traditional campaigning and Web 2.0 is unlikely to be present in the way anticipated. However, the lack of public personal interactivity does not rule out a
connection between traditional campaigning and private personal interactivity, or personal interactivity as a wider group of features.

The use of both private personal features and automated features was far more common than the use of public personal features. In particular the use of private personal features indicates that there may be a large amount of dialogue between campaigns and voters hidden in the private messaging functionality of social networks and through the use of email, or email-like functionality built into sites (e.g. feedback forms). Email was not considered as part of the wider analysis as it is a separate and distinct technology from the web, although the divisions between them may be growing less distinct as the web develops further. Automated features were uncommon on Web 2.0 platforms, with the exception of ‘friending’ or ‘following’ actions that were inbuilt. The vast majority of automated features identified were supported principally by Web 1.0, with tools such as polls and petitions not manifesting in social network profiles. This suggests that these features, which are often driven by data acquisition (in particular voter email addresses) are better supported through the use of party templates rather than the social networking services. This may change as social network services roll-out additional features such as Facebook’s addition of polling functions in July 2010 (Mashable, 2010).

In summary, despite the high levels of Web 2.0 site adoption reported in Chapter Four, the more detailed measure of interactive features reported in this chapter strongly suggests that the availability of these tools is not making campaigns more interactive. Web 2.0, beyond certain hardwired features inbuilt in systems, seems to be used very seldom to actually interact with voters in any form. The majority of campaigns, it seems, view Web 2.0 simply as a fresh channel through which to inform the voters rather than as a way to build Foot & Schneider’s (2006, p199) ‘transactional relationship’.

Beyond measurement, attempts to explain patterns of interactive feature use have been more challenging. The content analysis data provides a valuable insight into the way campaigns use their web presences, but the level of detail and resources required for collection limits the number of cases in the data, this restricted data collection to the North West of England only. While this provided a good number of cases for
exploratory analysis, combining the content analysis data and other datasets in order to include additional variables reduced the number of cases available for analysis further, limiting the power of the analysis. Every effort has been made to overcome these limitations and mitigate them where possible, but going forward there is a real need to develop larger and more comprehensive datasets in this field if we are to avoid having to do analysis in piecemeal fashion in the future.

Overall, the models show no connection between scores on the traditional and modern indices and the adoption of either personal or automated interactivity features. The only exception to this was a slight positive relationship between modernised campaigning and the adoption of automated interactivity features, which may indicate support for the idea of campaigns using interactive web campaigning as a way to collect information as part of a modernised campaign, but this was a comparatively weak relationship. From the data available it is not possible to support H2 as originally specified or the idea of a strategic connection between online and offline campaigns more generally. Indeed, the strongest relationship uncovered in the analysis is the positive effect of the Liberal Democrats on the adoption of automated interactive features. The significance of party affiliation was attributed to the provision of template sites by the Liberal Democrats, which were thought to be considerably more common than in campaigns affiliated to either Labour or the Conservatives. The inclusion of candidate factors though a model based on the CCS also offered two additional significant predictors of automated features: age and education, both with negative effects. Age was thought likely down to younger candidates making more extensive use of the web and the negative effect of education was thought likely down to better educated candidates being selected for more competitive seats and therefore receiving more support from the central party although the relative homogeneity of PPCs makes this finding of limited value.

Compared with the analysis of Web 2.0 site adoption, switching the dependent variable to interactive features has resulted in a less powerful model, and highlighted that whilst Web 2.0 site adoption may be partially explained by the factors included in the model, the same factors are less well suited to predicting how sites will be used. This leaves a number of possibilities: that the dependent or independent variable are wrongly specified, that the use of interactive features is not linked to factors included in the
analysis or finally, that the use of interactive web campaigning is essentially unpredictable. The specification of the dependent variables is based on a theoretically sound schema that has been implemented rigorously. Similarly, the independent variables have been taken from research in the wider area of constituency campaigns and are supported by statistical analysis that points to traditional and modern campaigning as being separate and distinct approaches to elections. Given the available data, these measures are as rigorous as possible. As a result, the latter two scenarios are the most likely, either the adoption of interactive features is influenced by factors not represented in model, or the adoption of interactive features is random. The low residual values (reported as pseudo $R^2$ in Poisson regression) further support this position.

In combination, the results of Chapters Four and Five suggest that there are more factors at work in influencing the adoption of interactive web campaigning than those it is possible to model. Chapter Four showed that traditional and modern campaigning along with other social factors such as party affiliation and candidate factors can offer only a partial explanation of why campaigns adopt Web 2.0 sites. Similarly, Chapter Five has shown that for interactive features, the explanatory power of these factors is even lower. As a result this work now moves to consider explanations outside the role of the social factors that have thus far been the mainstay of analyses of web campaigning. Chapter Six returns to the question of interactive web campaigning more generally, but does so through the analysis of qualitative data collected through interviews with campaign workers and candidates. This provides an opportunity to further check the non- or limited significance of the factors tested in the quantitative analysis, but it also allows for additional factors, outside those derived from social explanations of web campaigning, to be explored. Chapter Six begins to consider factors innate within the technology of the web itself, such as the opportunities it offers for new campaign practices, or the symbolic value of being seen as a Web 2.0-enabled campaign. The hope is that the qualitative analysis will serve both as a way to further confirm the apparent low regard campaigns have for established social factors in their decision making on the adoption of the web, but also to allow them to explain what factors did influence their thinking.
Chapters Four and Five examined the research question through quantitative data that measured the extent of offline and interactive web campaigning and tested the relationship between interactive web campaigning and social factors using a variety of statistical techniques. This provided a series of insights about relationships between the variables of interest that allowed for generalisable conclusions to be drawn that are not possible via single case or small N studies. This analysis showed widespread adoption of Web 2.0 sites, but low uptake of the more interactive features on offer. It also showed that the hypothesised relationships (H1 and H2) are not supported, and that there were only limited relationships between offline campaign styles and the adoption of interactive web campaigning. A range of other variables appear to be relevant to understanding the adoption of interactive web campaigns including party affiliation and candidate factors, but that even including these factors left a lot of the variation in the sample unexplained. The purpose of this chapter is to go beneath the more ‘surface level’ findings of the preceding empirical chapters; specifically the aims are three-fold: to explore the relationships between the key theoretical variables of interest and particularly why the anticipated relationships did not hold up; to explore the other individual party and campaign factors that have emerged as relevant; and finally examine those explanations and variables that are less suitable for quantitative analysis, such as the culture of a campaign and its openness to new technologies.

This chapter takes a qualitative approach to the research question, discussing campaigns’ approaches to the web directly with candidates and campaign workers through a series of semi-structured interviews. Given the small number of cases, this analysis is not able to measure the overall levels of interactive web campaigning; it focuses only on the second part of the research question. This approach resulted in the collection of ‘thick’ data on campaigns; rich descriptive detail that shows a candidate’s and worker’s thinking and their own reasons for using the web as a campaign tool. So while previous chapters have concentrated on measuring the spread of interactive web campaigns and testing the theorised relationship between offline and online campaigning by focusing on offline campaign strategy as an independent variable, this
approach adds an additional explanatory layer, allowing campaigns to describe their campaigns and to say what influenced them in their own words. This chapter expands the search for explanations outside the role of social shaping arguments derived from previous literature and begins to consider the role of more technologically deterministic explanations in the adoption of web campaigns. To this end, the analysis is based on an analytical framework that includes a wider range of possible explanations of interactive web campaigning.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In the course of this analysis a further set of variables have been identified as relevant, beyond those available in the quantitative data; these are summarised below. The first set of variables are termed ‘social shaping’ explanations and refer to those pre-existing factors that are seen as shaping campaigns. These draw from the literature on local campaigns discussed in the Literature Review and the measures used in Chapters Four and Five. These are the standard explanations of campaign activity that draw on the social and political environment surrounding a campaign as well as factors related to specific candidates, to determine how parties will use technology (Lofgren & Smith, 2003; Rommele, 2003). The second set of factors examined here are termed ‘technologically determinist’. They are distinguished from social shaping explanations in that they account for uptake primarily in terms of the functionalities of the technology. Such motivations are essentially less strategic and more opportunistic, i.e. campaigns adopt new tools in recognition of the additional agency that technology offers them – either in instrumental terms of meeting a new goal, or more abstractly in terms of signalling or symbolising an outlook or cultural dimension of the candidate or campaign. These factors are summarised in greater detail below.

• Social shaping explanatory factors
  o Offline campaign, either traditional or modern as measured by the traditional and modern indices
  o Party affiliation including the party’s ideological outlook and relative size
Electoral factors: incumbency, marginality

The socio-economic profile of the constituency

- Candidate factors, including attitudes to technology and campaigning

- The technologically determinist explanations do not focus on specific variables per se but instead provide rationales for the adoption that put the technology at their centre. These are sub-divided into two types: instrumental and symbolic.

  - Instrumental explanations cite opportunities that the technology brings to focus on new voter outreach methods that were not previously priorities for the campaign such as the way it allows them to bring in a more participatory aspect to the campaign, or to reach certain voter groups they had never really targeted before.

  - Symbolic arguments focus on the adoption of interactive web campaigning as an end in itself, i.e. it offers the campaign a particular outlook or the appearance of modernity.

For evidence that adoption is socially shaped this work looks for statements of how campaigns see the web first with their existing offline campaign i.e. allowing them to do the things they were doing offline better. These explanations essentially embody the logic that underpins the wider argument: that offline and online campaigns are connected. This could take the form of predominantly traditional campaigns talking about the web contributing to building local support networks as originally hypothesised, but in light of the findings in Chapter Four, this may also take the form of predominantly modernised campaigns discussing the role of the web in voter identification and targeting. Examples of this are likely to be where campaigns discuss web campaigns with reference to continuing campaign activities they would have done anyway e.g. we used the web to contact voters and ask them about their issues alongside the doorstep canvassing we were doing. In this example, the web campaign itself represents nothing new for campaigns, only a transfer of offline activities online.

In addition to predominantly traditional and predominantly modernised campaigns, this chapter also includes a number of campaigns that scored above average on both
traditional and modernised indices. In the quantitative analysis this was less of an issue as the variables were treated as continuous, and an interaction term was used to test for a significant effect of campaigns going all out and emphasising both traditional and modernised techniques. This was described as an intensity effect. In the case of this chapter, we are not dealing with a large number of cases, and so the specific combination of traditional and modern scores becomes more of an issue. As a result this chapter also addresses a number of high-intensity campaigns that use above average levels of both traditional and modernised campaigning. These campaigns are expected to use a mixture of campaign techniques to achieve their goals and to use the web in support of both traditional and modernised campaigning – either to develop local networks or to gather data.

In addition to the traditional and modernised campaign concepts, this chapter is also a chance to revisit control variables, all of which to some extent represent social shaping explanations. For evidence of party as a driver to adoption this work would look for references to party ideology, organisation or any general advice received by constituency level campaigns from central party organisations suggesting that they were encouraged (or discouraged) to go online. For evidence of competitiveness of the race as a driver to adoption this work would look for references to the position of the campaign as an incumbent or challenger, in a marginal or safe seat, and how these factors influenced candidates’, and workers’, thinking. For evidence of constituency characteristics as a driver to adoption this would look for references to features such as levels of internet usage, education and affluence. This in particular is likely to be a very subjective measure given that different campaigns will target different areas in the same constituency. So one constituency with average levels of internet use may mask a Conservative voting population in an affluent area with high levels of internet access and a Labour stronghold with low levels of internet access.

Candidate factors remain harder to characterise as social shaping explanations. They have been included in previous analyses alongside social shaping explanations, but have been reduced to easily quantified variables e.g. age. Quantitative analysis has shown age and gender to be influential factors, but these are thought likely to be proxies for attitudes towards technology i.e. younger candidates are more likely to already be
steadfast web users prior to the campaign. In this sense, candidate factors do not fit within the bracket of social shaping, but are more deterministic. So whilst the quantitative analysis focused on specific characteristics, in this chapter the wider attitudes associated with candidate factors need to be accessed directly. These include internal biases in the candidate or other members of the campaigns that make them decide to campaign online. Examples of candidate explanations could include candidate’s own backgrounds and experience e.g. *I work in IT so it was natural to campaign online* or *I’m on Facebook a lot so it was easy for me to campaign there.*

The framework now moves to factors that fall under the heading of technological determinism. Candidate factors have already been considered above. Instrumental factors are explanations that see the role of the web as breaking with existing patterns of behaviour. These are distinct from institutional or personal factors in that subjects introduce them as something new and separate from their existing patterns of campaigning rather than as being a strategic element of the wider offline strategy. Context is crucial in the distinction between instrumental and social shaping factors. Web campaigning allows campaigns to do things that they previously thought were beyond them or develop new ways of pursuing the same goal. Examples of instrumental explanations might include use of the web to perform tasks too expensive or time-consuming to do offline e.g. *we couldn’t afford direct mail so we used the web instead.* Crucially, the context of this statement differs from socially shaped explanations as the web allows the campaign to do something they would not have otherwise been able to do; it is not a continuation of an existing offline campaign. In short, instrumental explanations can be as much about shifting emphasis on established techniques as they can be about entirely new techniques; where they differ from socially shaped explanations is the context they are presented in by the subject. Finally, symbolic explanations conform most closely to the kind of ‘technological somnambulism’ described by Winner (1986, p10). These are explanations that focus on the symbolic or ritualistic value of being seen to be a Web 2.0 campaign and link with the idea of being modern or cutting edge, or mimicry of other campaigns such as Obama 2008. Examples of these explanations might include narratives such as *it was expected* or *we wanted to seem technologically adept.*
DATA & METHODS

Data to populate this framework are drawn from a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with candidates and campaign managers between September 2011 and April 2012. A fuller description of data collection can be found in Chapter Three, but the most important aspect of this exercise was the choice of cases. As noted, case selection was driven by the main argument being tested in this thesis; that the adoption of interactive web campaigning will be socially shaped rather than technologically determined, specifically by the kind of strategy the campaign pursues offline. To this end it was necessary to include cases that represented the two main offline campaign strategies identified in the literature as characterising UK constituency campaigns and therefore allowed for a deeper probing of hypothesised relationships: i.e. predominantly traditional campaigns, predominantly modern. Given that the traditional and modern indices were not mutually exclusive, combined or high-intensity type campaigns that score highly on both indices were also included.

The requirement for examples of different campaign types was filtered through the practical limitations of conducting research in the real world. This was driven in part by limited resources; interviews had to be conducted within easy reach of the University of Manchester or over the phone. A further limitation was that subjects had to be willing to be interviewed. Often chosen subjects, particularly sitting MPs were too busy or unwilling to discuss topics like campaign strategy. Reluctance to participate was mitigated to some extent with the guarantee of anonymity and assurances that participants would be able to review any quotations used in the final work. Based on these criteria, a final sample of seven campaigns was selected for the qualitative analysis. These consisted of three traditional campaigns, one modernised and two high-intensity campaigns. It was also considered important to have a mix of parties although it was not possible to compare across all parties within each campaign mode. In each case the campaign had made use of Web 2.0 sites as part of their web presence, and had been recorded as engaging in public personal interactivity. Campaigns that did not use interactive campaigning in any form were not considered in this analysis as non online candidates were reluctant to be interviewed about web campaigning. In some cases
multiple interviews were available from both candidates and campaign workers, but in others only candidates were interviewed. To preserve the anonymity of subjects cases are referred to by letters preceded by the role of the subject in the campaign e.g. Campaign Manager, Campaign A. The table below summarises the cases included in this analysis.

Table 31: Case Selection for Chapter Six

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<td>LD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
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CHAPTER STRUCTURE

The following is divided into three broad sections covering different explanatory variables. The first section explores the campaign candidate or worker’s description of their campaign and how well this resonates with the scores provided by the traditional and modernised indices. Initially this is a chance to test the validity of the traditional and modern measures of offline campaigning and adds an additional check to the results of earlier analyses. Following this, this section then proceeds to explore the explanations offered by candidates of their web campaigns in relation to their offline campaign type. In effect this is a further chance to test the hypothesised connection between traditional campaigns and interactive web campaigning, but it also gives subjects scope to describe the connection between online and offline campaigning in their own words. This section aims to address the question of why there is apparently so little connection between online and offline campaigning in previous quantitative analysis. The analysis then goes on to consider additional social shaping factors included in quantitative analysis: party affiliation, electoral factors, socio-economic factors. The work then goes on to consider influence of candidate factors on web campaigning. The final section expands beyond social shaping explanations to consider 200
the possibility that rather than being driven by outside factors, that web use in campaigns is driven by more deterministic factors. This analysis begins by considering instrumental explanations but then develops symbolic arguments.
TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CAMPAIGNING

This section considers candidates’ and campaign workers’ responses in light of how well they conform to their characterisation as traditional, modernised or as a mixture of both (high-intensity). It then goes on to demonstrate the extent to which the offline campaign was felt to be a factor in their online campaign. Overall it demonstrates that there is a difference between traditional and modern campaigning in terms of techniques employed and campaign strategy; however, it also shows that campaigns can be more nuanced, with traditional campaigns experimenting at times with modernised techniques and modernised and mixed campaigns still reliant on time honoured techniques such as the doorstep canvass. This section also confirms the findings of Chapters Four and Five, with subjects often struggling to relate their offline and online campaigns, suggesting that the web was seen as being something separate and apart from the offline campaign.

TRADITIONAL CAMPAIGNS

This section covers the responses of the three traditional campaigns included in the data (A, B and C). In terms of the offline campaign, for the most part these campaigns conform to the expected model of a predominantly traditional campaign. Notably, these campaigns struggled with the number of supporters available to them at the local level:

‘...I had a small team of mainly me.’

Candidate, Campaign A

‘I think we had 10 people who were actively involved in different ways and up to 20 who were less involved but still contributing somewhat.’

Candidate, Campaign C

In addition campaign techniques are confined mainly to face-to-face meetings and direct contact with potential voters. All candidates receive a free electoral address, but for some of these campaigns even organising this was difficult due to limited resources.
‘Speaking to people. I’m quite good at speaking to people and I had a limited budget so it was easy to come to them and meet them and get the message across that way.’

‘Well the freepost leaflet, that went, so everyone gets a nice glossy leaflet. But most of the work was actually going out, public meetings and... So I was at two or three public meetings a week for a month and half, two months.’

Candidate, Campaign A

‘The most important for me was face-to-face. You cannot beat face-to-face.’

Campaign Manager, Campaign B

‘We had certain parts of the constituency that we felt there was a possibility of getting out the Labour vote, so increasingly knocking on doors and picking up issues from those sorts of activities.’

Candidate, Campaign C

‘We did the one free mailing and that was like, a big effort even to take advantage of that.’

Candidate, Campaign C

However, the traditional model was not only about the idea of face-to-face campaigning. Candidates often demonstrated a desire to conduct a more targeted, mobilisation focused campaign rather than relying solely on face-to-face campaigning.

‘As part of that - understanding of the issues we were planning to lead on - in the early stages we were talking to people on the doorstep in terms of trying to understand what was important to them. More and more as we moved towards the election – as you’d expect – we were focusing more and more on voter ID and knowing where we’d be able to turn out the vote, such as it was.’

Candidate, Campaign C
‘OK, well we had the freepost that went to all voting households. We also, prior to the start of the campaign, we put out a newspaper that we got delivery to go out to most parts of the... It was four wards of the constituency, it wasn’t everywhere, it was four wards of the constituency’

Candidate, Campaign B

‘It would be the literature.’ [When asked about the most important aspect of the offline campaign]

Candidate, Campaign B

‘I think the key issue is collecting voter identification, so knowing who your voters are, how to get the vote out.’

Campaign Manager, Campaign B

‘We prefer to use the word voter-identification rather than canvassing. A lot of people are under the impression that canvassing is knocking on doors and convincing people to vote for you. That’s not the case. What you need to do is you need to get the vote out.’

Campaign Manager, Campaign B

So whilst campaigns labelled as predominantly traditional on the basis of the EAS results do demonstrate the face-to-face techniques expected, there was also a clear understanding from some of the traditional campaigns of the value of voter identification and targeting rather than simply network building through the local canvass. So whilst this evidence supports the idea that traditional and modern campaigning are distinct approaches to campaigning, it also recognises that campaigns that emphasise the role of the traditional are also aware of modernised campaigning and demonstrate aspirations to include elements of it where they can.
When questioned about their use of web campaigning, as expected the traditional group of campaigns interviewed all used Web 2.0 sites to some extent.

‘So I had a website, I managed my own website tailored specifically to the constituency... And I used Twitter.’

‘The Twitter, I get more of personal relationship going with someone, and you can respond instantaneously. So it has a different feel to it. So I think you’re able to engage more with the voters with Twitter than... Whereas the website is more about saying what you’ve done, where you’re going.’

Candidate, Campaign A

‘I had a Facebook page and a Twitter account.’

Candidate, Campaign B

‘I did have a Twitter account at the time but to be honest I didn’t really understand what Twitter was or how to use it so it wasn’t used at all. Now I prefer Twitter to Facebook, but at the time of the General Election Campaign...’

Candidate, Campaign C

Many of the traditional campaigns, however, were also keen to talk about the volume of email they were receiving on top of their web presences.

‘Although the postal address was there on the website, national campaigns would send me loads of bumph to this postal address, but I don’t think any constituent sent me anything like that. Where I guess I got a good one hundred or possibly as many as two hundred emails from constituents. Quite a good chunk of which, I would say two thirds of which, were people putting their names to generic national campaigns.’

Candidate, Campaign C
'And there was an awful lot of email that goes on. As a candidate you get absolutely bombarded with questionnaires from people during an election campaign. Hundreds and hundreds of emails.'

Candidate, Campaign A

Email is an aspect of the web campaign that is difficult to access for researchers. This evidence suggests strongly that it was very much a tool that campaigns rely on and therefore a key part of the online presence. This supports further the findings of earlier analysis that email was an important tool in the 2010 campaign at the constituency level and may have provided the core elements of personal interactivity seemingly lacking from Web 2.0 sites.

When asked about interacting with voters online subjects were often subdued about the role of Web 2.0, with interactivity seemingly not the main element of Web 2.0 usage. There was, however, a clear preference for Twitter over and above other options, confirming to some extent the findings of Chapter Five, which showed Twitter to be the most common medium over which campaigns interacted publically. This was tempered to some extent by the perception of Twitter as being limited to those that were particularly interested in the campaign rather than the ‘average’ voter.

‘I was surprised the website provided a lot less opportunity for that [interactivity]. Mainly because I think you need a paper campaign to promote your website and I wasn’t able to do that, so people found it by chance, although they did, a lot of people came and visited it. Twitter was easier because I had a more established Twitter presence already.’

Candidate, Campaign A

‘On Twitter I did respond to people.’

‘I took the time to respond to individuals, but I thought they are the people who want to know... They are the people who want to know what my views as a candidate are so I took a bit of time responding to individuals...’

Candidate, Campaign B
‘A lot of people think [Twitter] it’s engaging with the voter. Unless you are in a very small minority, most voters I am afraid, are not on Twitter.’

Campaign Manager, Campaign B

‘There was maybe a little bit of discussion on Facebook.’

‘...this is why I now Twitter more than Facebook, because Twitter is better set up.’

Candidate, Campaign C

Perhaps as a result of its ubiquity, however, the key interactive feature for subjects was often email.

‘But email was the key one, so I found a lot of it... Yeah, email and dialogue with people. And it was a much bigger amount of traffic and conversation via email than the previous general election.’

Candidate, Campaign A

‘The online campaign was a big part of the campaign. I think I was saying before that I responded to every email I reviewed, even the kind of duplicate ones that were similar.’

Candidate, Campaign B

The ubiquity of email was such that one campaign manager also began to create online discussion spaces so as to reduce the volume of traffic and the burden of creating email sub-threads.

‘Email can become an absolute pain in the backside... I detest email... You get that much email.... ’

Campaign Manager, Campaign B
The importance of email to these campaigns lends further weight to the trend identified in Chapter Five, whilst email may be to some extent ‘old hat’, it still represents a technology that is firmly established within the voting population and as a consequence provides a broad base for campaigns to interact with voters should they wish to. So whilst Web 2.0 may be the newest opportunity to interact, by concentrating on this we are perhaps missing dialogue between campaigns and voters taking place over older (and less public) technologies.

Regarding the hypothesised relationship between traditional campaigning and Web 2.0, there is some evidence of a link between the offline campaign strategy and the online amongst these campaigns. Candidate A for example stressed the need to engage with the electorate face-to-face, focusing on public meetings as the key tool in the offline campaign. Online, the candidate makes definite connections between that and the use of Web 2.0, in particular Twitter:

‘I used them to report back, to say look I’m going to this public meeting, then I would report what happened at the meeting and the questions that were asked.’

‘[I] would talk at a public meeting and we would get involved in a conversation over Twitter afterwards.’

‘Well it was about engaging with people who were interested in the issues that were going on, so I would go to a march, or I’d speak at an event about a campaign issue. Publish stuff about the campaign issue and how people could get involved with the campaign online, and I would engage with campaigners on the same issue over Twitter, saying when the next meeting [was] going to be or they would ask me if I was going to be there and what my views on it were and what I’d be able to say.’

Candidate, Campaign A

There was a similar sense of the offline campaign spilling over into the online from both campaigns B and C. The candidate in campaign C makes a strong point of arguing that
the online campaign was an addition to the offline campaign as opposed to a distinct entity in itself.

‘*I think the web was more just an addition to what was happening offline as opposed to being something that was a core driver of the campaign.*’

‘Firstly, some people who we would meet would make reference to the website. They were more likely to take the time to have a conversation with you if they’ve already become familiar with you through the website. Secondly, certain campaign themes that you want to push and be consistent on, they would feature in the literature that was going through people’s doors and on the website, so they complement each other in the sense of consistently reinforcing the same themes.’

Candidate, Campaign C

Beyond this evidence, however, the link between the offline campaign and the online is not as strong as the literature (this work included) would suggest. Whilst candidates have stressed the need for coordinated action across platforms and in some cases following up offline actions online through networks such as Twitter, there is little sense of the offline campaign fully driving the online campaign as hypothesised. Overall, the effect of offline campaign forms on the use of interactive web campaigning is in line with the findings of previous quantitative analysis.

**MODERNISED CAMPAIGNS**

Only one campaign (D) in the selection matched the criteria of being a predominantly modernised campaign based on EAS responses. Only one interviewee was available, a Labour candidate. Interestingly this candidate was replacing a sitting MP who was stepping down at the 2010 election. This makes this case unique amongst the other cases considered here. Candidate D’s description of the campaign echoes in some ways the mixed responses given by the traditional campaigns above about the nature of the
offline campaign. The subject highlighted no one area of campaigning, instead stressing the importance of mixing campaign techniques.

‘You never do it like that. You do door-stepping and you get material out, you couldn’t not do one or the other.’

Candidate, Campaign D

This further confirms the blurring of the designations traditional and modern shown by the traditional campaigns. Again in this campaigning, doorstep canvassing was an important plank of the campaign strategy, but a multi-faceted one, potentially fulfilling many functions.

‘You do doorstep contact work for a number of reasons. ... to meet people because that helps. ... to listen out for situations where you can actually help people. ... to convey key messages, or to pick up what people are telling you. ... to build up a list of people you want to visit on election-day and ask them to go vote.’

Candidate, Campaign D

It was also clear, however, that Campaign D differed from other cases in the degree to which it employed more developed campaign techniques that were not evident in more traditional campaigns. In some part this seemed to be enabled by central party support – perhaps as a result of the electoral context (an expected Labour victory).

‘I did have direct mail through the national party. It was the kind of scheme whereby if you demonstrate to the party that if you’re talking to people all the time they back you up by doing direct mail shots that were targeted on selection criteria established though Contact Creator [party software].’

‘I didn’t mention phone-canvassing either. There was a lot of phone-canvassing.’

Candidate, Campaign D
Online, Campaign D had a diverse online presence encompassing a broad range of interactive web campaign tools:

‘’I did a website. I did Facebook. I did emails. I had a blog. We had one video made but... a late and earnest endeavour by a volunteer ...’’

Candidate, Campaign D

Despite a wide-ranging online presence, however, the overwhelming sense from Campaign D was that the web campaign failed to gain traction with the public or lead to any interaction. Overall, the candidate saw the web very much as a tool for information gathering rather than for interacting.

‘’It [The Web campaign] was struggling to capture much imagination. But I was pleased and proud with the artwork, which I thought at times was distinctive and original.’

‘[When asked how much interactivity they saw] Not much. I think there are a couple of things to be aware of. One is that there is a sense in which you've got to be either a celebrity or a notoriety to get a lot of people to decide to follow you.’

‘I did a bit but... we struggled to find a way of getting it to engage people. Even party members weren't that interested in Facebook.’

‘I would have regarded the general role of the web in much the same sort of way as the general role of the media: things we were getting information on. [...to convey] some idea of the big messages that were playing out. I think I saw [our web material] as part of the campaign. I never thought there was a moment when [anything happened using the web that] was particularly exciting.’

Candidate, Campaign D

There is little evidence of any direct connection between the offline campaign and the online campaign in this instance beyond styling. Whilst Candidate D strived for a
consistent visual identity, the online campaign was not seen as contributing to or expanding the offline campaigns being pursued:

‘[The web campaign] was all interconnected, [sharing] key messages, it shared the ... visual identity of the campaign logo, and the border on the [printed] materials. It was all unified.’

Candidate, Campaign D

As with traditional campaigns, Campaign D does not give the impression that the offline and online campaigns were strategically linked. The subject discusses the web presence as an addition to and not a core part of the campaign.

**HIGH-INTENSITY CAMPAIGNS**

As well as predominantly modernised and predominantly traditional campaigns, there were also campaigns that scored above average on both the traditional and modernised indices. These are seen as campaigns that use a mixture of traditional and modernised campaign techniques and are thought likely to be amongst the most intensive campaigns. This section covers campaigns E and F, both of which were categorised as high-intensity campaigns that scored over 100 on both the traditional and modernised indices.

A number of statements made by these campaigns allude to the use of modernised campaign techniques, in particular direct mail and the targeting of voters based on specific characteristics. However, both subjects still placed the canvass as the centre of their campaign. Campaign F in particular saw the role of canvassing as to generate data to better target other aspects of the campaign. There is a notable contrast here between the attitudes to canvassing, whilst traditional campaigns saw the canvass in part as a way to connect with voters, the combined campaigns were far more interested in the data it could provide.
‘Well throughout three years I had been doorstep canvassing so it was blood, sweat, tears and toil... and shoe leather. The canvass was the foundation of the success of the campaign and in terms of the technology... The technology is no good unless you have the data within the computer.’

‘It was all about voter intentions, looking for supporters, leaflet deliveries, postal votes. The short campaign is really just the end, reminding people that actually three years ago I knocked on your door.

‘If you have a database then the direct mail comes out of that. You're talking about my campaign so those three years of canvassing, that information goes in there so the direct mail campaign would go to those waverers and those people who may vote Conservative. We used direct mail for that.’

‘Yes, by ward. Because it’s quite a diverse constituency [description of constituency] so what I did, I segmented them into wards.’ [When asked if the content of direct mail was targeted.]

Candidate, Campaign F

‘I think you try and mix getting literature out and getting leaflets and electoral addresses out with speaking to as many people as possible; knocking on doors and then using the knowledge of supporters to try and drag them out on polling day.’

‘It needs to be about balance, but with limited resources in terms of people we needed to focus more on the leaflets than on the canvassing.’

Candidate, Campaign E

The combined campaigns also differed in their attitudes to the web. Whilst both of these subjects had a web presence augmented with Web 2.0, they were sanguine about the role of the web. Candidate F saw the web as a tool for information delivery, and outright rejected the idea of directly engaging with voters over Web 2.0 tools.
'It was very much a shop window as far as I was concerned. I didn’t update all the time. I would put photographs up there, if anybody looked at it they would think [candidate name] looks like a normal [person] which I am.’

‘You start going through Facebook for casework and things to do then it’s a recipe for disaster. The workload... You cannot be... I had an email account anyway. People would contact me via email or by association email, so people did have access to me.’

Candidate, Campaign F

Candidate E was more enthusiastic about interactivity, but primarily as an organisational tool rather than as a platform to interact with voters.

‘Facebook I think is more useful as an organising tool than as a campaigning tool; although if you get it right it can be good. I used Facebook primarily to shuffle my supporters around and using things like Facebook events to get them in the right place’

Candidate, Campaign E

Candidate E also confirms one of the earlier decisions made in this thesis: to treat blog platforms as a Web 1.0 site.

‘My mother’s dog has a blog now.’

‘I wouldn’t see blogs as something special actually, they’re just a type of website.’

Candidate, Campaign E

When justifications of web campaigning were explored neither campaign made explicit links between the offline and the online campaign, although there were clear connections between the online and offline campaign. Campaign F talked about the feedback loop between leaflet delivery and the website which demonstrates an integrated campaign.
'So any literature always had reference to the website knowing full well that... We used to look at the spikes [in traffic]. When you'd done a delivery in a certain area you’d look at the website and you could see that after a few hundred leaflets had gone out there was a spike in the [traffic]. People clearly looked at the leaflets to the extent of going to the trouble of looking you up on the internet via the website.'

Candidate, Campaign F

Candidate E also discussed a possible future connection between online and offline campaigning, although this was an implicit connection.

'I don’t think it will ever replace the traditional methods, but I think there’s probably more that can be done to complement the ways in which people campaign.'

Candidate, Campaign E

Again, beyond superficial stylistic connections, there was little evidence of the offline driving the online campaign or being fully strategically integrated as expected.

This analysis has shown a number of things. Firstly, it has provided support for the consideration of traditional and modern campaigning as distinct campaign types, although these have not been as discrete as might have been expected. In general campaigns pursue a mixture of campaign techniques, but the emphasis on face-to-face techniques and access to more advanced campaign techniques such as direct mail fits the pattern expected. The most intensive campaigns are likely to be the mixed campaign types that are able to perform above average on both indices. These can be considered to be similar to the purely modernised campaign types hypothesised in the literature review, with the modern index forming the ‘dominant gene’ over and above the traditional index. Secondly, there has been little evidence presented by campaigns to challenge the findings of Chapters Four and Five. Although there is some evidence of a connection between the online and offline campaign, most interviewees expressed this as being at a relatively superficial level, involving connections between branding or key
messages. In only one case (Campaign A) was there clear evidence of the web being used as part of a wider campaign goal, to continue discussion with potential voters following public meetings. This confirms the findings of quantitative analysis, for most campaigns, most of the time, the use of the web was not related to wider strategic aims of either network building in the case of traditional campaigns or targeting material in the case of modernised campaigns.

Two further points are of note. Where campaigns did discuss interactivity and interacting with voters, this was over Twitter. This supports the finding from Chapter Five, that Twitter was the most common source of public personal interactivity from campaigns. The data also raises questions over the audience Twitter accounts were directed at, with a number of interviewees suggesting that the role of Twitter was more elite-focused than about communicating with potential voters. Also, the role of email is potentially an untapped well of information about the behaviour of campaigns. Many campaigns went out of their way to report the volumes of information they received over email, and in at least one instance how they replied (Campaign B). For future work on campaign interactivity, email is a crucial dimension that is easy to overlook for methods related reasons.
ADDITIONAL SOCIAL FACTORS

So far the picture from interviews has been relatively consistent with expectations derived from the quantitative analysis. Subjects have remained relatively consistent with the boundaries of traditional and modern campaigning, whilst none have made a deep-rooted strategic connection between how they campaign offline and what they do online. So if, as seems to be the case, web campaigning is not being driven by the offline campaign strategy, what factors (if any) are influencing the decision making of campaigns? The literature review identified a number of additional arguments as to why campaigns behaved as they did, all of them derived from social explanations of campaigning. These were incorporated into quantitative models as control variables. The qualitative analysis offered a further chance to explore how important these factors were for candidates and workers.

PARTY AFFILIATION

Subjects were split on the idea of party affiliation as a factor in driving them to campaign online. A number of campaigns rejected the idea outright:

‘No, I don’t think so.’ [When asked if being a Conservative made any difference to the decision to campaign online.]

Candidate, Campaign E

‘Not really. [When asked if being a Labour party candidate had any influence on the decision to campaign online]

Candidate, Campaign C

For other campaigns there was a clear ideological connection between their own party and their use of the web.
'We (Lib-Dems] look at allowing people to break out of conformity and not be enslaved by ignorance, surely the web does that as long as it's not overly controlled.'

Campaign Worker, Campaign A

'I think one thing about being a Lib-Dem is that you are not put in a box about what you think and the party line.'

Candidate, Campaign B

Both of these campaigns were affiliated to the Liberal Democrats, a party with a notably federalised structure, committed local campaigning strategies and has used the web as a communication tool in the past (Cutts, 2006; Lilleker et al, 2010). A connection between party ideology and technology use is difficult to substantiate. More easily specified was the level of practical support on offer from central party organisations, and in a number of instances subjects took the opportunity to be critical of the support they received:

'I would wonder if there isn't something about the way the party is organised in London, or the way Parliamentarians are organised in London that stops it being more spontaneous? I don't know if that's a Labour party thing. It was a shame that more of the stuff the Labour campaign was generating wasn't finding its way down to the constituency.'

Candidate, Campaign D

'As I say, the internet campaign was so much in its infancy. I'm sure it'll be much better organised next time. That's all I have to say about that.' [When asked about the influence of the party on the decision to campaign online]

'There wasn’t a campaign plan about what you did online, it was “there’s the tool, make the best use of it” without specifying what to do or what messages to send.'

Campaign Worker, Campaign A
‘There was a period when we were being given some quite useful tools from central office if you like, and encouragement... Certain press releases that we could use that made life easier... There was a lot of encouragement back then to actually start using the web. Unfortunately that’s sort of dwindled, but that’s now rekindling.’

Campaign Manager, Campaign B

This is an interesting development given the likely future progression of campaign website management. As the web becomes a greater part of daily life and by extension campaigns, the expectation is that central parties will exploit the capacity of the web to be templated and standardised, and their own candidates’ trepidation about using it, to further centralise the campaign. Already there is extensive use of campaign templates and the growth of campaign networks such as Lib-Dem ACT to testify to this. However, if central party support for web campaigning is lacking, the future may be more complex, with constituency campaigns left to some extent to fend for themselves. In a wider context, party affiliation was a divisive issue for the subjects, but the positive reactions of the Liberal Democrat campaigns in particular were in keeping with the expectations generated by the quantitative analysis, suggesting that there is a connection between the Liberal Democrats and the web, although as already discussed, this is difficult to substantiate. It may also be as a result of more practical commitments to the web by the Liberal Democrats in terms of supplying templated sites with inbuilt automated interactivity features for their campaigns although of those questioned, none explicitly confirmed this. Based on the backgrounds of those interviewed it seems likely that they would prefer to develop their own bespoke websites rather than rely on central templates.

**ELECTORAL FACTORS**

A further area of interest covered by the control variables was the electoral factors affecting the campaign, for example the difference between campaigns in safe and marginal constituencies. None of the subjects was able to make a strategic connection
between their position in the race and their use of the web, although a few were keen to point out their own specific circumstances.

‘We’re in a Labour stronghold so it wasn’t a full-blown campaign, so it went hand in hand with the local elections.’

Campaign Worker, Campaign A

‘As much as when you have a small number of people, and you’re a third party sounds like an uphill struggle, I think I got a lot out of it and I enjoyed it.’

Candidate, Campaign C

Candidate D had the most to say about how the circumstances of the election had impacted their web campaign. Campaign D was an unusual case in that the candidate was replacing a sitting MP stepping down. Candidate D highlighted the difficulties in developing social connections to potential constituents for challenging or outsider campaigns.

‘I think another factor for me which would be different from a number of others of which [one particular MP’s campaign] would be the highlight, was that ... if you were a sitting MP you kind of blended it in with your casework - not in a way that was inappropriate or illegal - but never-the-less there was a certain connection. There was one MP who I think had a database of, if I say ten thousand it's indicative, [well] it was huge. He was doing twice weekly emails and they were getting out to people. I was not allowed to have the email addresses of the constituents my MP worked with. I'm not complaining, that's the way it is. [It's right because those] email addresses are shared on certain [conditions]. Whereas that MP had a tremendous thing [they] could work up, it was quite difficult for me to get email addresses. They're quite difficult to collect on the doorstep as well. And when you're on the doorstep you're focussed on more important things: [Is] this the person on the [register]? Are they supporting you? Are there any issues that concern them?’

Candidate, Campaign D
Overall, there was little evidence that campaigns were using their web presences to match their specific electoral circumstances, although the evidence offered by these cases is somewhat limited. This does fit in with the limited significance of marginality shown in Chapters Four and Five, but it was not possible to confirm the negative impact of incumbency as shown in Chapter Four given that none of those interviewed were incumbent candidates.

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS**

The final group of independent variables considered were socio-economic factors; in essence an expression of Norris’s Digital Divide argument. In general, subjects were aware of uneven patterns of internet access in their constituencies, but still felt a web campaign was justified:

‘And in fact I think there were large parts of the constituency that probably didn’t have an awful lot of internet access. There are quite a lot of middleclass areas in the constituency that I knew would be going online. But the public meetings for sort of other aspects, they took care of the bits in the constituency that had less, less access.’

Candidate, Campaign A

‘Obviously you have to make as much of the online campaign as you can, but there are nice areas in the constituency, but there are deprived areas as well.’

Campaign Worker, Campaign A

‘It might be that geographically there are a lot of big houses with large drives, so if I wanted to knock on everybody’s door or deliver leaflets to every single house, that would be quite a task.’

‘Plus because it’s a relatively affluent area, there might be higher computer ownership.’
‘The one thing I would say about online communication is to always be aware that some people just don’t access it at all. I am aware that there are quite big parts of this constituency who wouldn’t go online and don’t have a Facebook account and don’t even have an email account. We’ve got members, you know, of our party and they’re always upset when they have not received an invitation because everyone else got the invitation by email.’

Candidate, Campaign B

‘I don’t think so.’ [When asked if there was anything about the constituency that made it harder to campaign online.]

Candidate, Campaign E

Finally, Candidate D also saw geography and the socio-economic circumstances of the constituency as being relevant factors in their thinking:

‘Helping those that need most help, you could possibly argue that people who are on less money aren’t going to be reached by IT in the same way. You’d probably qualify that by saying that mobile phones tended to be a thing that people were finding cheaper than landlines, so there was that, we were aware of.’

‘One of the hopes is that given the distances there are between these key places, was that the internet campaign would help.’

Candidate, Campaign D

The subjects show an awareness of issues surrounding the Digital Divide, but there is little to suggest that it strongly influenced their thinking on interactive web campaigning. Chapter Four showed that ‘rural-retired’ constituencies were significantly less likely to adopt Web 2.0, but this was based on an abstract index, and from the comments above it seems that a constituency’s ‘ruralness’ or the population of retirees is not a consideration for the candidates interviewed.
CANDIDATE FACTORS

Chapters Four and Five also considered candidate factors as possible explanations for the adoption of web campaigning. These were not easily considered under the heading of social shaping as they stem more from a candidate’s own internal biases and attitudes than from external institutional constraints. In the quantitative analysis these factors were considered as abstract numerical representations such as age or employment which stood as proxies for attitudes candidates were thought likely to hold, e.g. younger candidates being better disposed to the use of social media. In contrast, this analysis considers directly the actual attitudes of the candidates towards the web and web campaigning. A further point of interest for the interviews was the background and narratives of candidates and campaign workers themselves. Each of the campaigns interviewed for this chapter used Web 2.0 in some form and there was a clear comfort level with technology and the web throughout the interviews.

‘Well I am comfortable with technology. I am an IT professional so…’

Candidate, Campaign A

‘I work in computing, so I should be a great advocate for tech, but I also see its drawbacks.’

Campaign Worker, Campaign A

‘I like technology. I’m not a technical person because... I don’t like technology for technology’s sake, but I do like what it can do and I enjoy working with technology just because it’s a fun way of communicating with people. But not the actually being techy for tech’s sake.’

‘I think I would have campaigned online in any case because it’s the sort of thing I like to do.’

Candidate, Campaign B

‘I’m warm to it, exceedingly warm to it. [When asked about their attitude to technology]’
Campaign manager, Campaign B

‘I’m not a technologist, I’m just a naïve enthusiast for technology’

Candidate, Campaign C

‘I worked for [large public company] computing so I was in IT since ’83. So I was one of the first party users of electoral software for recording voting intentions. I was one of the first party members to be using email. I was one of the first party members to have a blog and a website. I think the corollary to that was that some of the stuff that was coming along [more recently] I was a little bit behind the curve on because by the time that technology came along - some of the more multimedia stuff - I was less comfortable with that.’

Candidate, Campaign D

‘I’m a sales and marketing background so you use technology wherever it’s possible when it’s right to do so’

Candidate, Campaign F

‘I think I’m quite accepting of it. I wouldn’t say I’m someone who has to have the latest gadgets but I will make use of it where I can and I do try and keep up with things.’

Candidate, Campaign E

There was also some evidence that personal feelings or experience with technology, as well as personal backgrounds, was shaping the online campaign strategy. This was manifest in some cases as a clear dislike for a particular technology, or in others as an admitted lack of understanding about how some services work. In the case of Campaign B the campaign manager was able to deploy specialised software.

‘I’m not a Facebook user, but... so... and that’s just me hating Facebook. I probably should have put my distaste to the side and had a Facebook page but I couldn’t bring myself to do it.’

Candidate, Campaign A
'I did have a Twitter account at the time but to be honest I didn’t really understand what Twitter was or how to use it so it wasn’t used at all. Now I prefer Twitter to Facebook, but at the time of the General Election Campaign…’

Candidate, Campaign C

Let me explain another thing that just because of my IT background we also had set up. Nowadays personalised mailing lists are becoming quite commonplace with the likes of mail chimp just taken off in the last couple of years. Prior to this I had been working with a developer in Canada for a customised list messenger software. So the newsletters we were sending out, the way we were doing them when we were collecting information, was that everything was personalised. It had your name on it.

Campaign Manager, Campaign B

Personal experience, as expressed in these narratives, differs from the aggregate quantitative measures considered in the quantitative analysis such as age, but despite this they do seem to be a big factor in the adoption of interactive web campaigning by campaigns. Although the cases here could not be considered to be representative, indeed subjects were always more likely to be interested in the web simply by virtue of them agreeing to be interviewed on the subject, but nevertheless, the evidence presented by these subjects speaks strongly to the idea of personal bias playing a role in how campaigns chose to use the web, and the decision to experiment with Web 2.0 in particular. Such evidence suggests that web campaigning may not be as strategic or socially driven as the literature suggests, that in fact it is driven in part by non-strategic factors. Based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis, a candidate’s individual preference is likely a key driver of the adoption of interactive web campaigning.
TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS

Building on the apparent significance of candidate factors, the qualitative data also provides an opportunity to explore justifications for interactive web campaigns outside the realm of quantitative analysis. Two groups of factors were identified through the analysis of transcripts: instrumental and symbolic.

INSTRUMENTAL

Instrumental factors cover statements that locate the web outside of existing campaigning techniques, suggesting that there was something new or different about the online campaign, divorced from the old. In practice the distinction between instrumental and social explanations was not always clear. In part the categorisation of statements is based on the researcher’s judgement, but in general, if the subject introduced the web as something new or distinct then it was considered to represent an instrumental rather than social justification, excepting where there was a clear connection between the social circumstance and the web campaign.

Many of the subjects were keen to point out the comparative cheapness of the web as a tool for campaigning. This is by far the strongest instrumental reason for using the web, presenting an opportunity for campaigns to carry out costly offline activities such as distributing literature online for a fraction of the price, assuming voters can be encouraged to the site.

‘...you can communicate with so many people for so little money and so little time. Because it’s interactive. Because I can easily add people. Because I can easily add photos. I can go back and edit it.’

Candidate, Campaign A
‘It allows you to amplify your message without actually having people on the ground to deliver leaflets.’
Campaign Worker, Campaign A

‘Part of it was just my personal circumstances at the time…’

‘…I wasn’t able to go out and knock on doors as much as I wanted to so I focused on the online campaigning just because it was something I could do.’
Candidate, Campaign B

‘One good thing about the web is that it’s cheap, compared with getting loads of stuff printed. I think increasingly more of the constraint in terms of web activity was my time rather than the amount of money.’
Candidate, Campaign C

‘You use electronic tools because they’re cheap, it doesn’t cost anything.’
Candidate, Campaign F

‘As party membership is a lot lower than it was thirty or forty years ago there are less people willing to knock on doors and deliver leaflets, and it’s a way of getting your message out to a lot of people if you do it right without that level of physical commitment.’
Candidate, Campaign E

‘New technology helped in incredible ways in that sort of way. Newspapers [designed and printed] in an incredibly short amount of time ...’
Candidate, Campaign D

The second instrumental explanation that was commonly offered was that the web was a way to open up new audiences, voters the campaign could not easily reach in other ways. There was also a sense from some campaigns (A, B, F and G) that it enabled them to personalise what they were doing to some extent, to allow candidates to come across as ‘normal’ individuals.
‘Twitter was quite useful because it gave you a conversation with people you wouldn’t have. People are more keen to engage over Twitter than they are in a comment section of a blog because it’s sort of quick and easy and they’ve got access and it means contacting you with their phones.’

Candidate, Campaign A

‘You can only knock on so many doors, you can only shake so many hands, you can only respond to so many letters, but if you can contact people via the internet it gives you that sense that you are reaching out to people.’

Candidate, Campaign B

‘Whilst lots of your constituents might not be on Twitter, a lot of – to use local government speak – key stakeholders... I mean a horrible phrase I know but I have no better one. Terrible. But certainly you look now you will find pretty much every [local newspaper title] journalist is now on Twitter. All the ones who are involved in my area are following me and I’m following them.’

Candidate, Campaign E

‘I’ve always taken the view that as an elected representative who is a candidate, you want to try and get your message across to as many people as you can by as many different ways as you can.’

Candidate, Campaign E

‘On the website, once you’re on the website they could have a bit more detail, photographs and background and so on and so forth.’

Candidate, Campaign F

‘I hope it gives you a chance to be a bit more personal, give you a bit more colour. Because there’s only so much you can say on the doorstep. In particular there’s only so much you can say on a leaflet. Particularly at a general election rather than a local where a large chunk of the leaflet is going to be about
In summary, the text reveals that campaigns saw plenty of new potential in the web as a campaign tool, and by no means did they believe it was only a way to replicate their existing campaign behaviours online. Unsurprisingly, the greatest preoccupation was with how the web could help in saving or stretching existing resources, for example by allowing candidates who could not go out and canvass a chance to do so online. There was also an element of the web allowing campaigns access to new audiences, both electorates and elites, that they would struggle to engage with through offline campaign means only. There is some evidence (from Campaign A) of this being interactive, and in line with a traditional network strategy, although the subject did not explicitly make this connection, hence it is included as a new, instrumental, justification for the web campaign.

SYMBOLIC FACTORS

The final group of explanations considered are symbolic. As with instrumental factors above, these explanations are driven more by the innate qualities of technology itself as opposed to being shaped by external social causes. Symbolic factors are evidenced by statements that show campaigns are concerned about the way they appear, or where they feel that their web campaigning was a product of the weight of expectation on them. The commonest expression of symbolic factors was campaigns justifying their use of the web in terms of external expectations on them, that they had to use the web in order to be a serious campaign.

‘... it’s kind of expected that you have a website...’

Candidate, Campaign B

‘At the same time I feel like there is a basic expectation in the world today that if you want anyone to take you seriously as an organisation you need to have a...’

Candidate, Campaign E
decent website which was a core reason why I felt we needed to improve the web presence of Labour’s campaign in [constituency name].

‘I think the website was important for the Labour party in [constituency] to show they had a candidate and campaign who had worthwhile things to say, who took the constituency seriously.’

Candidate, Campaign C

‘[When asked why they campaigned online] Because I hoped for better. Because ... I think it was expected. ... It is 2010, that is what you do now. There's no sort of query about that really.’

‘[When asked if they were expected to campaign online] Yes. I think it was expected. De rigueur really.’

Candidate, Campaign D

There was also evidence of campaigns using the web as a presentational tool, as a way to say something about the campaign and the candidate. Candidate F specifically referenced the potential of the web as making them more accessible to younger voters.

‘It was just part of the portfolio. If you’re talking to younger... The younger generation talk about Facebook and they’ll ask if you’re on Facebook. They will have a look at it as it were. It was used as part of a marketing portfolio.’

‘No, it was part and parcel of the portfolio ‘[candidate name] told us that if you go on my Facebook page you will see...’ that was it. Then I didn’t look like an old... I could refer to that.’

Candidate, Campaign F

Finally, there was also evidence of candidates being influenced by global events, in one case by the Obama campaign, and in another in more general terms of technology as a transformative force.
'I went to a talk once about how Barack Obama won America and there... It was by someone who worked there. It was about how he had used media, internet media to communicate with people and I thought that’s the way forward... That’s the future.’

Candidate, Campaign B

‘Barack Obama was... I was watching how he was using groups etc. etc. and we were trying to utilise it also.’

Campaign Manager, Campaign B

‘But equally, more and more over the past ten years or so I’ve come to see technology as a very transformative force.

Candidate, Campaign C

In addition to the direct, instrumental benefits that came from launching a web campaign, there was also strong evidence that for many subjects the use of the web was justified through its connection with more nebulous concepts such as the Obama campaign, as well as expectations closer to home from voters and parties. In summary, the combination of personal factors, instrumental and symbolic factors offers a compelling explanation for the low levels of explanation offered by quantitative analysis. In many cases the social factors considered in the quantitative analysis (with the exception of candidate factors) did not resonate with interview subjects. To some extent campaigns’ use of the web did conform to what was expected, but crucially this relationship was not identified by campaigns themselves and so was unlikely to influence their thinking. The consideration of personal histories, the new campaign elements enabled by the web and the symbolic value of a web campaign, however, throws considerable light onto the question of why campaigns adopt the web profiles that they do. Rather than careful strategic calculation, the campaigns analysed here are more influenced by their own abilities and ideas, what they think is expected of them and what they have seen others do.
CONCLUSIONS

The key purpose of this chapter as initially conceived in the research design was to probe the results of the analyses of Chapters Four and Five examining the relationship of offline and online campaign mode. Given that these chapters showed a lack of support for the central hypotheses, the remit of this chapter has been widened to attempt to explore those explanations of interactive web campaigning that are not so open to empirical quantitative analysis. The results of the qualitative analysis serve to enhance the findings of the thesis in a number of key ways. Firstly, it provides an opportunity to confirm or challenge the choice of traditional and modern campaigning as the primary analytical framework. Secondly, it provides an opportunity to re-evaluate the findings of Chapters Four and Five from a different perspective using qualitative data. Finally it is an opportunity for interview subjects to explain their decision making in their own words and thus a chance to explore factors not represented in secondary data. These objectives were fulfilled through the analysis of text gathered through semi-structured interviews with a number of candidates and campaign workers, primarily from the North West region of England. Subjects were selected on the basis of their use of the web, how well they exemplified the offline campaign style as defined by traditional and modern indices and their willingness to co-operate. Interviews were semi-structured based on the questionnaire in appendix B, but subjects were encouraged to go beyond these questions where they felt it appropriate.

The results are largely consistent with the conceptualisation of traditional and modern campaigning as the independent variables used in previous analyses, although there is also a strong sense that campaigners did not easily see themselves fitting into boxes, and that many campaigns sought to do more where they thought they could. In addition, the analysis also suggested that campaigns were often more mixed in the way they went about campaigning, with campaigns that had both local resources and national support able to do both traditional and modern campaigning rather than only relying on modernised campaigning. So whilst the distinction between traditional and modern campaigning as it is used here is valid, attempts to typologise campaigns on this basis may do well to differentiate between highly modernised and campaigns that are both highly modern and highly traditional.
The main findings of Chapters Four and Five have been the lack of support for H1 and H2, with a positive association between modernised campaigning and Web 2.0 site adoption (and a lesser connection between modernised campaigning and automated interactivity). In addition to the unexpected modernised-interactive web campaigning connection, quantitative analysis showed the connection between offline campaign style and online campaigning to be limited, as were social factors overall. There was some evidence that candidate factors alone may be as important or more important than the other social factors in explaining the adoption of interactive web campaigning and this is supported by the qualitative evidence presented in this chapter. In the examples included here candidates often had difficulty in linking their use of interactive web campaigns to their wider offline strategy as the literature would suggest. This supports the assertion that social factors are of limited significance in explaining the adoption of interactive web campaigning. There was, however, evidence of a common disposition towards technology and the use of the Web by campaigners in the interview data, with several subjects having backgrounds linked to the use of IT. To some extent this has to be considered a result of sample bias: candidates with IT backgrounds are simply more likely to agree to be interviewed about their use of the web in campaigns, but coupled with statistical analysis, and on balance, this is fairly strong evidence for the importance of candidate factors over and above wider social factors.

Beyond the evidence of the importance of candidate factors there was also a sense for many of those interviewed that they valued the web as it let them develop new campaign practices, things that they could not have done offline. For instance targeting new groups of voters over social networks or developing a more personal presence than usually possible through campaign leaflets. Equally, there was also a sense that for many of the subjects, web use was at least in part of ritualistic value. In other words they felt expected to campaign online to demonstrate that they were modern and in-touch. Very quickly, online campaigns have gone from being innovative to part and parcel of campaign practices. These justifications represent a clear break from the idea of web use being socially determined, and instead point more towards an explanation that focuses on the properties of the web itself rather than with reference to existing social factors. Rather than the web being used as part of an existing strategy, campaigns
are in some cases, behaving in non-strategic ways, thanks in part it seems down to the aspirational qualities of the technology. Initially the literature suggests that campaigns will behave strategically, playing to their strengths and adopting interactive web campaigning only where it best suits them, but the indications are that this process has been superseded by the candidate’s and campaign team’s own beliefs and experiences, and in large part by the lure of the technology itself and the weight of expectation placed upon campaigns.

The following chapter (Seven) is the concluding chapter for this thesis. It summarises the findings of this thesis and links them back to the original research problem of party decline. It also identifies the limitations of this work and suggests further research work that could be undertaken in this area.
This thesis has addressed a research question that stems from the phenomenon of party decline. It has looked at the adoption of interactive web campaigning by candidates and their campaigns in the 2010 UK general election to evaluate the usefulness of new digital campaign techniques in reinvigorating connections between parties and voters. It asks:

Is constituency campaigning becoming more interactive as a result of the availability of interactive web campaign tools and how can this be explained?

This can be further divided into two separate research questions: measuring and then explaining the adoption of interactive web campaigning.

The approach taken in this work reflects a behavioural approach to political science in that it seeks to identify precise hypotheses and rigorously test them using a range of methods. At the same time, there is an element of exploration in this work, largely due to the unknown qualities of interactive web campaigning; levels of interactive web campaign adoption by constituency campaigns in UK general elections were entirely unknown. In addition few previous works have taken an analytical approach to this question and so developing hypotheses has required importing concepts from other areas, in this case the constituency campaigns literature. In addition, this work cannot claim to reveal precise causal explanations of interactive web campaigning. The available data and the context only support conclusions based on statistical associations rather than causal mechanisms. Despite these caveats, this work sets out to be as rigorous as possible with the available data and to test hypotheses grounded in previous academic works in this and related areas.
MEASURING INTERACTIVE WEB CAMPAIGNING

The first part of the research question asks if constituency campaigning is becoming more interactive as a result of the availability of interactive web campaign tools. The concept of interactive web campaign tools is operationalised in this work in two distinct ways: the adoption of specific websites (Web 2.0 sites) and the adoption of specific interactive features within a campaign’s web presence.

The results of Chapter Four show, through the analysis of secondary data, that Web 2.0 sites are becoming a common part of web campaign presences at the constituency level. The most common manifestation of this was ‘social networking’ whilst the data revealed lower levels of adoption for Twitter alone and video or image sharing websites. As an aggregate measure, around half of campaigns that responded were using Web 2.0 sites in some form. If this finding constitutes a wider increase in interactivity however is hard to determine from this data alone. If we equate Web 2.0 sites and interactivity, then yes, there is considerable evidence of campaigns becoming more interactive. However, this is far from the whole picture. The secondary data used in this analysis is useful as it offers a high number of cases for analysis, but this comes at the expense of detail. From this data there is no way to know how campaigns are using their Web 2.0 sites or whether they play any role in supporting dialogue or automated interactions between campaigns and voters.

To correct for this, Chapter Five developed a more detailed measure of interactive web campaigning based on the adoption of specific interactive features. Where the secondary data was far-reaching, this measure was more focused, concentrating only on campaigns in the North West of England. Campaign web presences were analysed using a schema that differentiated at first between three different forms of interactivity. From the perspective of redressing party decline, the most interesting of these features was also the rarest. Public personal interactivity - users and campaigns exchanging information with one another in public - was evident in only a hand-full of campaigns.
Interestingly, this behaviour was confined almost entirely to Twitter, which might indicate that the Twitter eco-system is particularly suited to the needs of more interactive constituency campaigns. Private personal interactivity was more common with many campaigns providing channels to communicate with them directly. The most notable form of this interactivity was the provision of contact email addresses and feedback forms on Web 1.0 sites although the use of either Twitter or Facebook came with associated private personal interactivity functions built-in in the form of direct or private messaging. Private channels were frustrating from a research point of view as their contents were inaccessible. These channels represent the potential for the exchange of information, but there is no quantitative data on what (if any) information actually changed hands through these tools. Qualitative data, however, suggests that for some campaigns a great deal of interaction took place over email. Finally, automated features were also relatively common, but were based largely on Web 1.0 platforms, again with the exception of built-in mechanisms such as Facebook’s ‘friend’ and Twitter’s ‘follow’. Beyond this, functions such as polling, donating and joining the party were conducted mainly through the use of Web 1.0 sites. So despite the idea that Web 2.0 sites are potentially a supply of personal information for campaigns a lot of information gathering at the constituency level took place over Web 1.0.

**EXPLAINING INTERACTIVE WEB CAMPAIGNING**

The measures used in the exploratory analysis above, Web 2.0 sites and interactive features, in effect go on to become the dependent variables in analysis that addresses the second element of the research question: explaining the adoption of interactive web campaigning. In keeping with a deductive approach, this analysis tested hypotheses that linked the adoption of interactive web campaigning to a campaign’s offline campaign techniques. This was based on the similar properties of the traditional offline campaign, with its focus on face-to-face meetings and developing local support networks, and Web 2.0, with a similar focus on direct exchanges of information between users and designers. In addition, there is an established theoretical perspective on the use of technology that maintains that the use of technology will be guided by established social factors rather than accepting technology as being a natural or pre-determined
phenomenon. This is the logic that has formed the basis of a number of theories of technology adoption by parties (Loffrgen & Smith, 2003; Rommele, 2003). This argument strongly suggests that campaigns will adopt web campaigns so as to augment rather than change their established offline campaign. Consequently two hypotheses were outlined: H1 which predicted a positive relationship between traditional campaigning and the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, and H2, which predicted a similar effect for the use of personal interactive features.

Traditional and modern campaigning was measured using indices adapted from those developed by Fisher and Denver (2009). The analysis showed that the adoption of Web 2.0 sites was linked to traditional campaigning, but it showed a comparable relationship was also present for the modernised campaign. This strongly suggests that traditional campaigning was no more predictive of web campaigning than modernised campaigning. Also of concern was the low explanatory power of the model including traditional and modern campaigning, suggesting that the indices were relatively limited as predictors of Web 2.0 adoption. Analysis of the adoption of interactive features showed no significant relationship between either the traditional or modernised indices and either personal or automated interactive features. Furthermore, qualitative evidence replicates the lack of connection between the offline and online campaign shown in quantitative analysis. Only one of the campaigners interviewed made an explicit connection between offline campaigning and the use of web campaigns: following up on public meetings using Twitter. The wider impression from campaigners was that the online campaign was not strategically integrated with offline campaign techniques in the way hypothesised.

The inclusion of measures of offline campaigning into this analysis was done on the grounds that it would expand the range of factors considered in the model beyond previous studies of this type. Doing so would import a new measure from the local campaigns literature, between the use of traditional methods and those that are closer to the kind of modernised campaigning described in the national campaigns literature. This has not been the case; instead the lack of predictive power associated with these variables forces us to reconsider their relevance. It is possible that the measures of traditional or modern have been wrongly specified, but they are supported theoretically
by previous studies (Fisher & Denver, 2009) and by empirical analysis on the 2010 EAS data (see appendix A). The other possibility is that – in the case of web campaigning - campaigns do not act strategically and are not shaped by social factors. Or, a further possibility is that other social factors are more relevant than the offline campaign in explaining adoption of interactive web campaigning.

The Literature Review chapter identified a number of previous studies of web adoption by candidates in a variety of settings: the US (Herrnson et al, 2007), Germany (Schweitzer, 2005, 2011; Zittel, 2009), Finland (Carlson & Djupsund, 2001) and Australia (Gibson & McAllister, 2006). These studies all shared a similar approach to web campaigning, testing a variety of social factors. In addition, several works offered some insight into the likely drivers of web campaigning such as party affiliation and the impact of the Digital Divide (Scammell, 1995; Norris, 2001; Seyd & Whitely, 2002; Whiteley & Seyd 2003b; Lilleker & Negrine, 2003; Dutton et al, 2009; Lilleker et al, 2010; Crabtree, 2010).

Party affiliation was the first variable included in both the sites and features models, and in both cases it was amongst the most predictive. In the adoption of sites the Liberal Democrats were notable for their use of Web 2.0 as were, to a lesser extent, the Labour Party. In the adoption of interactive features party affiliation was found to have no impact on the adoption of personal features, but the Liberal Democrats were again more likely to adopt automated interactive features – likely due to their use of template campaign sites. Qualitative evidence to some extent supports the idea of the Liberal Democrats as being the most committed web campaigners, with some subjects drawing an ideological connection to the use of the web in campaigning, although they were less convinced about the practical support that the party was providing.

Electoral factors were found to significantly influence the adoption of Web 2.0 sites, with incumbents being less likely to venture into social media than challenging candidates. This influence did not carry over to the models of interactive features. Web 2.0 is interesting in part because it relies on social connections to work in many cases (in particular social networks such as Facebook). Incumbent candidates, able to build up significant contacts during their term, may be more likely to be able to exploit these
online. It seems however that the opposite is more likely to be the case, with incumbents perhaps reluctant to take the risky option of opening their campaigns up to the voters online. Qualitative evidence about the effect of incumbency was difficult to obtain, as the subjects were nearly all challenging rather than incumbents. This is unfortunate but to be expected as incumbents that were not returned at the election would be unlikely to consent to be interviewed about the reasons why, and sitting MPs were often hard to contact for interviews. One subject (candidate D) was replacing a sitting MP of the same party, and although their campaign was unsuccessful, they did suggest that incumbency would be an advantage to a candidate in a web campaign. This presents a conflicting picture and makes unravelling the effect of electoral factors difficult. In the main however they seem to be of limited significance on candidates’ use of the web.

The final group of social explanations are socio-economic factors related to the constituency. In statistical analysis these were represented as two indices aggregating the levels of differing socio-economic characteristics: rural-retired, urban-deprivation, and an additional variable to control for ethnic diversity. Despite the evident Digital Divide in the UK, candidates seemed relatively unconcerned with the socio-economic status of their constituency (Norris, 2001; Dutton et al, 2009). The rural-retired index did have a significant negative impact on the use of Web 2.0 sites, but urban-deprived did not, and socio-economic factors did not impact on the adoption of specific interactive features. Some explanation comes from the interviews with campaigners, all of which had a web campaign, and all of which showed some awareness of issues surrounding the Digital Divide, but none of which saw these as a reason to limit their own web campaign activities.

The addition of party affiliation, electoral and socio-economic factors rendered improved models of both site adoption and to a lesser extent the adoption of automated interactive features (personal features remained hard to predict). However, the models did not explain a great amount of the variation in the sample, all of them exhibiting low residual values. This adds further weight to the idea that social factors, at least as far as they were able to be represented through quantitative data, were part of a wider picture that explained the adoption of interactive web campaigning. This leaves room to challenge the social shaping perspective, and introduce more deterministic explanations.
First of these deterministic explanations were candidate factors. Candidate factors do not fit easily under the heading of a socially shaped explanation of technology as they represent candidate’s internal biases and preferences rather than an external social explanation. For example, candidates might want to include interactive web campaigning in their campaign as they are already comfortable with the tools, or because they use the tools in their own personal lives. These could not be included directly in models of either site or feature adoption due to constraints on the use of EAS data. As a partial solution to this, further models were constructed using an additional dataset, the CCS. These models showed that candidate factors were strong predictors of interactive web campaigning, with younger and female candidates more likely to adopt Web 2.0 sites and younger candidates likely to exhibit greater numbers of both automated and personalised interactive features. The CCS and EAS models are not directly comparable so some care needs to be taken with interpretation, but candidate factors seem to play a large part in predicting adoption and use of interactive web campaigning. Qualitative data indicates that an individual’s age is unlikely to be related to the adoption of interactive web campaigning directly, but is likely a proxy for his or her own attitudes and background. Certainly the qualitative data seems to suggest that candidates with experience - either personal or commercial - of the web are more likely to adopt interactive web campaigning.

Instrumental factors were more difficult to represent in quantitative models and therefore were considered through the analysis of qualitative data. Instrumental justifications were those where candidates used the web campaigning because they thought they would be able to do something new, unrelated to the existing offline campaign. Interview subjects offered a range of justifications for their use of the web that fitted this explanation, foremost of which was the usefulness of the web in extending the reach of their campaign for very little cost and with few resources, in contrast to offline canvassing, leafleting or direct mail. In a number of cases campaigns also pointed out the potential of the web campaign to tap wider audiences not accessible through offline campaigning, including both voters and local elites.
Symbolic factors were the final set of factors considered. As with instrumental and candidate factors, these were difficult to represent in quantitative analysis and could only be looked at through the qualitative data. These were explanations based on the symbolic value of using the web as a campaign tool. In some cases candidates wanted to seem in-touch and accessible, in others they were following the example of other successful online campaigns and events, for example the Barack Obama campaign in the US. In a number of cases, subjects also expressed the sentiment that web campaigning was now simply part and parcel of campaigning, that having a web presence made them look like professional and competent campaigners.

The final outcome of this analysis is a complex and mixed explanation of interactive web campaign adoption. Rather than being solely socially or entirely technologically driven, the adoption of interactive web campaigns in the 2010 election can be explained as a cocktail of justifications and explanations. These ranged from campaigns dealing with the social realities of their organisational and electoral situation, through to valuing what were seen as innate capabilities of the technology and what it could do for the campaign. Of these factors, offline campaign techniques, as described by the indices of traditional and modern campaigning, were not strong influencers. There is little to be gained at the current juncture by including measures of offline campaign techniques into models of online campaigns. The major drivers based on this evidence were candidates’ political persuasion, their personal characteristics and attitudes to technology and a ‘cool’ factor associated with new web campaign techniques that for many candidates retain both a mystique and a great deal of utility. Even now the picture is not complete and there remains room in the model for outliers, random chance and other factors that cannot be represented easily in either quantitative or qualitative analysis.

INTERACTIVE WEB CAMPAIGNING AND PARTY DECLINE

Having answered the research question, it now remains to link the findings back to the original observation that drove this research: the apparent issue of declining party linkage functions and the threat to political legitimacy it presents. Based on these
findings did interactive web campaigning bring about a more connected campaign that might have gone someway to restoring linkage functions? No. Despite the widespread use of interactive web campaigning in the form of Web 2.0, there was little evidence that this had resulted in more public personal interaction between campaigners and voters. At best campaign activities are limited to automated interactive features and possibly private personal interactive features. The prevailing model is still a top-down, information-centric approach to campaigning. Furthermore, there was no evidence linking interactive web campaigning to more traditional campaigning, ruling out the possibility that the arrival of interactive web campaigning is promoting forms of campaigning that rely more heavily on interaction with voters.

Despite these findings there are still reasons to think that in the future there may be a role for web campaigning in bringing about more direct interactions between voters and campaigners. Firstly, despite the lack of a strong connection between traditional campaigns and interactive web campaigning, there was little evidence of a strong connection to modernised campaigning either, or indeed social factors in general. During the 2010 campaign interactive web campaign use was evidently nonstrategic, and driven in large-part by factors not derived from the campaign’s circumstances. This can be explained as party organisations having failed to integrate interactive web campaigning into their established practices as of yet, which is likely down to the newness of the tools. For most campaigners in the UK, the 2010 election was in effect a test drive of new options presented by interactive web campaigning. As the tools develop further and are socialised to a greater extent, becoming embedded in to an even greater degree in the lives of both voters and campaigners, then it will be likely fruitful to return to the role of interactive web campaigning in the future to look for greater evidence of the strategic use of the web.

The second reason is the rapid spread of Web 2.0 sites. The stand out finding of the early part of this thesis has been the number of campaigns using Web 2.0 sites to some extent, even without the associated interactivity. There is good reason to think that Web 2.0 sites are cumulative and their value grows the longer campaigns and candidates use them. For example, Facebook relies on establishing social connections between users, but this can take time and a single general election would not be sufficient time for
campaigns to establish a widespread presence. Similarly, few campaigns had much time to attract followers on Twitter, limiting the value of the service. The inter-election period however is likely to be one of consolidation as many candidates will retain their social media presences through their various local roles, in particular as councillors. As a result the infrastructure required to support an interactive web campaign has been laid during this election, and for many candidates it is likely to grow and develop.

Thirdly, whilst the evidence presented here has been as comprehensive as possible, it is limited by the available data. In particular this work has not been able to access what may turn out to be a key area: private personal interaction. These features were common in web presences and candidates interviewed often pointed out the amount of time they devoted to dealing with personal correspondence through email. This is possibly an important element, and could mask extensive evidence of campaigns and voters interacting with one another behind closed doors. The arrival of Web 2.0 is certainly the most interesting feature of the 2010 online election, but it may well be the ‘mundane’ tools that carried much of the interactive water (Nielsen, 2011, p755). Future researchers may be able to negotiate the access required to investigate these tools further and may well be able to show how these tools were being used. For the moment this remains a missing piece of the puzzle.

Party decline, as expressed by falling membership numbers, de-alignment and the erosion of party linkage functions, remains a cause for concern. Campaign modernisation is not the only cause of this phenomenon, but it is likely to remain a factor and become a bigger one if parties continue to refine and rationalise campaign strategies to the point that more and more voters feel that parties are unwilling to listen to what they have to say in an authentic or genuine way. Based on the available data, the 2010 web campaigns did not show any signs of contributing towards a reversing or even a slowing of this process, but they did show campaigns engaging with techniques that have the potential to introduce previously unknown levels and modes of interaction between voters and campaigns. The next time voters go to the polls will be an environment where such techniques are an even greater part of voters and campaigners lives, where the tools themselves have matured, but also one where the use of such tools
has grown more strategic and possibly limited by the process of campaign modernisation.

**LIMITATIONS, LESSONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This is the final section of this work and sets out the limitations of this study along with suggesting possible future research in this area to address them. The major challenge in this thesis has been the availability of data. For secondary data analysis the EAS data has been pivotal in making a widespread analysis of Web 2.0 site adoption possible. However, the questionnaire is far from perfect. The inclusion of items asking about the use of social networking and Twitter separately is understandable given the association between Twitter and text messaging at its inception. However, treating Twitter as different from social networking likely caused some confusion for candidates. Overall, a more unified set of questions on the use of Web 2.0 would have been preferable and hopefully the next iteration of the EAS will continue to hone the questions on the use of the web. A further issue has been the need to mix and match variables from different datasets in order to control for factors thought predictive of Web 2.0 adoption. The lack of candidate information on the 2010 EAS survey meant that candidate factors had to be borrowed from another dataset, the CCS. As these two datasets could not be linked the result is an additional model, complicating both the analysis and the interpretation of results. One possible solution is a bespoke questionnaire on the use of the web by candidates during elections. Such a questionnaire might be considerably shorter than the existing EAS, leaving out many of the questions retained for their relevance to previous work. However, an additional survey at election time would undoubtedly contribute to a sense of ‘survey fatigue’ amongst candidates and compete with other surveys for limited candidate time and resources. In addition, such a questionnaire may struggle to gain the endorsement of parties, a factor that undoubtedly boosted the number of responses to the EAS. For the present time, the best option might be to continue to rationalise the existing web questions on the EAS.

One area where more could be done to make data available is in content analysis. During analysis the greatest difficulty came from identifying campaign web presences
and ensuring that sites analysed could reasonably be called a campaign’s online presence. This could be helped with the establishment of a curated list of campaign web presences. In much the same way as Tweetminster was able to act as a clearing house for political Twitter accounts during the last election, a similar service but encompassing Facebook, regular web campaign sites and any other prominent emerging platforms would be of tremendous value to students of web campaigning and would minimise one element of uncertainty in future research. As with Tweetminster, such a service would work best if it was collaborative, so users could add sites for candidates in their own area for example.

As well as expanding the range of data available, future research would do well to consider carefully the platforms it analyses. This work has dealt with web campaigning as a complete web presence ranging over Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 sites alike. Future research may benefit from specialising in their choice of platform rather than attempting to embrace the entirety of a campaign’s web presence, particularly for research questions that deal with locating interactivity in web campaigning specifically. Based on the results of this work there are two specific platforms that stand out as having significant potential for interactivity in the near future: Twitter and email. Focussing on Twitter would provide future study with a structured set of data that could then be analysed for content as well as any specific recipients. A more in-depth study may well offer a chance to investigate the high number of @replies compared to other forms of personal interactivity. Such an approach would suit detailed content analysis using tools like DiscoverText\(^{15}\) or a wider analysis of networks formed by Twitter communications such as is possible through the tools NODEXL\(^{16}\). Further study of email would enable a more detailed analysis of the use of emails to communicate between campaigners and voters. In particular email use by campaigns needs to be further studied to evaluate the kinds of information being exchanged. Are campaign emails simply another hierarchical channel of communication or does the use of email support a dialogue between campaigns and voters? The interactivity that is potentially concealed in private communications such as email is likely to be significant but is currently easy to overlook because of the difficulty in obtaining data.

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\(^{15}\) [http://discovertext.com/](http://discovertext.com/)

\(^{16}\) [http://nodexl.codeplex.com/](http://nodexl.codeplex.com/)
Despite the broad perspective taken in this work on the idea of a campaign’s entire web presence rather than focussing on specific sites, there were a number of elements of campaign web presences excluded from the analysis. Less common Web 2.0 tools such as YouTube and Flickr were not considered and so some potential interactions between campaigns and voters have undoubtedly been overlooked. Perhaps a greater issue however is the emergence of party specific campaign networks in the form of Lib-Dem Act, My Conservatives and the Labour party’s Membersnet. Undoubtedly these services were modelled on Obama’s MyBO platform, but they seem to have played less of a role in the web campaign in the UK than in the US. As these networks grow in sophistication and become more embedded in campaigning then they may become more significant and should be considered in future study.

As well as focussing on specific platforms in future research; there is also a need to approach the issues raised in this thesis from the perspective of voters rather than from campaigns. This work has concentrated on the ‘supply’ of interactivity from campaigns; the use of sites and interactive features by campaigns. What this work has not been able to do is to address the demand for such tools by voters, nor has it been able to give much of an idea of how intensely these features were used when they were present. Based on the qualitative data analysed in Chapter Six, those campaigns that did offer interactive options through tools such as Facebook were largely underwhelmed by the response of the voters. This could indicate that the lack of interactivity may be driven to some extent by a lack of demand from the public. Partially this question is a data problem as it is much harder to gather data on voters than it is campaigns. However, there remain a number of questions on the demand side of the equation that could be answered with a more voter centred approach to web campaigning – in particular exploring the attitudes of potential voters and the demand for interactivity from candidates may add much to the debate over the role of web campaigns. Such a study could also investigate the role of third party sites in election campaigning. These could include local newspapers or local online forums where voters meet to discuss the campaign independently of the web campaigns of the various candidates.
The final area of future research suggested is altering the context of this study to look at other events beyond the general election. General elections are perhaps the pinnacle of UK campaigning, but they also represent an abnormal period in which representatives are compelled to engage directly with their electorates in a way they do not at other times. So further studies may wish to look at how candidates operate online in the intervening years. Sitting MPs’ use of the web as a tool for connecting with constituents has been looked at previously, but how this connects to the idea of campaigning is unclear (Jackson & Lilleker, 2004; Williamson, 2009). Moreover, in the long term, former and future candidates may also be trying to engage with voters during peacetime through interactive web campaigning by building up their own followings in preparation for the short campaign. There are also further opportunities to study web campaigning within an election: firstly by continuing the study of campaigning at the supra-national European level (Lilleker et al, 2011), but also by looking at more local level campaigns. As web audiences grow it becomes easier for campaigns to obtain the critical mass needed to establish web presences and support interactivity. It may still be too early to expect much web based campaigning at the local campaigns level, but certainly elections for mayors and the (at the time of writing) upcoming Police Crime Commissioner elections may provide scope for web campaigning. Furthermore, given that the police crime commissioner elections are likely to be something of a wildcard, having never been run before, there is plenty of room for innovation by candidates.

In the final analysis, this thesis has been a rigorous, empirically focused study of the adoption of web campaigning by constituency campaigns at the 2010 UK general election. It has taken a mixed methods approach designed to both measure and explain the levels of interactive web campaigning adoption amongst campaigns. The findings have shown that the widespread use of Web 2.0 sites has not translated to public interaction between campaigns and voters. Furthermore, the hypothesised alignment between traditional, face-to-face campaigning and Web 2.0 has not emerged as anticipated. Based on this analysis there is no support for the idea of interactive web campaigning providing a potential connection between campaigns and voters. However, this analysis does not show strong evidence of interactive web campaigning being used by modernised campaigns either. For the moment, interactive web campaigning is largely unrelated to offline campaigning, nor does it show strong links to other potential
explanations of web campaigning based on a social factors; interactive web campaigning is instead best explained by a mixture of social, candidate and more deterministic factors. Whether this picture will remain in the future as the use of interactive web campaigning becomes more formalised and embedded within both the practice of campaigns and voter’s lives remains to be seen. There remains significant future potential for these tools to provide a bridge and improve the links between voters and the political campaigns and parties that are tasked to represent them.


250


Christensen, H., (2011) “Political Activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or Political Participation by Other Means?” First Monday, 16(2).


APPENDIX A | MEASURING TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CAMPAIGNING

This appendix outlines the method used for compiling the indices of traditional and modern campaigning used as the main independent variable in chapters four and five. Initially it attempts to recreate the original measures developed by Fisher and Denver (2009), but then goes on to revise them on the grounds that they have become out-dated and that the inclusion of measures of computerisation make these measures unsuited to evaluating the use of the web. In addition, the original measures do not load as expected suggesting that Fisher and Denver’s original analysis was more confirmatory than exploratory. To this end this appendix compares the results of different strategies for creating indices, beginning with un-rotated principal components analysis, then rotating the solution using both orthogonal and oblique rotations. A confirmatory factor analysis is also used as a further check on the validity of the findings. Finally the resultant regression scores from each approach were compared.

FISHER AND DENVER MEASURES

Fisher and Denver (2009) originally developed the distinction between traditional and modern campaigning at the local level as part of their research into the effect of declining local party memberships on the effectiveness of local campaigning. Their original measures were based on the same EAS data used in this study (although from previous iterations between 1992 and 2005).

‘To create indexes of traditionalism and modernisation, the data sets covering all four elections were pooled, and relevant variables entered into principal components analyses. In each case, these produced single components with associated factor scores, and we take these factor scores as measures of traditionalism and modernisation. As in previous work, the factor scores have been standardised around a mean of 100, to allow for ease of interpretation.’

Fisher & Denver, 2009, p198
They go on to note the creation of two sets of indices, A and B, which differ based on a change in the telephone-canvassing question in 1997.

The original Fisher and Denver indices focus heavily on the division of labour in constituency campaigns. Traditional campaigns are defined as those that focus heavily on labour intensive tools like doorstep canvassing, whilst modernised campaigns are those that have integrated technology into their campaigns, mainly in the form of computerisation, which is included in some form in four of the seven measures. Treating computerisation as synonymous with modernisation is problematic in the context of this thesis as the dependent variables are bound up in computerisation. Campaigns that do not use computers cannot be online, whilst campaigns that are online are likely to use computers for other tasks. To accommodate this change the modernisation index needs to be revised to account for the ubiquity of personal computers and to separate out computerisation from the measurement of modernised campaigning.

It was also difficult to arrive at a two-component solution for the associated PCA in the same way that Fisher and Denver did. The table below shows an unrotated component solution for Fisher and Denver’s indices as applied to the 2010 EAS data. Rather than two clearly delineated components, traditional and modern, it shows four components with the majority of variables loading onto a single component. This is likely down to either the 2010 data being significantly different to previous datasets, or it could also be due to differing approaches to PCA, with the original work deliberately specifying two factors in their analysis. If this was the case, the theoretical specification of the index before running the analysis would make this approach more confirmatory than exploratory.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^\text{17}\) It should be reiterated at this point that PCA and factor analysis are different techniques using different statistical approaches, and this should not be construed as suggesting that Fisher and Denver did not use PCA in their paper.
268
Table 32: Un-Rotated Component Matrix Based On Fisher & Denver
Traditionalism And Modernisation Index B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th>Component 3</th>
<th>Component 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters per elector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National/regional leaflets per elector</td>
<td>0.303</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>-0.356</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local leaflets per elector</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>0.503</td>
<td>-0.368</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes - % of electorate canvassed</td>
<td>0.618</td>
<td>0.300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes - how many public meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of campaign helpers on polling day</td>
<td>0.596</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good morning leaflets delivered</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters knocked up on polling day</td>
<td>0.817</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Of constituency covered</td>
<td>0.542</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>0.300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modernisation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of computers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used computerised electoral register</td>
<td>0.527</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.365</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election software provided by party hq</td>
<td>0.580</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers used to compile knock-up lists</td>
<td>0.811</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters contacted by telephone on polling day</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail used to target individual voters</td>
<td>0.677</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Of electorate telephone canvassed</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values under .3 have been supressed to aid interpretation
REVISED MEASURES OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERNISED CAMPAIGNING

To continue the analysis it was necessary to develop a revised approach to traditional and modern campaigns that removed the association between computerisation and modernisation and loaded clearly onto two distinct components identifiable as traditional and modern campaign levels. The table below summarises the revised measures chosen to reflect traditional and modern campaigning.

Table 33: Variables Used To Compose Revised Traditional And Modern Campaign Type Indices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Index</th>
<th>Modernised Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Electorate Canvassed (21b)</td>
<td>Use of special leaflets to target groups (22a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort canvassing to intro candidate (37.3)</td>
<td>Use of Direct Mail (23a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort canvassing to identify supporters (37.2)</td>
<td>% Electorate telephone canvassed (24b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort distributing leaflets (37.1)</td>
<td>Effort telephone canvassing (37.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effort targeting groups (37.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are considerably pared down from the Fisher and Denver versions, and focus on activities that can be considered central to traditional and modern campaigning. The traditional index concentrates on doorstep canvassing and leaflet distribution, both techniques that require campaigns to be out and about and likely to result in face-to-face meetings. The modern index concentrates on more arms-length techniques such as direct mail, specifically targeted literature and telephone canvassing, again these are core activities in this conceptualisation of modern campaigning. Where possible, the indices also measure both effort expended in a particular technique and the proportion of the electorate reached, as a way of accommodating campaigns that may put in high effort but with limited resources and therefore are likely to reach less of the population with the same amount of effort. Computerisation has been removed from the modern index altogether.
Cronbach’s $\alpha$ was measured as an initial test of reliability of the revised indices. This statistic measures the internal reliability of a scale, based on the covariance between measures. Both indices score above the .7 threshold recommended by Field (2009) suggesting that the revised indices are capturing distinct modes of behaviour.\(^{18}\)

The next step was to compare factor loadings between differing approaches. The first approach was a PCA, the original method used in the Fisher and Denver paper. Table 34 shows an unrotated PCA solution based on these measures. The results divided into two components, identifiable as a traditional (component 1) and modern (component 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes - % of electorate canvassed</td>
<td>.669</td>
<td>-.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to introduce candidate</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td>-.453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to identify supporters</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>-.410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - distributing leaflets</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>-.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of special leaflets to target groups</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>.354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail used to target individual voters</td>
<td>.705</td>
<td>.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of electorate telephone canvassed</td>
<td>.561</td>
<td>.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - telephone canvassing</td>
<td>.737</td>
<td>.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - targeting groups</td>
<td>.698</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PCA often results in high factor loadings on a single component and weak loadings on other components, often making clear interpretation of the result difficult. To account for this, solutions are often rotated in order to maximise the distinction between components and make for the clearest possible interpretation. There are two forms of rotation, orthogonal and oblique:

\(^{18}\) Cronbach’s $\alpha$ scores are .817 (standardised) for the traditional index and .790 (standardised) for the modernised approach. Standardised scores are used to compensate for the varying scales that measure each variable. Field (2009) suggests that .7 be taken as the threshold for accepting a Cronbach’s $\alpha$.\(^{18}\)
• Orthogonal - meaning unrelated - rotations assume that factors are uncorrelated and maintain the independence of factors throughout the rotation, resulting in uncorrelated factors.
• Oblique rotations relax this assumption and allow factors to correlate with one another.

Although there is good reason to expect that factors will be correlated, with highly active campaigns likely to be engaged in both traditional and modernised campaign techniques, the choice of rotation is not clear cut. Field (2009) argues that when deciding on the choice of rotation, the theoretical understanding must be reconciled with the way the variables cluster on factor loadings. The table below shows the results of the orthogonal rotation (varimax). The rotation has sharpened the distinction between traditional and modern components considerably from the unrotated solution above.

**Table 35: Component Matrix With Orthogonal (Varimax) Rotation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of electorate canvassed</td>
<td>.731</td>
<td>.208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to introduce candidate</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to identify supporters</td>
<td>.873</td>
<td>.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - distributing leaflets</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of special leaflets to target groups</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail used to target individual voters</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Of electorate telephone canvassed</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - telephone canvassing</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - targeting groups</td>
<td>.245</td>
<td>.749</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of oblique rotations (direct oblimin) the output is two fold, a pattern matrix showing the factor loadings and a structure matrix showing correlations. Again the pattern matrix is considerably clearer than the unrotated solution, but allowing the factors to correlate has altered the loadings, with traditional and modern components swapping places and the traditional component becoming negative. If direct oblimin were used as the basis for developing an index this would create substantial difficulties in interpreting the traditional index, where a negative score would indicate greater use of traditional techniques.
Table 36: Pattern Matrix With Oblique (Direct Oblimin) Rotation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes - % of electorate canvassed</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>-.766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to introduce candidate</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>-.914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to identify supporters</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>-.904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - distributing leaflets</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>-.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of special leaflets to target groups</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail used to target individual voters</td>
<td>.608</td>
<td>-.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Of electorate telephone canvassed</td>
<td>.753</td>
<td>.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - telephone canvassing</td>
<td>.719</td>
<td>-.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - targeting groups</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>-.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 37: Structure Matrix With Oblique (Direct Oblimin) Rotation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes - % of electorate canvassed</td>
<td>.410</td>
<td>-.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to introduce candidate</td>
<td>.445</td>
<td>-.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to identify supporters</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>-.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - distributing leaflets</td>
<td>.416</td>
<td>-.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of special leaflets to target groups</td>
<td>.698</td>
<td>-.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail used to target individual voters</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td>-.529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Of electorate telephone canvassed</td>
<td>.692</td>
<td>-.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - telephone canvassing</td>
<td>.786</td>
<td>-.516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - targeting groups</td>
<td>.788</td>
<td>-.448</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further alternative to the use of direct oblimin rotation is promax. Promax is another oblique rotation; permitting factors to correlate. Field (2009) notes that promax is faster than direct oblimin and requires less processing power. More importantly, from the perspective of this thesis however, in this case the outputs are far more readily interpretable. Most notably, the pattern matrix does not change signs during the analysis removing the problem of a negative sign on the second component.
Finally, the table 40 below shows the results of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Whereas PCA is a data reduction tool, factor analysis is designed to identify latent variables that explain the common variance between the variables. The advantage of factor analysis is the ability to perform a confirmatory factor analysis, where latent variables are predetermined based on theoretical assumptions. As well as alternative indices, this allows for an additional check on the conceptualisation of traditional and modern campaigns used here. The results show that the CFA loadings are similar to the PCA results. The CFI and TLI measures (.939 .957 respectively) indicate that the model is a relatively good fit. With the addition of the CFA, there are now three checks on the validity of the traditional and modern indices, Cronbach’s $\alpha$, PCA and CFA. The next
stage of the analysis is to select an appropriate method for developing the indices of traditional and modern campaigning. Both PCA and CFA produce regression scores that can be used as a scale to measure campaigns on.

**Table 40: Results Of CFA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Of electorate canvassed</td>
<td>.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to introduce candidate</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - canvassing to identify supporters</td>
<td>.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - distributing leaflets</td>
<td>.721</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modernised</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of special leaflets to target groups</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail used to target individual voters</td>
<td>.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Of electorate telephone canvassed</td>
<td>.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - telephone canvassing</td>
<td>.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign effort - targeting groups</td>
<td>.779</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CFI .939  
TLI .957
CHOICE OF REGRESSION SCORES

The central aim of this appendix is to explain the choice of method for representing traditional and modern campaigning, and to show that it is suitable for the analysis and theoretically consistent with what is known about campaigning. The original Fisher and Denver paper used an index derived from the outputs of PCA known as regression scores. Centred on zero, these scores indicate where a particular case is on the scale compared with other cases. Where cases score over zero they are engaging more than the average. Where they score less, they are below the average. Both PCA and CFA produce scores that could be used as a basis for these indices, and deciding on the appropriate regression scores requires the researcher to exercise judgement.

An unrotated PCA solution is not appropriate in this instance, as the resulting loadings do not clearly distinguish between campaigning forms. In addition, using the results of CFA would represent a departure from the original method used by Fisher and Denver. In including a CFA, the intention was to use it as an additional check on the validity of the loadings arrived at through PCA, not to alter the method. CFA does not take into consideration cross-loading and error in the same way as PCA and is more concerned with identifying specific latent variables rather than the kind of more abstract indices needed for this analysis. This leaves rotated PCA solutions.

There is good reason to expect correlation between the factors, given that active campaigns are likely to be active across both traditional and modern techniques. The non-mutual exclusivity of these indices was noted by Fisher and Denver in their original work (2009). Given that varimax assumes no correlation between the components, then in this instance it would not be an appropriate method. Of the two oblique methods tried, direct oblimin was difficult to interpret, reversing the sign on what would become the traditional index. Promax however resulted in two positive indices that make interpreting the outputs of analysis far easier. On these grounds, the analysis proceeded with indices based on a promax rotation. To further aid interpretation, the index was standardised with a mean of 100, scores over 100 were above the mean, scores of less than 100 were below.
The charts below show the distribution of these indices and a scatter plot of both indices together. The frequencies reveal a good deal about the distribution of different campaign techniques amongst constituency campaigns. The traditional index shows a great deal of variation between campaigns, with a relatively even spread. The modern index is far more negatively skewed, with a notable peak around the high 80s. This seems likely to be the effective floor of the index, representing no use of modernised campaign techniques. This fits with Fisher and Denver’s findings (2009) that suggest that traditional campaigning is effectively the foundation of all campaigns, with only a select few being able to mobilise modernised campaigning. The comparison of the indices in the scatter plot shows the floor effect in modernised campaigning as a dense clustering towards the low end of the modern index, but one spread across the entire spectrum of traditional methods. This chart also shows a positive correlation between both indices (.569 p<.05), again in keeping with the non-mutual exclusivity of Fisher and Denver’s approach.

**Figure 14: Distribution Of Regression Scores For Traditional Campaigning**
Figure 15: Distribution Of Regression Scores For Modernised Campaigning

Figure 16: Scatter Plot Comparing Traditional And Modernised Scores
SUMMARY

This appendix has tested the original work of Fisher and Denver (2009) to see how far it could be applied to the current campaign environment. Given that the indices were originally created to chart the rise of computerisation in constituency campaigning, they were no longer suitable in an environment where computerisation is likely to be pervasive. In particular, using these variables as predictors of web campaigning would create significant analytical problems and risk blurring dependent and independent variables. To correct this, revised indices were produced that relate more closely to the emergence of modernised campaigning as reflected by both the national and constituency campaigns literature. The resulting indices were then confirmed as distinct variables through the use of principal components analysis, Cronbach’s α, and confirmatory factor analysis. The final indices were chosen after considering the variables resulting from confirmatory factor analysis and principal components analysis. CFA was discounted as too big a departure from the original work, whilst several rotation solutions of PCA were considered. Orthogonal solutions were discounted given the clear expectation that the traditional and modernised indices would be correlated to some extent. Of the oblique rotations considered, a promax solution was chosen as it offered outputs that were more readily interpretable.
APPENDIX B | INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Note: This appendix lists the interview questions used in the interview of candidates and campaign workers reported in Chapter Six. This is a semi-structured questionnaire rather than a survey; the questions are designed to act as talking points and subjects are encouraged to expand and extemporise as they see fit to generate a more organic dataset. This often meant that subjects talked at length about topics not included in this questionnaire, but that they felt were important to their experience of the web campaign. Where appropriate the questions were modified to better fit the subject, so for example some of the organisational questions were rephrased depending on whether the subject was a campaign manager or a worker.

PART 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is your name and role within the campaign?

How did you get involved in the campaign?

How would you describe your attitude to technology?

How would you describe the role of the web, as you see it, in the 2010 campaign in your area?

PART 2: THE ONLINE AND OFFLINE CAMPAIGN

Thinking about the offline campaign only, what campaign techniques did you use or see used during the campaign?

Still thinking about the offline campaign, in your opinion, which techniques would you say were most important to the campaign, what did it rely on most heavily?
Did the campaign have an online component that you knew about, and if so what websites did it rely on? Please include websites run by the campaign, third party websites and presences on social networking sites.

In your opinion, how big a part was the online element in the overall campaign?

Where more than one website is used, how important were they in relation to one another?

What factors motivated you to campaign online? / What do you think motivated the campaign to include online component?

Think about: the party, the area you were campaigning in the party, the closeness of the race, the opinions of the candidate and their own relationship with technology.

Are there any factors particular to specific types of websites?

What factors discouraged you from campaigning online? / Do you think anything made it harder to campaign online?

Does this apply equally across all the websites you used?

Think about: the party, the area you were campaigning in the party, the closeness of the race, the opinions of the candidate and their own relationship with technology.

How did the web campaign fit in with your overall campaign strategy, did it allow you to do things differently than you might otherwise?

**PART 3: WEB CAMPAIGN BEHAVIOUR**

What were the goals of the online portion of the campaign as you saw them?
Of the websites the campaign did use, how did you feel they were used to engage with both the voters and campaigners?

One of the interesting elements of online campaigns, is that campaigns can sometime interact directly with voters and supporters. Did you see any evidence of this?

What benefits (if any) could you see for a campaign interacting online? What factors encouraged you to interact online?

Think about: the party, the area you were campaigning in the party, the closeness of the race, the opinions of the candidate and their own relationship with technology.

What were the downsides? What factors discouraged you from interacting online?

Think about: the party, the area you were campaigning in the party, the closeness of the race, the opinions of the candidate and their own relationship with technology.

How did the way the campaign behaved online, either interactively or non-interactively fit in with the wider campaign aims, as you understood them?

**PART 4: CAMPAIGN ORGANISATION**

How would you describe the organisation of the campaign in very general terms?

Can you draw for me an approximate sketch of how the campaign organisation worked, and how different groups and individuals were connected to one another? Think in particular about the following groups:

- National party organisation,
- Regional party organisation,
- Local campaign,
- Local party,
- Formal party members
- Informal and casual supporters
• Any other individuals or groups you think were important

How would you describe the relationship between the local campaign and the central party? Can you indicate the strength and direction of the relationships on the diagram you have drawn (either weak/infrequent contact, medium/regular contact or strong/frequent contact)?

How would you describe the relationship between the local campaign and local party members and supporters? Can you indicate the strength and direction of the relationships on the diagram you have drawn (either weak/infrequent contact, medium/regular contact or strong/frequent contact)?

What role did the Web play in these organisational relationships? Can you indicate which relationships were based on online ties (excluding email)?

Thinking in particular about campaign workers and informal supporters, who may or may not be members of the party, how was the Web used in relation to them?

How would you describe the nature of the relationship between the local campaign and informal members and supporters?

In your opinion, do you think the Web made your campaign overall more centralised with less involvement from supporters and members, or more decentralised with less involvement from supporters and members?

Is there anyone else I should talk to from the campaign?
This appendix contains the participant information sheet given to interview subjects.

Web 2.0 and Political Campaigns in the UK

Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to take part in a PhD research project concerning the role of the Web in local political campaigns.

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and before you decide to participate I would like to provide you with some further details of the project so you can understand why it is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read through the following information and to decide whether you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask any questions (either via email/phone or in person prior to the interview) if there is anything you are not clear on or would like more information. Thank you for your time.

Who will conduct the research?
Benjamin Lee, A PhD student based currently in the Institute of Social change in the School of Social Sciences at The University of Manchester, UK.

Title of the research: Web 2.0 and Political Campaigns in the UK (please note this is subject to change)

What is the aim of the research?
The research is designed to understand to what extent political parties are using the World Wide Web as a campaign tool.
Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because of your role in managing/directing/or participating in your parties’ recent election campaign/leadership contest/party conference.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
You will be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview of around an hour, in that Benjamin Lee will ask you a series of questions about the nature of the campaign/contest/conference, your own involvement in it, and your views on the experience in terms of what you consider the impact of the Web to be. The interview is semi-structured and so there is considerable flexibility for you to introduce/add topics for discussion.

What happens to the data collected?
The interview discussion will be audio recorded with your permission, and then transcribed. The tapes/files and transcripts will be securely stored at the University of Manchester.

How is confidentiality maintained?
You will be assigned a unique id number and this will be used to label all files/audio tapes relating to your interview. A list linking id numbers to individuals will be retained in hard copy by Benjamin Lee and stored securely within the ISC separate from any interview data.

An electronic file copy of the list will be retained by Benjamin Lee on his secure University network drives, again stored separately to any interview data.

Any material quoted will not include personal information such as your name or contact details. However, in the case of the General Election, as the research deals with specific constituencies it is likely that any quotations used may identify you indirectly. If you would like to remain completely anonymous, then this can be arranged, in which case data will be used in such a way as to avoid associating your comments with a specific geographical area.
What happens if I do not want to take part of if I change my mind?
Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any point without providing a reason and without detriment to yourself. At your request any information you have supplied to that point will be deleted/destroyed and will not be used to inform the research. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form, consenting to use of the information you have given for purposes of the research.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?
There will be no financial payment/compensation offered for your participation in the research.

What is the duration of the research?
The interview will last approximately 1 hour but may be extended if you wish to talk for longer.

Where will the research be conducted?
The interview will take place in your place of work or a public venue/meeting point of your choosing.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?
The results of the research will be published as part of a PhD thesis that will be available from the University of Manchester. In addition the thesis will also be made available online and over email.

Contact for further information
Please contact Benjamin Lee for any further information or help/advice about the research project at:

The Institute for Social Change
University of Manchester
If there any issues regarding this research that you prefer not to discuss with the researcher please contact my academic supervisor:

Prof Rachel Gibson
The Institute for Social Change
University of Manchester
Humanities Bridgeford Street 2.13
Oxford Rd.
Manchester M13 9PL
Ph: 0161 306 6933
Email: rachel.gibson@manchester.ac.uk

Thank you very much for taking the time to read through the information provided.

Yours sincerely,

Benjamin Lee
This appendix contains the consent form subjects were asked to sign before they were interviewed.

**Web 2.0 and Political Campaigns in the UK: Consent to be Interviewed**

I have read and understood the project information sheet provided [ ]

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project. [ ]

I agree to take part in the project. [ ]

I agree to the interview being audio recorded [ ]

I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to take part. [ ]

**Select only one of the next three options:**

I am happy for direct quotations to be used as long as they do not identify either myself or my location. [ ]

I am happy for direct quotations to be used as long as they do not identify either myself or my location and the researcher submits the quotes for my approval before publishing the work. [ ]

I wish to remain completely anonymous. [ ]

I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be published or shared with other researchers outside the immediate project team. [ ]

I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, according to the terms I have specified in this form. [ ]
I agree for the data I provided to be retained by the researcher for 6 years. All data will be anonymised either in part or in whole depending on the terms I have specified in this form.

I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of that data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form. I understand that personal details will no be shared.

I understand that other researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs according to the terms I have specified in this form.

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project to Benjamin Lee.

Signed..................................................... Date..................

Signed..................................................... Date.................