



Tracking Digital Political Advertising

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About me

- Director and Professor, School of Politics, Philosophy and Public Affairs at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington
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- Co-director, Wesleyan Media Project



Wesleyan Media Project



- Since 2010, tracked televised political ads since 2010
- Since 2018, tracked digital on Meta and Google
- Goal: transparency

Meta and Google Spending (House and Sen)

Table 1: Digital (Meta and Google) spending by general election candidates in federal races (in Ms).

	Since Jan '21	Since Jan '22	General election
U.S. House	\$53.8	\$41.8	\$23.9
U.S. Senate	\$95.8	\$79.0	\$41.2
Total	\$149.6	\$120.8	\$65.1

Source: Meta Ad Library and Google Transparency Report with analysis by the Wesleyan Media Project.

Social Media Platforms

	Sell ads?	Spending info	Content info	Market Share
Facebook	yes	yes	yes	big
Instagram	yes	yes	yes	big
YouTube	yes	yes	yes	big
Google search	yes	yes	yes	big
Snapchat	yes	yes	yes	small
Reddit	yes	basic	basic	small
Twitter	yes	no	no	small?
TikTok	no	no	no	small?
Display Ads	yes	no	no	big

Social media/display advertising

- We don't know what percentage of ad spending we are missing
- Facebook declining in importance
 - Likely missing more than in past
- But new platforms with large reach have not (yet) emerged
 - Meta's Threads debuting this summer?

CTV/OTT

- CTV (connected TV) is a device that connects to—or is embedded in—a television to support video content streaming, such as Roku, Amazon Fire
- OTT (over the top) is the delivery of TV/video content directly from the internet
- Estimated to account for \$1.2 to \$1.4 billion in political ad spending in 2022
 - About 15 percent share

CTV/OTT



	Sell ads?	Spending info	Content info	Market Share
Hulu	yes	no	no	medium?
Roku	yes	no	basic	medium?
Tubi	yes	no	no	small?
Sling	yes	no	no	medium?
Peacock	yes	no	no	medium?
Paramount +	yes	no	no	medium?
Netflix	no	no	no	big potential
Disney Plus	no	no	no	big potential

Campaign websites

- Importance for brand awareness
- Many ads link to campaign website or ActBlue/WinRed