

# Peer-to-Peer Texting and the 2020 U.S. Election: Hidden Messages and Intimate Politics | Center for Media Engagement

By Katlyn Glover, Jacob Gursky, Katie Joseff & Samuel C. Woolley

October 30, 2020

As the 2020 general election nears, voter's phones will likely be buzzing with texts from political campaigns and groups. Campaigns have used this form of communication as an intimate way to communicate with voters since 2016 and use of this strategy has only increased as door-to-door outreach continues to be limited by COVID-19 and companies who specialize in Peer-to-Peer (P2P) texting attempt to capitalize on what may be the last national election cycle before regulations on these forms of communication are put in place. The advantages are obvious: texting is fast and easy and the open and response rates of these types of messages exceed alternatives such as email or mass broadcast texting. P2P texting provides a valuable opportunity to send private, personalized messages to voters that allow campaigns to build relationships with their constituents.

But hyper-personalized messages in private spaces, as well as lax regulations on these political texts, also create ideal opportunities for misuse. Political campaigns continue to develop ways to circumvent content moderation and regulations in their quest to gain votes and are able to sidestep state campaign disclosure and attribution laws. New forms of direct communication, such as through campaign apps and digital wallet passes on smartphones, are poised to bring political messaging to even higher levels of intimacy and efficacy, and, disturbingly, render them difficult to factually audit by outsiders.

[...]

Source: [Peer-to-Peer Texting and the 2020 U.S. Election: Hidden Messages and Intimate Politics - Center for Media Engagement](#)