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# Programmatic Ads for Political Campaigns

SPEAKEASY POLITICAL



## overview

We know as well as anyone that digital politicians throw around a lot of jargon. We've put together a glossary of terms and a guide for how to most effectively leverage these digital tools for your campaigns.

## types of digital ads + strategies

### banner ads

Also commonly called 'Display Ads,' these are advertisements you see on websites throughout the internet. They can either be static or animated. Banner ads are typically found in specific sizes, and each size corresponds to a specific placement on a webpage. For example, you may see a long narrow shaped ad (728x90 pixels) on the top of a webpage and a more square-like ad (300x250 pixels) between paragraphs of a news story. These ads click through to a website, or landing page.

Many campaigns choose to have banner ads up and served to their voters at all times. It is relatively easy to start new ad campaigns, and it is a great way to strategically target voters with specialized creative designs showing endorsements or policy positions that may be meaningful to them. We also have clients who pair their digital strategy with their organizing work to ensure the message their voters see online is the same one that is coming to their doors from canvassers.

Because banner ads need to fit into specific locations (typically referred to in the industry as 'inventory') on a page on the internet, an ad with a specific design is often resized into 3 or more sizes. All of these ads with similar designs in different sizes are called an 'ad set.' Having an ad set with our recommended sizes (which you can find on the last page) has more flexibility to be placed in front of viewers because each size can fit into different inventory. With only one ad version, it can be difficult to properly deliver your ad to voters because they will need to be browsing on a webpage with that specific size available, and many other companies, campaigns, and organizations are also fighting for that space.

## facebook and google ads

While ads that appear on Facebook and Google meet many of the specificities of banner ads, both companies – and their subsidiaries – have separate systems for buying and placing online advertising. Ads that are placed as banner ads are not on Facebook or Google. Facebook ads won't be seen outside the walls of Facebook, and Google ads won't be seen outside the walls of Google. That being said, Facebook ads and Google ads - in particular, Google Search ads - are incredibly valuable to an effective multi-channel digital strategy.

## pre-roll

'Pre-roll' is the term for a video ad that is played before or during content on sites with videos (but not Youtube, because it's owned by Google!). For example, if you watch a news clip on CNN.com or watch a 3 minute recap of the latest basketball game on ESPN.com, you'll probably see a short ad or two before you can get to your video. That is a pre-roll video ad. Top performing pre-roll ads are 6 or 15 seconds, but they can be as long as 30 seconds.

Pre-roll ads are great for campaigns because, like banner ads, they are easy to place. They also tend to have high completion rates, meaning a large percentage of viewers will watch the ad in its entirety. Although fewer viewers tend to click on pre-roll videos compared to banner ads, you will likely capture more of their attention for longer. Plus, with the video format, you have the ability to deliver a more complex or holistic message to the voter, especially with the audio component that is typically missing from generic banner ads.

## ott

'OTT' stands for Over-The-Top. An OTT ad plays before or during content on apps within connected TV streaming services such as Roku or Tubi. These are simply the commercials you'll see when watching content on Hulu or a Roku app. These ads are actually targeted and delivered similarly to pre-roll and banner ads. We typically recommend 15 or 30 second ads in this format.

We love OTT at SpeakEasy because it can carry so much power for your campaigns. TV commercials are cost prohibitive to most political campaigns, but OTT is a way to get out a longer, TV-commercial length message about yourself or your candidate. It is targeted directly to your voters and you won't need to pay millions of dollars for a single spot.

# components of digital ads

## creative

The political advertising world uses the term 'creative' to mean the visual asset, image, video, or audio file you are using to speak to voters. The creative is critical for your campaign because it is the execution of your strategy. For campaigns with budgets large enough to have multiple ads running, effective consultants will recommend strategically selecting creative to drive home specific messages for specific audiences. For example, you can have one creative design focused on the latest endorsement you received from your local school board member, and target voters in that district or voters who care about education policy. You can have another creative design focused on getting out the vote, and target likely voters in your district.

## call to action

Every digital ad should have a call to action (CTA). Most of the time, this will look like a clickable button on the ad. While the entire creative is clickable, the button indicates to the voter that they can and should click the ad. The CTA also indicates to the voter how you want them to engage. For example, a "Become a Voter," button indicates that the ad will click through to a page that will allow the viewer to register to vote. A "Learn More" button will indicate to the viewer that they will be taken to a page to read more about the candidate or policy promoted in the ad.

If used properly, CTA buttons can be a strategic asset for your campaign. Changing the CTA on your creative can help your campaign achieve the goals of each ad. For example, if the goal of the ad is to collect email addresses or encourage volunteer sign-ups, the CTA might be something like "Join Us" or "Get Involved." If the goal of the campaign is to share information about a candidate or cause, the CTA might say "Learn More." If the goal of the ad is to solicit donations, the CTA might say "Donate Now" or "Pledge to Give." Make sure that your landing page aligns with the CTA – and your campaign's strategy.

## landing page

Every digital ad is clickable. Once clicked, it will take voters to the webpage of your choice – generally known as the landing page. Landing pages are critical for campaigns and can be used to strategically enhance your voter engagement.

If you run a number of ad sets with different creative messages, you can tailor the landing page to align with the creative. For example, if you are running an ad to talk about the endorsement your candidate just received from the governor, your ad could click through to the endorsements page of your website to show off all of the other endorsements you have received, in addition to the mayor. If you are running a GOTV ad, it's recommended your ad clicks through to a page where voters can find their voting location or more information on how to vote. Coordinating landing pages with your ad creative – and even targeting these ads to specific people based on interest or voting patterns – is a great way to reach the right voters with the right messages at the right time.

For best ad delivery, make sure your landing page is a secure site. To check, it should have an 'https://' attached to it.

## disclaimer

A disclaimer is a statement – legally required – noting what organization or committee paid for the political advertisement. Disclaimer rules and regulations vary by state and municipality, so we recommend consulting your local or state election officials to ensure your disclaimer is correct. If your disclaimer is wrong, you may be in violation of campaign finance laws.

# recommended specifications

Type of Ad	Specs
Banner ads	Recommended Sizes: 300 x 250 pixels 300 x 600 pixels 160x600 pixels 728 x 90 pixels 300 x 50 p or 320 x 50 pixels  Recommended formats for static ads: JPG, PNG  Recommended formats for dynamic ads: HTML5
Pre-Roll ads + OTT ads	Resolution: 1280 x 720 or 1920 x 1080 Aspect ratio: 16:9 Constant Bitrate: 15-30 Mbps File Formats: QuickTime movie (.mov) or MPEG-4 (.mp4) format

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## about SpeakEasy

We support Democratic campaigns, causes and consultants with leading data, strategic targeting, and comprehensive ad tech to launch digital media and direct mail strategies. Please visit us at [speakeasystudios.com](http://speakeasystudios.com) to learn more.