

# MEMBERS OF CONGRESS RESPOND TO THE POLITICAL BLOGOSPHERE

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## ABSTRACT

As traditional media organizations faced challenging financial straights, closing their Washington news bureaus, an opportunity emerged for political blogs to seize upon the changing nature of political communication. New technologies and forms of communication forced the distinction between the traditional mainstream media and the new media formats, such as blogs. Blogs exhibited differing media effects and cultivated unique relationships among policymakers. This research encompassed the ability for blogs to elicit agenda response from policymakers on certain episodic news issues that blogs seized upon. Exploring the potential for this effect among members of the House of Representatives following the ascension of a new president in the nonelection year of 2009, this study revealed a diminished potential for policymaker response to the issues selected by the blogs in this study. While pointing to the long-supported view that blogs remain heavily dependent on the mainstream media for significant agenda-setting effect, the results of the study may confirm previous research that predicted blog influence would wane as the mainstream media and policymakers adjusted to the new medium's potential disruption.