

## Candidates, Color, and Type: Visual Rhetoric in Presidential Candidate Websites

Kristen Flory

320 Law College Building  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1300

517-432-6959 (voice)  
517-432-6859 (fax)

florykri@msu.edu

Rhetoric & Writing  
Michigan State University

Michael Wojcik

519 W. Ash Street  
Mason, MI 48854-1553

517-676-0769 (voice)

wojcikm4@msu.edu

Rhetoric & Writing  
Michigan State University

We examine the rhetoric of typography and color in websites for 2008 presidential candidates, presenting rhetorical theories and actual and transformed pages from the sites.

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Visual rhetoric is a well-established field with important conceptions of how rhetorical concepts apply beyond text (in the work of Trimbur, George, Hocks, Wysocki, and others). Work by design and usability scholars such as Brumberger and Schriver is also highly relevant to rhetoric and the “new work of composing” as well. While technology has made many visual elements widely available for rhetorical purposes, some of them—such as type and color—are largely absent from existing theories of visual rhetoric. Scholars across fields provide sophisticated understandings of these elements, but generally not in rhetorical terms (though Ehses, for example, has made this connection explicit).

We propose that type and color are rhetorical elements and we expand the conversation of visual rhetoric to place them within the discipline. To illustrate this, we examine their use in websites for 2008 presidential candidates as contributing to the arguments made by those sites. We propose rhetorical theories of type and color, drawing from classical and contemporary rhetoric and fields such as design, and illustrate them in an interactive visual presentation that demonstrates the effects of altering color and type.

Our presentation will require standard color computer projection equipment (eg LCD projector and screen).