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Between Polar Opposites Is This Equator: Text Me

By Zachary A. Goldfarb
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Ring, buzz, vibrate: You've got a political message on your cellphone.

Sending text messages to cellphones is catching on this year as a method for reaching supporters.

On Thursday, the political action committee of former senator John Edwards (D-N.C.) went live with a messaging service. People who sign up for the One America Committee's text-messaging database receive on their phone: "Thanks 4 joining my mobile team. Please text me your name & email. Visit us @ http://oneamericacommittee.com. I'll be in touch. John."

"Senator Edwards and Mrs. Edwards are very interested in utilizing all the latest technologies to communicate with people," said Kim Rubey, Edwards's spokeswoman. "Communicating with text messages is a great way to stay in touch with people who are incredibly busy."

The technology comes from a firm called the Rights Group, which has worked on mobile phone advocacy with organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union.

"It's a very good way to increase the number of people you're in ongoing contact with," said Jed Alpert, the company's chief executive. "You can enroll at different points of contact, at live events, in print media or on the Web.

"We get response rates that are 10, 20 even 30 times what response rates are to e-mail because open rates are so high with text

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Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.) has raised and donated millions of dollars. (By Julia Malakie -- Associated Press)

POLITICS TRIVIA

Which politician once boxed Oliver North?

- H. Ross Perot
- John McCain
- James Webb
- George Allen

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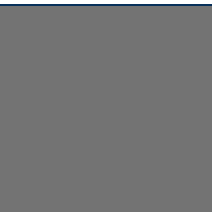
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messaging," Alpert said.

Embattled [Sen. Rick Santorum](#) (R-Pa.) recently started using text messaging.

At a women's outreach breakfast in the Harrisburg area last month with Mary Matalin, a former adviser to Vice President Cheney, attendees were invited to join Santorum's text-message database. In response, they received: "From Keeping Women's Docs in PA to Allowing Parents the Freedom to Work from Home, Rick Santorum is Leading 4 Women. Look 4 Msgs with More Information."

"We wanted to find a way to reach some of the busiest voters. Almost everyone has a cellphone at their fingertips," said Virginia Davis, Santorum's spokeswoman. She said people who sign up will get "periodic updates on what the senator is up to."

Right now, the text-messaging feature is limited to Santorum's women's outreach efforts, but it could be expanded to other groups, such as veterans or students.

Kerry's Treasury Department

[John F. Kerry](#), the Democratic presidential nominee in 2004, has a big electronic address book -- it contains 3 million e-mail addresses -- and he hasn't been shy about using it to promote Democratic causes and to position himself for a presidential run in 2008. Now, insiders say, it's also bringing in quite a bit of money for Democrats nationwide.

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