

# OUTDOOR ADVERTISING: CHARTING A FAKE CAMPAIGN'S VIRAL BOOST



By [Katie Bascuas](#) / May 28, 2013 (via *the RushmoreVote Facebook page*)

The Outdoor Advertising Association of America recently sponsored a test campaign asking people to vote for the next president to be added to Mt. Rushmore to measure the ability of outdoor advertising to drive social and mobile activity.

Who should be the next face etched into Mt. Rushmore?

That was the question posed in a fictitious advertising campaign sponsored by the Outdoor Advertising Association of America to test the value of out-of-home (OOH) advertisements in driving social and mobile activity.

*This relatively small OOH campaign drove online traffic from across the country.*

The RushmoreVote campaign placed 164 ads on billboards and bus shelters in Cincinnati, San Antonio, Phoenix, and Sacramento, California, and asked consumers to go online to vote for the president they thought should be the face added to Mt. Rushmore. They were given the choice of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, or no one—Mt. Rushmore should remain the same.

The four-week campaign, which ran in March 2013, generated 17,681 online user sessions, 15,679 of which were unique. Two-thirds of online voters came from outside the four metro areas where the ads were posted, and 75 percent said they saw the ad on a billboard or bus shelter.

“This relatively small OOH campaign drove online traffic from across the country,” OAAA President and CEO Nancy Fletcher [said in a statement](#). “Even those who learned about the campaign online were aware it originated on OOH ads, painting a clear picture of the medium’s role in today’s evolving interactive landscape.”

In case you’re wondering, a majority of voters—69 percent—said no one should be added to Mt. Rushmore, while 11 percent voted to add George W. Bush and 20 percent voted to add Barack Obama.

Why a fake campaign around Mt. Rushmore? Stephen Freitas, chief marketing officer at OAAA, said the association wanted something attention grabbing that also wouldn’t cause confusion around a product due to its fictitious nature, and coming off the presidential election last fall, Mt. Rushmore seemed relevant.

OAAA also decided to keep its name out of the campaign, Freitas said. “We just wanted these mysterious messages going up to sort of attract people’s attention and see how they respond.”

Ultimately, “we wanted to test and prove that out-of-home advertising can be a central, integral part of a social advertising program,” he added.

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