

US Presidential Elections 2016 - Case Study

In December, we analyzed the social media sources for the candidates participating in the US Senate elections and created communication profiles for the winners and losers based on IntenCheck's 26 psycholinguistic categories and the election results. Now, as the US presidential election campaigns have already started, we decided to analyze the presidential candidates for 2016.

In our analysis of the presidential candidates, we used the profiles previously created for winners and losers from the US Senate elections research. This case study covers the findings from our research conducted in order to evaluate which candidate has the best chance of voter support based on the way they communicate.

The Presidential Candidates

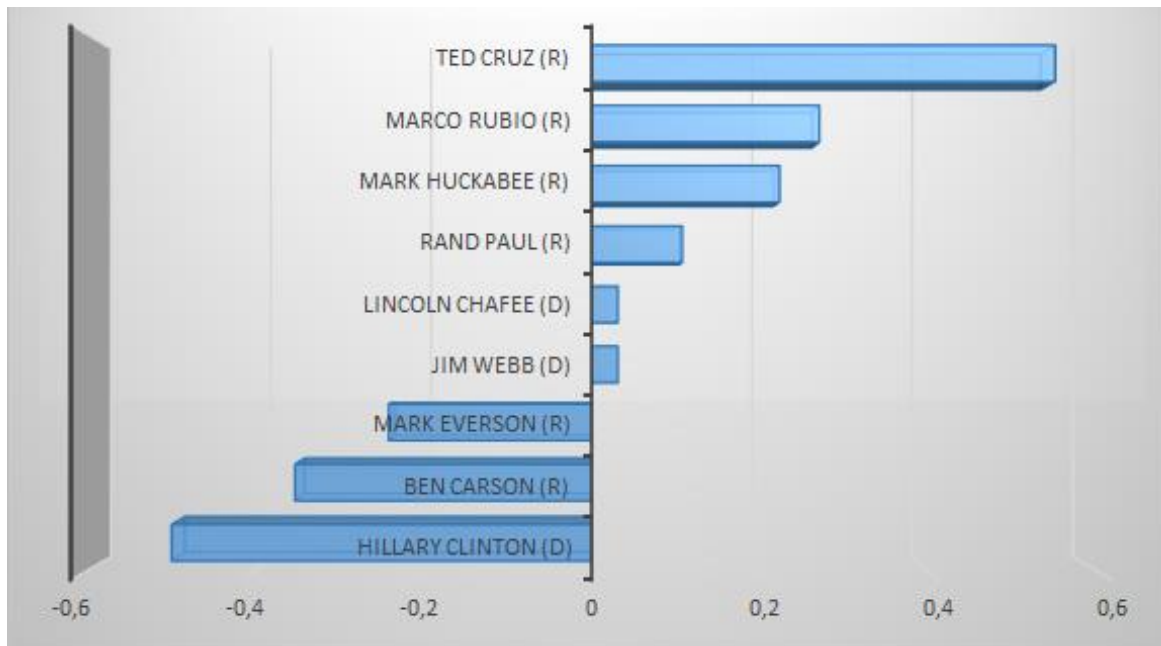
When we started this study there were only 9 people who announced their participation in the US presidential elections in 2016. At the time of our last update, the number of candidates grew to 22.

Methodology

We first analyzed, in November 2014, the elections for the US Senate and we collected from different social networks the posts/tweets of the participants in these elections. Once the results were known, we calculated comparative profiles of the winners and losers based on IntenCheck's 26 psycholinguistic categories. The winners profile reflects what kind of politicians American voters prefer. Estimates were statistically significant.

In April, when 9 politicians formally announced their candidacy for US president in 2016, we repeated the procedure and collected from social networks the posts and tweets of the candidates for the period July 9, 2013 to April 25, 2015. Then we created psycholinguistic profiles for each of the candidates and calculated the correlation between their communication evaluation and the profile of the winners of the US Senate elections. These estimates were used to build the ranking of candidates.

For each new candidate that joined the race for US presidency the same process was followed.

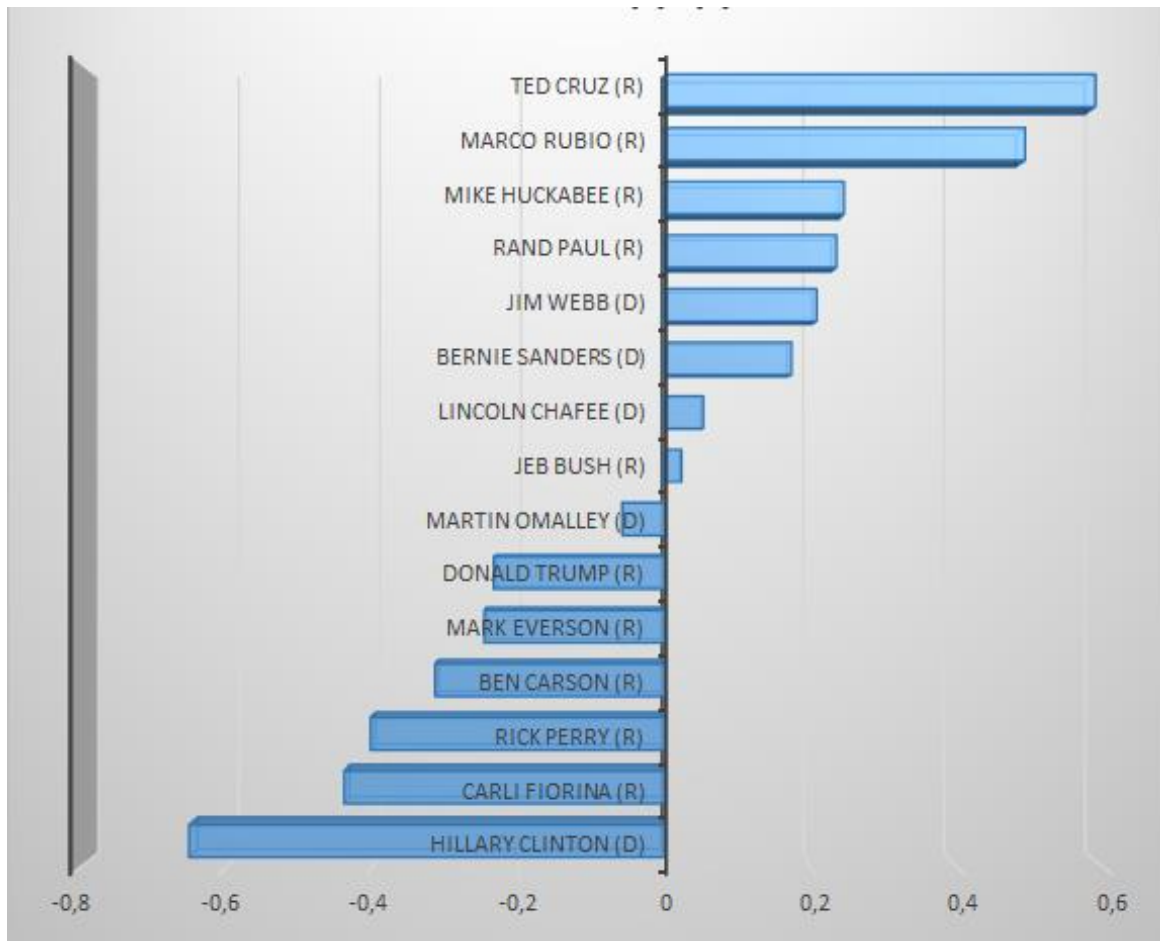
Ratings of US presidential candidates (based on IntenCheck profiles), as of April 24, 2015:

The undisputed leader at this point was Sen. Ted Cruz. What and how he expresses himself is the most relevant to American voters out of this pool of candidates, though there is still plenty of room for improvement. The winners profile from the Senate elections contains many clues regarding what can still be improved.

Please note that the upper half of the ranking is occupied by Republicans. Even if Ted Cruz would not make it to the end of the race, there is high probability that the candidate to become the next US president would be a Republican.

The big surprise was the ranking of Hillary Clinton. What and how she addresses the voters doesn't seem to make a successful communication recipe, as there is a big discrepancy between what she communicates and what the public finds relevant. On the other hand, she has the most room to grow in front of the voters, as long as she makes some changes. What she could easily improve can be found in the winners profile that we have compiled.

Ratings of US presidential candidates (based on IntenCheck profiles), as of May 15, 2015:



In the period between April 25 and May 15, 6 other candidates have formally announced their candidacy for US president in 2016 and were included in our study. The new candidates at this point were: Jeb Bush, Donald Trump, Rick Perry, Bernie Sanders, Carly Fiorina and Martin O'Malley.

Over the past 20 days, there were changes not only in the composition of the participants in the race, but also in the rankings:

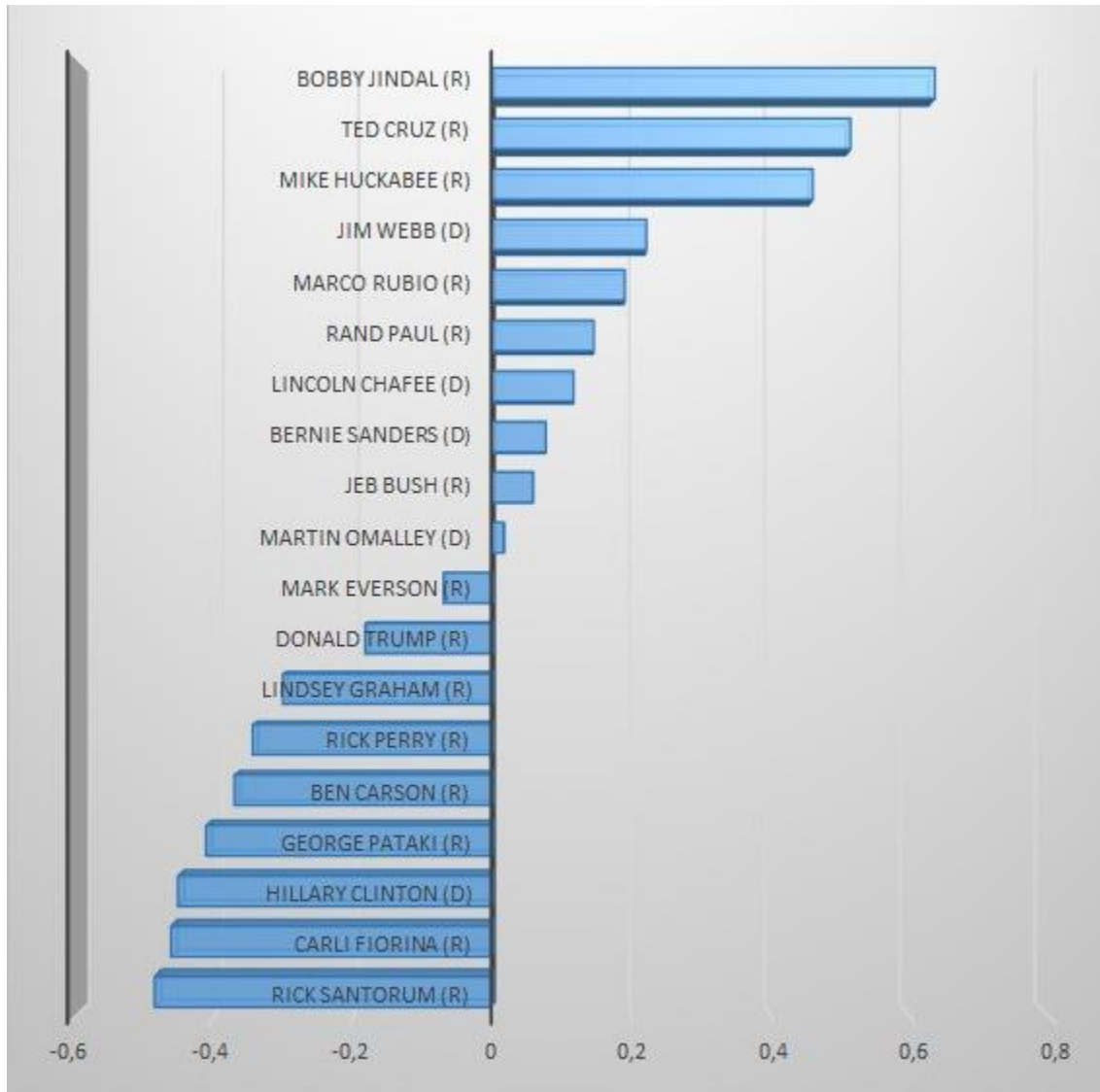
	Candidate	04/24/2015	05/15/2015	Changes
1	Ted Cruz (r)	0,55	0,59	+0,04
2	Marco Rubio (r)	0,27	0,49	+0,22
3	Mike Huckabee (r)	0,22	0,24	+0,02
4	Rand Paul (r)	0,11	0,23	+0,13
5	Jim Webb (d)	0,03	0,21	+0,18
6	Bernie Sanders (d)	-	0,17	-
7	Lincoln Chafee (d)	0,03	0,05	+0,02
8	Jeb Bush (r)	-	0,02	-
9	Martin O'Malley (d)	-	-0,06	-
10	Donald Trump (r)	-	-0,23	-
11	Mark Everson (r)	-0,24	-0,25	-0,01

12	Ben Carson (r)	-0,35	-0,31	+0,04
13	Rick Perry (r)	-	-0,40	-
14	Carly Fiorina (r)	-	-0,44	-
15	Hillary Clinton (d)	-0,50	-0,65	-0,15

If on April 24 the undisputed leader in our rankings was Ted Cruz, now his rating has even increased slightly (by 0.04). However, Marco Rubio has improved the most out of all candidates (+0.22) and, although he is still second in the rankings, is very close behind Ted Cruz. We have also seen a strong improvement in the ratings of Rand Paul (+0.13) and Jim Webb (+0.18).

Hilary Clinton remains in the last place and her rating has even decreased in this period (-0.15.). Meanwhile, Jeb Bush who just joined the race finds himself comfortably at the middle of the table.

Ratings of US presidential candidates (based on IntenCheck profiles), as of May 30, 2015:



Over the past 15 days, as more candidates have joined the race for president, our rankings have also seen some important changes.

The changes from the last 15 days can be seen in the table below:

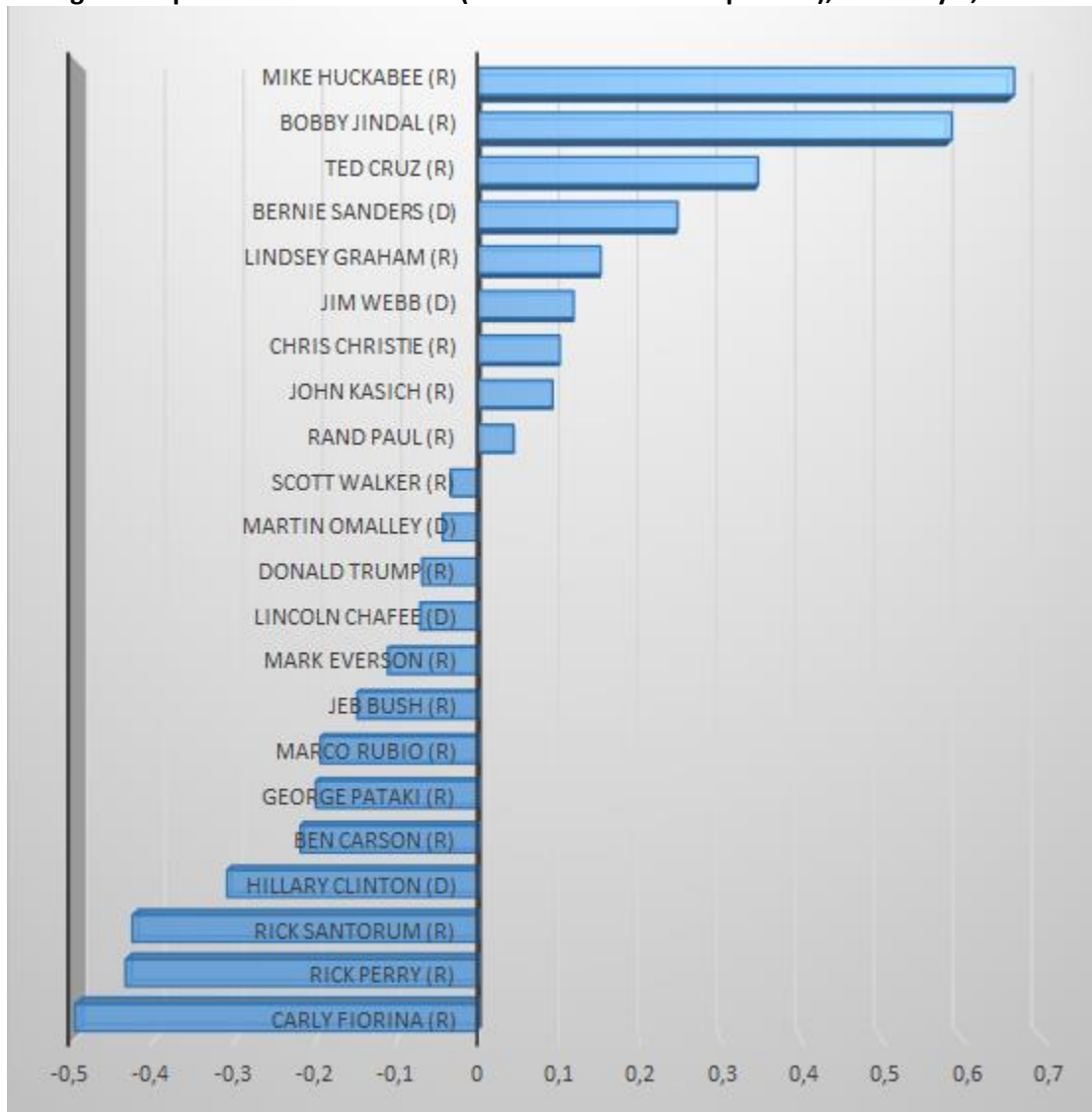
	Candidate	04/24/2015	05/15/2015	05/30/2015	Changes
1	Bobby Jindal (r)	-	-	0,64	-
2	Ted Cruz (r)	0,55	0,59	0,51	-0,07
3	Mike Huckabee (r)	0,22	0,24	0,46	+0,22
4	Jim Webb (d)	0,03	0,21	0,22	+0,01
5	Marco Rubio (r)	0,27	0,49	0,19	-0,30
6	Rand Paul (r)	0,11	0,23	0,15	-0,09
7	Lincoln Chafee (d)	0,03	0,05	0,12	+0,06
8	Bernie Sanders (d)	-	0,17	0,08	-0,10

9	Jeb Bush (r)	-	0,02	0,06	+0,04
10	Martin O'Malley (d)	-	-0,06	0,02	+0,07
11	Mark Everson (r)	-0,24	-0,25	-0,07	+0,18
12	Donald Trump (r)	-	-0,23	-0,18	+0,05
13	Lindsey Graham (r)	-	-	-0,30	-
14	Rick Perry (r)	-	-0,40	-0,34	+0,06
15	Ben Carson (r)	-0,35	-0,31	-0,37	-0,06
16	George Pataki (r)	-	-	-0,41	-
17	Hillary Clinton (d)	-0,50	-0,65	-0,45	+0,20
18	Carly Fiorina (r)	-	-0,44	-0,46	-0,02

As seen in the table, the absolute leader became rookie Bobby Jindal. Ted Cruz' ratings decreased slightly and he moved into second place. In third place is now Mike Huckabee. The ratings shows that the three leaders strongly detached from the rest of the candidates. Another surprise was the sudden drop of Marco Rubio in the rankings, from second to fifth place in just a 15 days period.

Hilary Clinton continues to trail behind in the rankings, only ahead of Carly Fiorina and newcomer Rick Santorum.

Ratings of US presidential candidates (based on IntenCheck profiles), as of July 7, 2015:



Between May 30, 2015 and July 10, 2015 three new candidates have joined the race for presidency: Chris Christie (gov. of New Jersey), Scott Walker (gov. of Wisconsin) and John Kasich (gov. of Ohio). The new candidates find themselves in the top half of our rankings, with Christie in 7th place, Kasich on 8th and Walker on 10th.

The most noticeable change in our rankings has been determined by Mike Huckabee's improvement in the way he communicates with the voters (+0.20), which helped him climb all the way to the top spot.

Although still far behind, Hilary Clinton has also improved her ratings (+0.14) and is now on an ascending trend, having made some positive changes to the way she addresses the public on social media channels over the past 55 days.

The candidate with the most improved ratings in the recent period is Lindsey Graham (+0.45). She made a considerable jump in the standings, climbing from the 13th position to 5th.

The full list of changes in the candidates' communication ratings from the past 40 days can be seen in the table below.

	Candidate	04/24/2015	05/15/2015	05/30/2015	07/10/2015	Changes
1	Mike Huckabee (r)	0,22	0,24	0,46	0,66	+0,20
2	Bobby Jindal (r)	-	-	0,64	0,59	-0,05
3	Ted Cruz (r)	0,55	0,59	0,51	0,35	-0,17
4	Bernie Sanders (d)	-	0,17	0,08	0,25	+0,17
5	Lindsey Graham (r)	-	-	-0,30	0,15	+0,45
6	Jim Webb (d)	0,03	0,21	0,22	0,12	-0,10
7	Chris Christie (r)	-	-	-	0,10	-
8	John Kasich (r)	-	-	-	0,09	-
9	Rand Paul (r)	0,11	0,23	0,15	0,04	-0,10
10	Scott Walker (r)	-	-	-	-0,03	-
11	Martin OMalley (d)	-	-0,06	0,02	-0,04	-0,06
12	Donald Trump (r)	-	-0,23	-0,18	-0,07	+0,11
13	Lincoln Chafee (d)	0,03	0,05	0,12	-0,07	-0,19
14	Mark Everson (r)	-0,24	-0,25	-0,07	-0,11	-0,04
15	Jeb Bush (r)	-	0,02	0,06	-0,15	-0,21
16	Marco Rubio (r)	0,27	0,49	0,19	-0,19	-0,39
17	George Pataki (r)	-	-	-0,41	-0,20	+0,21
18	Ben Carson (r)	-0,35	-0,31	-0,37	-0,22	+0,15
19	Hillary Clinton (d)	-0,50	-0,65	-0,45	-0,31	+0,14
20	Rick Santorum (r)	-	-	-0,48	-0,43	+0,06
21	Rick Perry (r)	-	-0,40	-0,34	-0,44	-0,09
22	Carly Fiorina (r)	-	-0,44	-0,46	-0,50	-0,04

Conclusion

Since the start of our study of the presidential elections campaigns, we have seen some interesting changes to the ways the candidates communicate to the voters. While there is much room for speculation over who will become the next US president, one thing is for certain: all of the candidates still have much room for improvement in terms of the way they address the public through online channels.

The US Senate elections from November 2015 have given us an important insight into the preferences of American voters and, undoubtedly, those candidates who will follow the recipe of successful communication will find themselves ahead in the race for the next US president.

The good news is that the recipe for successful communication has already been created. With our tools, we can analyze, measure the effectiveness, and also predict and help candidates improve their performance, at least when it comes to social media and written communication.

References:

<http://www.politics1.com/p2016.htm> - List of candidates for the US presidential elections in 2016