

BOOSTED NEWS TOOLKIT + 2020 REVIEW

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ACRONYM+ is a non-profit organization committed to building the digital infrastructure of the progressive movement at all levels.

What Is Boosted News?

Boosted news is the tactic of **promoting articles** produced by news organizations that support your program goals and delivering them to your audiences **through paid digital ads**.

Boost the News
Sponsored · Paid for by ACRONYM · ⚙️

President Trump is continuing to insist that schools must reopen in person this Fall despite Americans' worries about the spread of coronavirus.



NYTIMES.COM
Trump Wants Schools to Reopen. Americans Worry It'll Happen Too Fast.

Four Is Enough
Sponsored · Paid for by PACRONYM · ⚙️

"I'll be laser-focused on working families: the middle-class families I came from here in Scranton, not the wealthy investor ...See More



About this ad

REUTERS.COM
Biden says his economic plan would create five million new U.S. jobs

Example Boosted News FB Ads

ACRONYM's 2020 Testing Program

- For the 2020 cycle, ACRONYM ran dozens of RCT's with the intention of measuring the persuasion and vote enthusiasm effects across various messages and digital tactics.
- On average, ~500 survey respondents were gathered through Facebook ads and all ad treatments were served within Facebook in roughly 1-week treatments. This was a difficult environment to generate movement in.
- **Boosted news stood out** amongst traditional digital tactics in being able to more often **produce statistically significant persuasion results**. Especially amongst voters with lower levels of political knowledge.

Persuasion Meta Analysis: Boosted News vs. Traditional Video Ads

Research Question:

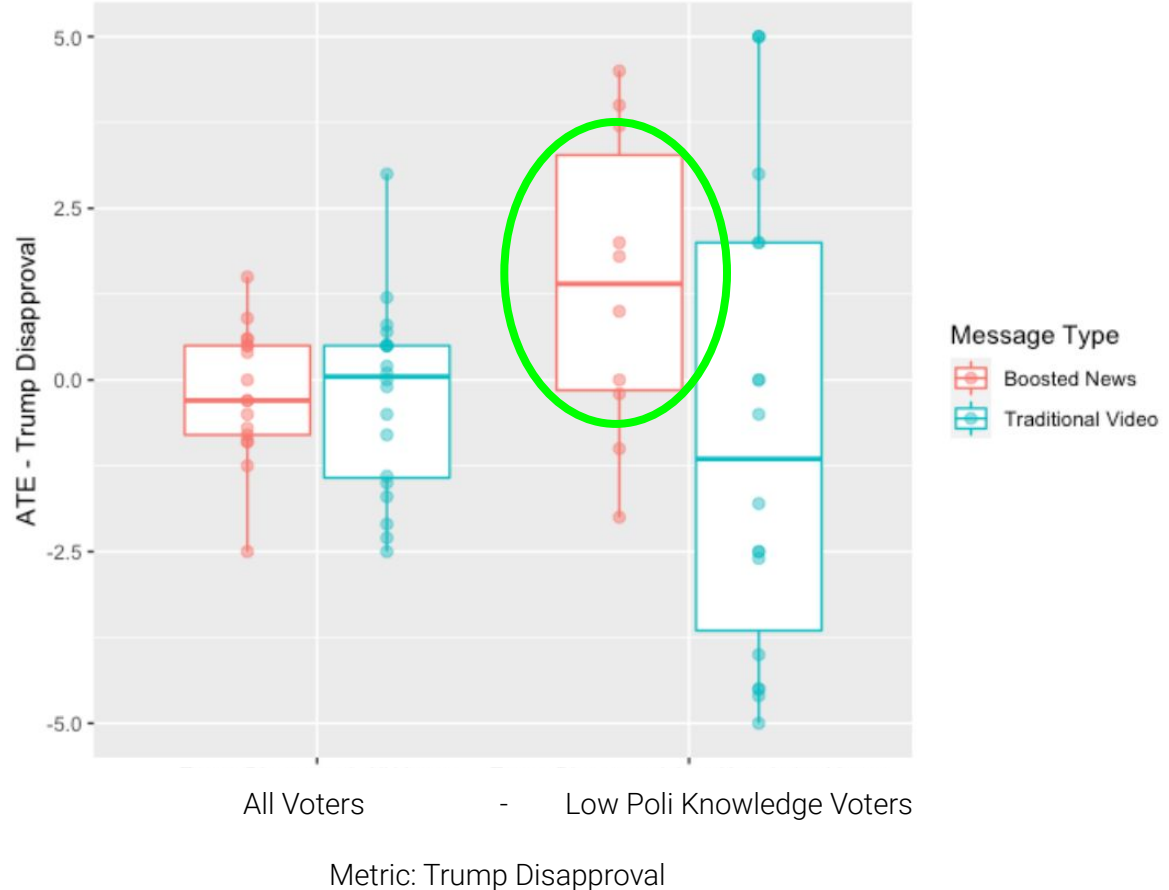
- How did boosted news compare with conventional videos across our RCTs (randomized controlled trials)? Particularly for our low political knowledge persuasion audience---who we found early success in moving.

Meta-Analysis:

- Analyzed 28 ads campaigns that ran on Facebook from December 2019 - June 2020
 - 10 Boosted News
 - 18 Traditional Video
 - 6 Both (Excluded from analysis)
- Low Political Knowledge measured by a 3 question survey (<2 = Low Knowledge)
 - Do you happen to know the term limits for members of the US Congress?
 - Do you happen to know which party holds the majority of seats in the US House of Representatives?
 - Do you happen to know how long the term of office is for a U.S. Senator?

Among Low Political Knowledge Voters, Boosted News Persuades

- Roughly 2% higher average treatment effect on Trump disapproval to low political knowledge voters.
 - Increased average effect of boosted news can be attributed to its **lack of backlash**.
- Wider effect range with higher chance of backlash effect when we did traditional video across all voters and low political knowledge voters.



Measuring Persuasion: Conservative Messengers

We found more frequent and stronger **positive effects** when boosting articles from, or that highlighted **conservative messengers** such as Tucker Carlson or other Republicans.

Frequency of Measured Positive Effect
Across Boosted News RCT Cells

67% > **44%**

**Conservative
Boosted News**

Standard
Boosted News



Key Learnings

- The majority of our **successful persuasion effect** came from a **combination of boosted news and conservative messengers**.
 - Noting that seeing any statistically significant movement in our methodology was difficult to come by, so these breakthroughs are particularly noteworthy.
- Our **boosted news** treatments were roughly **2% points more effective** on average among our low political knowledge voters **compared to video ads** on Facebook.
 - This was not true of our broader testing audience---effects were roughly the same size.
- Much of the increased average effect of boosted news can be attributed to its lack of backlash. **News ads rarely provoked backlash** among our audience, while more partisan video ads regularly produced backlash amongst some audience segments.

What Makes A Boosted News Ad Effective?

The following is a qualitative analysis with input from former Facebook employees.



- Less likely to trigger someone's political filter compared to traditional content, especially if coming from a non-political looking brand.
- Experts say that the typical eye tracking of a user looking at a news link article on Facebook is:
 - Headline
 - Image
 - Brand Logo/Name
 - Social Copy
- Users are more likely to read a headline, ensuring that some message is delivered, whereas it's much easier to scroll by a video or graphic if you don't think it's relevant to you.
- You can utilize 3rd parties as messengers that may be more tricky to incorporate in traditional ads.

Current Recommendations

- Regularly include boosted news as a line item in your persuasion program paid media mix, especially on Facebook.
 - A flexible monthly boosted news budget can you help with rapid response moments.
- When speaking to a persuasion audience, seek out conservative messengers when boosting news for greater effect.
- Create a back catalogue of existing news articles relevant to your campaign with favorable messengers and set up a monitoring system to collect and boost new ones as they appear.
 - You can re-contextualize old articles through your social copy.

Further Study Opportunities

- Test more messenger archetypes against more audience segments.
 - For example, who are the best messengers and trusted publishers for increasing youth voter enthusiasm?
- Identify persuasion effects of messages coming from local publishers vs national publishers.



THE BOOSTED NEWS TOOLKIT

The Boosted News Toolkit

Coming soon!

- Boosted News 101
- Tips & Tricks on Execution
- Strategic Recommendations
- Experiment Appendix
- & much more!

Q&A

Thank You!

Contact: Landru Parker - landru@anotheracronym.org

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