

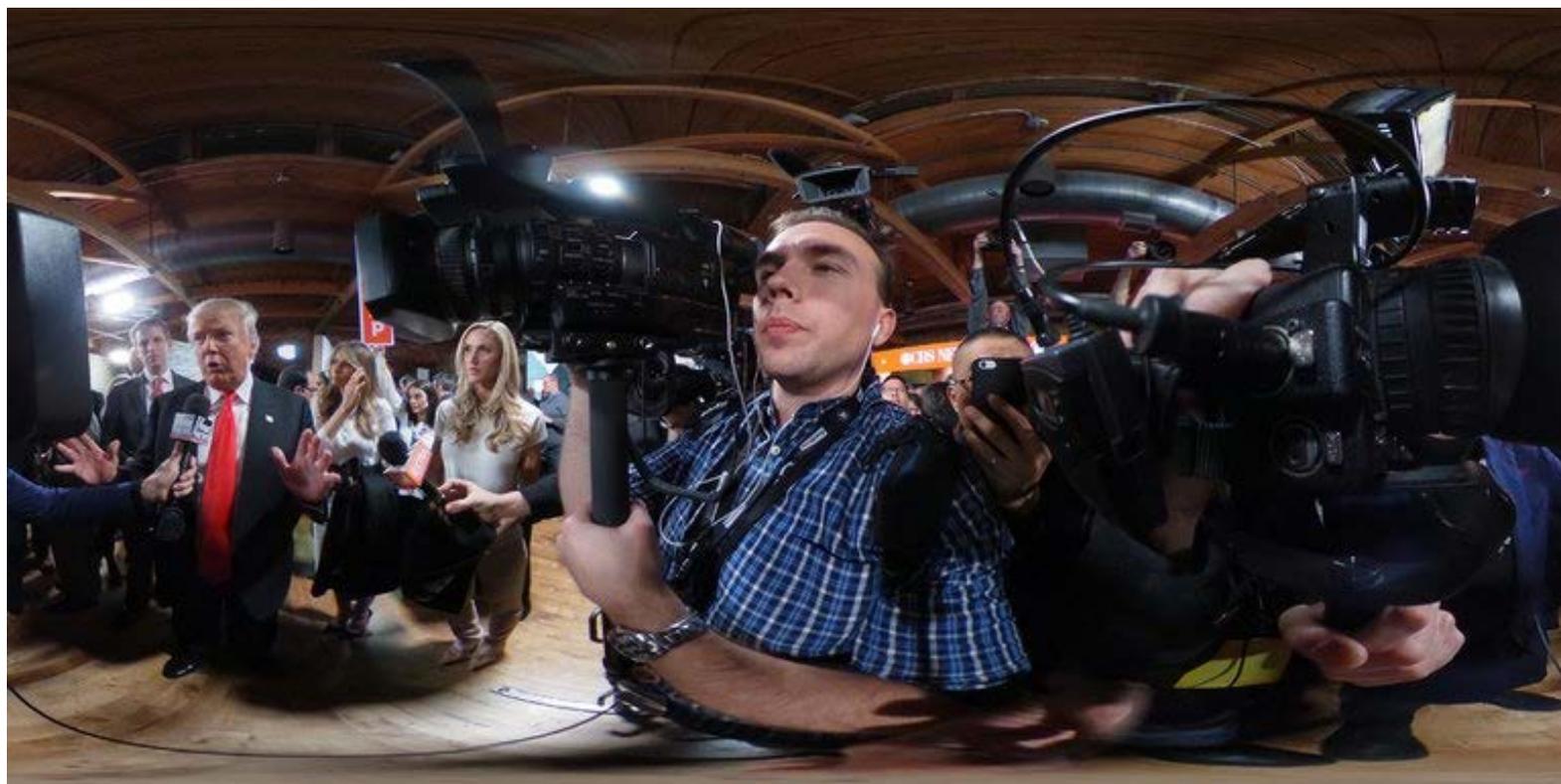


FOLLOW US:
GET THE UPSHOT IN YOUR INBOX

THE 2016 RACE

\$2 Billion Worth of Free Media for Donald Trump

By NICHOLAS CONFESSORE and KAREN YOURISH MARCH 15, 2016



Alex Wong/Getty

Cameras are never far away when Donald Trump is around. Images

Of all the ways [Donald Trump](#) has shocked the political system, one of the most significant is how he wins primary after primary with one of the smallest campaign budgets.

He still doesn't have a [super PAC](#). He skimped on ground organization and field offices. Most important, he spent less on television advertising — typically the single biggest expenditure for a campaign — than any other major candidate, according to an analysis by SMG Delta, a firm that tracks television advertising.

2016 Presidential Ad Spending

Through February, in millions.

Source: SMG Delta

By The New York Times

But Mr. Trump is hardly absent from the airwaves. Like all candidates, he benefits from what is known as earned media: news and commentary about his campaign on television, in newspapers and magazines, and on social media. Earned media typically dwarfs paid media in a campaign. The big difference between Mr. Trump and other candidates is that he is far better than any other candidate — maybe than any candidate ever — at earning media.

No one knows this better than mediaQuant, a firm that tracks media coverage of each candidate and computes a dollar value based on advertising rates. The mentions are weighted by the reach of the media source, meaning how many people were likely to see it. The calculation also includes traditional media of all types, print, broadcast or otherwise, as well as online-only sources like Facebook, Twitter or Reddit.

Its numbers are not quite an apples-to-apples comparison to paid advertising. But they do make one thing clear: Mr. Trump is not just a little better at earning media. He is *way* better than any of the other candidates.

Bought Versus Free Media

In millions.

Sources: mediaQuant, SMG Delta

By The New York Times

Mr. Trump earned \$400 million worth of free media last month, about what

John McCain spent on his entire 2008 presidential campaign. Paul Senatori, mediaQuant's chief analytics officer, says that Mr. Trump "has no weakness in any of the media segments" — in other words, he is strong in every type of earned media, from television to Twitter.

Over the course of the campaign, he has earned close to \$2 billion worth of media attention, about twice the all-in price of the most expensive presidential campaigns in history. It is also twice the estimated \$746 million that Hillary Clinton, the next best at earning media, took in. Senator Bernie Sanders has earned more media than any of the Republicans except Mr. Trump.

Of course, as Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Trump would probably attest, not all media attention is positive. (Mrs. Clinton's mentions, for example, would include news coverage of congressional hearings on Benghazi; Mr. Trump's will eventually include articles about violence and fights at his campaign rallies.)

The mediaQuant model collects positive, neutral and negative media mentions alike. Mr. Senatori said negative media mentions are given somewhat less weight. The best way to think of the numbers, he said, is as a gauge of which candidates are "trending" in the earned media market at any given time.

Monthly Earned Media

In millions.

Source: mediaQuant

By The New York Times

The model shows different candidates trending at different times. In February, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas earned almost as much media coverage as Mrs. Clinton, and about as much as Mr. Trump earned last October.

But Mr. Trump still dominates. In February, he earned as much media as Mr. Cruz and Mrs. Clinton combined.

[The Upshot](#) provides news, analysis and graphics about politics, policy and everyday life. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Sign up for our [newsletter](#).

A version of this article appears in print on March 17, 2016, on page A3 of the New York edition with the headline: Measuring Trump's Big Advantage in Free Media. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

RELATED COVERAGE

What We're Watching in Florida, Ohio and Other Primaries MARCH 15, 2016



A King in His Castle: How Donald Trump Lives, From His Longtime Butler MARCH 15, 2016



2 Front-Runners, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, Find Their Words Can Be Weapons

MARCH 14, 2016



NEWS

World

U.S.

Politics

N.Y.

Business

Tech

Science

Health

Sports

Education

Obituaries

Today's Paper

Corrections

OPINION

Today's Opinion

Op-Ed Columnists

Editorials

Contributing Writers

Op-Ed Contributors

Opinionator

Letters

Sunday Review

Taking Note

Room for Debate

Public Editor

Video: Opinion

ARTS

Today's Arts

Art & Design

Books

Dance

Movies

Music

N.Y.C. Events Guide

Television

Theater

Video: Arts

LIVING

Automobiles

Crossword

Food

Education

Fashion & Style

Health

Jobs

Magazine

N.Y.C. Events Guide

Real Estate

T Magazine

Travel

Weddings & Celebrations

LISTINGS & MORE

Classifieds

Tools & Services

Times Topics

Public Editor

N.Y.C. Events Guide

Blogs

Multimedia

Photography

Video

NYT Store

Times Journeys

Subscribe

[Manage My Account](#)

SUBSCRIBE

[Times Insider](#)

[Home Delivery](#)

[Digital Subscriptions](#)

[NYT Opinion](#)

[Crossword](#)

[Email Newsletters](#)

[Alerts](#)

[Gift Subscriptions](#)

[Corporate Subscriptions](#)

[Education Rate](#)

[Mobile Applications](#)

[Replica Edition](#)

[International New York Times](#)

© 2016 The New York Times Company | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

[Site Map](#) | [Help](#) | [Site Feedback](#)