

Brighton Centered

This is a weblog related to community activities going on in Brighton, MA, one of the neighborhoods of Boston. Ours is a large and diverse community including many long-term residents, recent immigrants, and students attending the local universities.

Wednesday, September 26, 2007

[Voter Turnout Via Blackberries for the Ciommo Campaign](#)

In the municipal preliminary election yesterday for the Allston-Brighton District 9 City Council seat, I received several reports that workers for the Mark Ciommo campaign were at various precincts with their Blackberries. Those reports didn't really describe what they were doing with the Blackberries -- a traditional use or something more clever.

I spoke with their campaign today and found out that the PDA Blackberries were part of their *get-out-the-vote effort on election day* using software written by a company called "First Tuesday in November". I can't find information online about the company, but it is part of the [Sage Systems](#) consulting that Ciommo is using to run his campaign. They claim that this is the first time such software has been used on an election day in Massachusetts.

The way it works: at some point in the middle of election day, a campaign worker at the precinct polling place inspects the list of who has voted; he then checks off those names on the Blackberry; the information is uploaded in real-time to the computer back at the campaign office; and then a worker at the office immediately knows who among their identified supporters in that precinct hasn't yet voted and needs to be called. The advantage of the PDA approach is not only the speed and efficiency with which the information is recorded into the master database, but also that there is no time-delay in getting the information to the campaign office's phone callers. In other words, they don't waste time calling a supporter who voted during the last hour or so. One person reported to me yesterday that they got called by a campaign two hours after they had actually voted -- they were obviously not called by the Ciommo campaign.

This system has some potential working in the other direction, too. The worker carrying the Blackberry can be told where to go to visit somebody's house to help get them to the polls. The technology sure sounds like the way of the future for campaigns all across the country.

Pretty slick!

The Ciommo campaign reported that they were swimming in volunteers on election day, such that they had a little bit of trouble keeping them all busy. I guess the efficiency of computers is not only taking over people's jobs -- it's also taking away the need for so many volunteers on election day.

Posted by Michael Pahre at [5:13 PM](#) ___

Labels: [boston city council](#), [election2007](#), [Mark Ciommo](#), [PDA](#)

3 comments:

 [Deborah](#) said...

"at some point in the middle of the day" isn't really an accurate description of poll-checking. The campaign poll-checker is there during the time when the people vote and checks off names as voters come in. I was a Schofield poll-checker, but was definitely admiring the efficiency of the Ciommo campaign poll-checker's Blackberry. There's no question that real-time updates are great for both campaigns and voters.

[10:45 PM](#)

 [Michael Pahre](#) said...

Fair enough. To be more specific, the Ciommo campaign had significantly fewer Blackberries for using in this manner than the number of precincts (but they couldn't tell me off-hand the exact number of Blackberries). As a result, they had a poll-checker there continuously at some (busy) precincts, but in others they effectively had to share one device amongst several (low-activity) precincts -- and hence "showing up periodically during the day" would probably be more accurate for those low turnout locations.

[10:51 PM](#)

 [David Cerrone](#) said...

I am a Managing Partner with First Tuesday in November. Our website is www.ftin.org. If you would like more information about what we did for the Ciommo campaign and about my company, please contact me at david@ftin.org. Thank You for your interest in our technology.

[11:29 PM](#)

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What do you think was the biggest reason for the low voter turnout in the November 6th election?

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[Marriage; Abortion/Gay Marriage](#)-----**Boston City Councilor-At-**
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Forums:10/10/07 in Brighton: [Audio-recording](#) ... analysis [see gambling and planning dept below]10/9/07
in Copley: [analysis](#)10/3/07 in Charlestown: [Boston Globe column](#)**Profiles of the Candidates:A-B**
TAB Campaign Finance Report Summaries:As of: [9/30/07](#) [with analysis] ... [10/15/07 Candidate](#)
Positions On the Issues:[Casino Gambling](#)[Creating a City Planning Department](#)**Websites / Contact Info--**
-----**General:**[MainStream Media not covering the election](#)[All Election 2007](#)
[Coverage](#) (includes opinion, analysis, and commentary)

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About Me

Michael Pahre

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sitemeter

industrial scales Counter

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John Connolly's campaign admitted to sending anonymous mailings attacking opponent Stephen Murphy, but offered no apology. Should Connolly also apologize for the mailings?

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Allston-Brighton residents: What is your view of Mayor Menino? [Choose as many answers as you like]

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Vote for the questions (below) that you would like the Allston-Brighton District City Council candidates to be asked. The top 5-7 questions will be sent to them in a questionnaire. You may vote for as many, or as few, questions as you like.

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What is the most important issue facing Allston-Brighton during this election cycle?

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