

What information do college students need to make informed and educated choices on election day?



Interview Data Report by: Beckett Dumo, Owen Lowery, Sunny Rahman, and Yash Singh

Our Research Question

- Our research was centered around answering, what information do college students need to make informed and educated choices on election day?
- We developed an interview protocol to investigate and draw conclusions from college students about where they would look to find information on politics.

Data Collection Process

- First we came up with our interview questions/Protocol
- For the data collection process we each conducted interviews with college students to discover where they might look for political information and what information was important for making political decisions.
- Our interviews were transcribed into document.

Data Analysis Process

- Using our transcripts, each team member derived codes for their interviews.
- These codes were mapped into miro and used to derive common themes seen across all interviews.
- Theme memos and quotes were attached to each of the major themes.

Initial Codes and Categories Mapping

Yash

Nico									
Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist
Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote
not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media

Gabe									
Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist
Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote
not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media

Danielle									
Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist	Black Nationalist
Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote	Registered to vote
not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media	not big on social media

Owen

Jacob Leonard		
born and raised in Alaska, goes to CU now	not registered to vote, never voted before	wants to vote just hasn't gotten to it
his parents aren't political, different, more social, a lot of Instagram, and a lot of social media	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person
into climate change and renewable energy	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person
he's not really into politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person

Kaden Tapia		
kaden tapia, from longmont colorado	registered to vote but never participated in an election before	this fall is the first time he's in the family and he's not really into politics
he's not really into politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person
he's not really into politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person
he's not really into politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person	he doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person

Harry Powers		
Harry Powers, from Santa Barbara, CA	Not registered to vote but he doesn't need to	His parents talk about politics a lot but he doesn't participate
He doesn't like to talk about politics much	He doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person	He doesn't really care about politics, he's more of a social media person
more left leaning views	he's not really into politics, he's more of a social media person	he's not really into politics, he's more of a social media person
mainly tik tok, Instagram, and twitter	he's not really into politics, he's more of a social media person	he's not really into politics, he's more of a social media person

Beckett

1		
Grow up in Colorado then moved to Japan	Information Science Major	Don't like how parents voted
Saw how they were affected by political media	Moving to Boulder changed others	Grow up in a small conservative town
Not active in politics but likes to engage in political conversation	Voted 2020	Needs to be in a small conservative town
Avoids strong personal opinions	Plains own news and talking to them was controversial	Don't like how parents voted
Washington Post for political information		

2		
Grow up in Seattle	Geology Major	Values basic rights for all
Parents are super liberal and only watch left leaning news	Growing up in Seattle affected political beliefs	Surrounds himself with liberal friends
Not involved in politics	Sees politics moving backwards, mentions how it's made	Votes in large elections but not in small ones
One vote doesn't matter all that much	Doctors don't vote on part basis like parents	Looks at New York Times article for left leaning and conservative
Takes social media political information with a grain of salt	Looks at articles from right and left leaning news to get both sides	Sees basic media political information as propaganda, saying their own version

3		
Grow up in Seattle	Computer science major	Parents aren't politically aware
Liberal	Doesn't feel like voting matters	Political mobs on social media
Twitter is politically charged	One vote is nothing against the majority	Looks at political news from both sides
Likes engaging in political conversation		

Sunny

Derek		
grew up in US college towns (PA, NC)	father works in athletics, mom in business	communications major
history buff	registered to vote in high school	mom votes often, father doesn't
solidified political stance in high school	hasn't voted	between the two party system in US isn't a clear system, but it's not really
thinks voting should be a choice	gathers information from a broad range of sources	

Nikita		
international student (Russia, UK)	English is second language	Engineering student
father owns company	Believes elections should be fair	believes US elections are far too complicated
Ineligible to vote	No established political stance	family is left-leaning
needs international social media and social media		

Baker		
American, lived internationally a lot (UK, Singapore)	INFO major	registered to vote
liberal-leaning	only has voted when against Trump	doesn't keep up with politics
family is left-leaning	father typically only follows news and news, mom likes CNN	tries to stay away from politics at work, mostly on social media
only sees himself voting when trying to keep someone out of office		

milo

Theme Analysis

gets
information
from a
social media

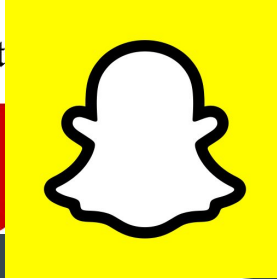
"So my opinion is probably been swayed a little bit by social media, but not super much."
(Yash danilo)

"Probably mostly Facebook Instagram a don't entirely know if don't know that much but they likely have apps on their phone."

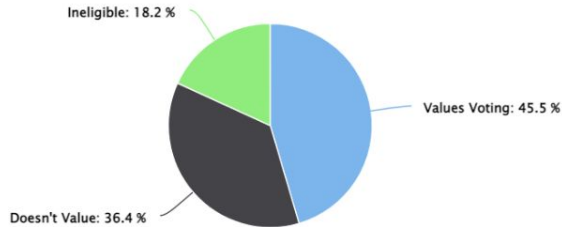
Daniilo

"I mean, like, probably like
that. Yeah. I mean, like, I
don't really watch the
news. Yeah, I don't really
have time to watch the
news. Yeah. So probably like
like Instagram."
(mew.jacob)

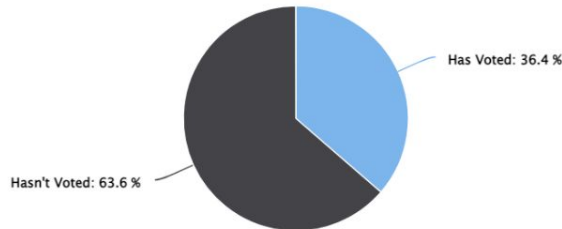
Visualizations



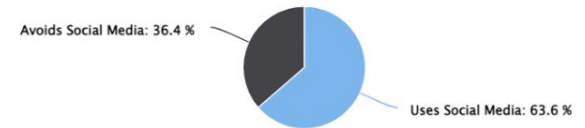
Views on Voting



Voters



Social Media Political News



Findings from analysis and themes

- Multiple people do not care for politics and just stay away from it because they have other things to do that take up more importance in their lives.
- Many people at CU Boulder are from outside Colorado.
- Social Media heavily impacts the way you think about politics. It either creates a bubble for you and you only think about what makes you stay on the app longer or you think you need to believe what most people believe.
- Many people get their information from diverse sources.
- Many people that go here do not vote regularly
- Many people consider social media to be their major source of information in terms of politics.

Quotes

- "there's always the thought that in social media you're always trying to try to be right or trying to be with the crowd sometimes" (Baker)
- "I'm being completely honest, I don't really keep in touch with politics. In the presidential election, one thing I did know is that I didn't like Trump. So I voted for Biden in that case, but in the grand scheme of things, I'm kind of not really too knowledgeable." (Baker)
- "Well, I mean, it seems like it matters so much. You know, like, we vote and stuff like that. And it does, and it does have a voice and make a difference. But I also don't wreck my whole life or care so much if we're wanting to win doesn't win. Because in four years, like, you know, hey, they're out for reelection, like you want 100% Do not care about what Ronald Reagan did when he was president right now. Right. And in 20 years, we're not going to give a singular fuck about what Joe Biden did, like, you know, it's so I don't really care." (N.)

Quotes Cont.

- "my parents are business owners, so they get their information from. like the financial experiences they've gone through because they've grown up, for they've been, for. They worked and made their own money. Uh, and they follow the news, but they still hold really independent opinions."(G)
- "I mean, like, probably tik tok. Yeah, I mean, like, I don't really have time to watch the news. Yeah, so probably TikTok and Instagram."(Owen)

Potential Impacts

- A majority of students at CU have not voted before and most haven't registered to vote.
- Many students are coming from out of state or country and may not understand where to look for political information.
- Some of our participant were registered to vote, but hadn't voted.

Questions derived from research

- How can CU Boulder and local governments get students more interested in politics without alienating a certain group or contributing to the polarization between several groups even more?
- Will political discourse eventually become less hostile in the future or more hostile as social media mobs expand?
- Will future generations further their views from their parents as increased social media use increases intake of political information?

Direction for future work

- For the future we believe that we should make our questions for the interviews as specific as possible so the interviewees do not get a chance to ramble about information that is useless for the interview.
- We should also conduct interviews without notes so we can focus on how to lead the conversation into a place that gives us good information about our question.
- We should also conduct multiple interviews and just keep the ones that talk mostly about what we want and not interviews that are just useless to our question.
- A large scale poll conducted on CU students about where they look for political information, then a following page showing the most picked answers would allow college students to seek out news and media their peers use.

Recommendations for CU

- Focus on the positive impacts of voting and political involvement in the community when introducing political information to students rather than a constant spread of saddening news that may stress them out and push them away.
- Increase the volume of quick, eye catching digital media that encourages students to vote on popular values among our generation without making the process seem obligatory.
- Create more cool incentives for students to register to vote without an attempt to sway them one way.