

Web 2.0 and the Dean Campaign 2002-2003

Pre-history

- Post 9/11 environment of solidarity --> Iraq War planning
- Oct 2002: Moveon.org raises \$2.2 million in two days for Paul Wellstone
- Most moderate Democrats support Iraq war; exceptions are Al Gore and then unknown Gov. Howard Dean

Beginnings: 2002



Michael Springer / Getty Images file

Fund For A Healthy America

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What is Fund for a Healthy America

Fund for a Healthy America was founded by Vermont Governor Howard Dean, M.D. to support the principles of fiscal stability, universal health insurance, better environmental protection, and equality for all Americans. The fund will also assist candidates who are supportive of these issues.



Paid for by "Fund for a Healthy America"

Howard Dean entered politics with no particular interest in the Internet, a centrist Democrat associated with the likes of President Bill Clinton. In the fall of 2002, the Dean campaign was known as a serious but long-shot effort by a centrist Democrat with a strong interest and record on health care. Dean predicted that "I'm going to be dead last in fundraising,"

Nov. 2002 - Jan. 2003

- Unusual number of emails coming into campaign headquarters
- Obscure blog called MyDD posts a link to Dean "meetups"
- Jan. 03 "What I want to Know Speech ..."

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During the next two months, the Dean campaign remained a tiny organization, and continued groping for a foothold in the national spotlight. But people inside the campaign began to notice a flood of e-mails

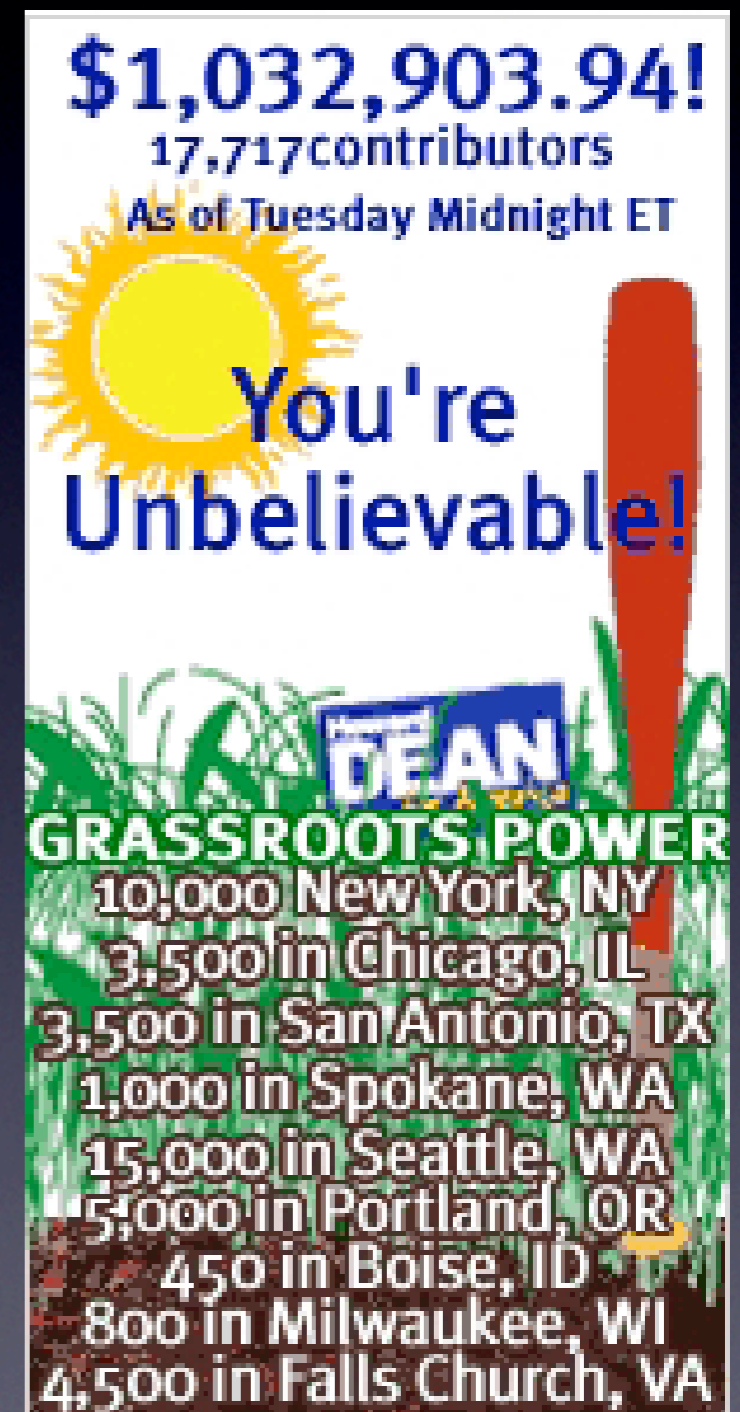
coming in, e-mails expressing not only support, but a desire to help, to act. Dean's assistant Kate O'Connor's personal e-mail inbox was flooded, as supporters searching for a contact on the campaign found her e-mail address. A few months later, Zephyr Teachout, a young lawyer recently hired as a deputy field director noticed e-mails saying things like, "I'm an artist in New York and I'd love to help out"; "I'm a student in South Carolina and we'd like to do something"; "I saw Howard Dean on the news here in Pennsylvania and if there's anything I can do"; "I've written the campaign two times offering to help and I've heard nothing."⁵ Meanwhile, an independent group of Internet-savvy enthusiasts set up a national listserv for Dean supporters—an e-mail discussion list—and began creating pro-Dean listservs in each state.⁶

January of 2003,

Jerome Armstrong, acting independently of the official campaign, posted a link on his political blog, MyDD, to the then-obscure website called Meetup.com; the "Meetup for Dean" graphic would soon become famous. People inside the Dean campaign, especially Joe Trippi (an experienced Democratic campaign consultant with a taste for technology who joined the campaign in January 2003), began to take note. After the MyDD posting, Trippi noticed that Kerry and Edwards had approximately 150 registrants each, whereas Dean had about 400—not particularly significant numbers for a national campaign, but at the time perhaps the only number in which Dean had a lead over the favorites.

The Rise of Meetups

- March 22 NYC meetup catches attention
- spreads like wildfire
- fund-raising starts to rise dramatically
- MSM takes note



Love Letter to the Dean Campaign:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaHYIIQIEqo>