# Why Podcasts and X are the Real Kingmakers in 2024 U.S. Presidential Election

In the landscape of the 2024 U.S. presidential election, one trend is unmistakable: the growing influence of long-form content on social media platforms and podcasts. In an era where traditional media outlets appear increasingly polarized and distrusted, these alternative formats are emerging as powerful, unfiltered voices shaping voter behavior. They are faring remarkably well, with many voters turning to these sources to make sense of the political fray, in large part because they have become disillusioned with the old media giants that now appear more like propaganda machines than sources of objective truth.

For years, major American media outlets like *The New York Times*, *Fox News*, *CNN*, and *MSNBC* have been perceived as pillars of journalism. However, the audience is now acutely aware of the political leanings and biases these organizations bring to the table. Whether it's the openly conservative stances of *Fox News* or the more progressive leanings of *MSNBC*, these outlets have, in many ways, branded themselves into Left and Right silos. For voters who find themselves outside of these binaries or who want deeper, more nuanced discussions beyond the shouting matches and sensational headlines, traditional media has lost its appeal.

Enter long-form articles on platforms like X (formerly known as Twitter), backed by Elon Musk, and the expansive universe of podcasts. These digital spaces offer an opportunity for independent thinkers, experts, and analysts to reach voters directly, without the editorial slant or corporate oversight that comes with legacy media. On X, the platform's shift to accommodate long-form content has given rise to threads and essays that unpack policy issues, candidate platforms, and campaign developments in detail. They provide context that simply isn't available in a two-minute TV segment or a 500-word news piece.

Podcasts, too, have become crucial in this election cycle. In an era where authenticity and transparency are prized, voters are gravitating toward the format's extended, often unscripted nature. Shows like *The Joe Rogan Experience*, *Pod Save America*, or *The Ben Shapiro Show* have millions of listeners, and their influence is palpable. These hosts are not just talking heads; they are commentators with their own ideologies, but they offer something most voters crave—extended, thoughtful dialogue with guests of diverse opinions. Unlike mainstream news, which often presents sanitized and overly condensed stories, podcasts provide a space where

hosts and their guests can dive deep into issues, break down policy debates, and discuss the broader social and cultural implications of the election.

Why does this matter now? Because voters are fed up with the mainstream media's penchant for drama over depth. In past election cycles, networks covered the spectacle—an inflammatory soundbite, an outlandish rally moment—but offered little context for why these moments mattered or what they meant for the average American voter. With so much at stake in 2024, voters want more: more context, more understanding, and more authenticity. They're tired of clickbait and pundit-driven spin. The popularity of social media long-form content and podcasts is a reaction to this craving for depth.

Moreover, these platforms are providing voices from across the spectrum that may not have otherwise found space in mainstream outlets. On X, for example, independent journalists and political analysts are able to amass large followings, engaging directly with voters in real-time. They can challenge the narratives put forth by traditional media and offer perspectives that are often overlooked by larger outlets with entrenched biases. This has led to a democratization of political discourse, where voters have access to a range of opinions, from the far left to the far right, and everything in between. The boundaries of the debate are no longer determined by corporate media gatekeepers; they are shaped by a diverse group of influencers, each vying for the public's attention and trust.

The result? An electorate that is more engaged and informed—but also one that is more fragmented. Social media and podcasts, with their more intimate, conversational nature, are not just informing; they are building communities. These communities are often echo chambers, to be sure, but they are also spaces where voters feel heard, understood, and empowered. This emotional connection is crucial and something traditional media has struggled to replicate.

This shift, however, is not without its challenges. The rise of independent voices on platforms like X and through podcasts also raises questions about misinformation and the spreading of conspiracy theories. Without the oversight of established editorial processes, falsehoods and dubious narratives can proliferate unchecked. Yet, even this challenge reflects the waning influence of legacy media. Traditional

outlets have tried to position themselves as the gatekeepers of truth, but for many voters, their credibility has eroded beyond repair. The responsibility now falls on the audience itself to discern fact from fiction in a chaotic and rapidly evolving information landscape.

Ultimately, the growing power of podcasts and long-form content on social media represents a seismic shift in how political information is consumed and disseminated in America. Traditional media outlets, caught in their left-right binaries, no longer hold the monopoly on shaping narratives or influencing voter behavior. Instead, the future of political discourse may well be determined by independent voices operating on new platforms, free from the constraints—and the trust deficit—of legacy journalism.

This election cycle is proving that voters are not interested in superficial headlines or one-dimensional reporting. They seek the depth, analysis, and authenticity that long-form social media and podcasts provide. These platforms may not yet be perfect, but they are winning the battle for voters' trust—and their attention. The 2024 election is not just a contest between candidates; it's a referendum on the way Americans choose to inform themselves, and right now, it's the independents, the podcasters, and the long-form social media commentators who are having the final say.