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The country would still be waking up in Ronald Reagan's "It's Morning Again in America" [advertisement](#). The little girl with the daisy in the [ad](#) for Lyndon Johnson would not yet have counted past seven, the bomb left undetonated. And the phone in Hillary Rodham Clinton's "3 a.m." [spot](#) would still be ringing. Fifteen seconds is not a lot of time in the world of political advertising to make a compelling statement or share a riveting candidate story. But in the attention-deficit era of politics, with voters consuming more and more news on mobile devices, campaigns and the groups supporting them are devoting significant resources and energy to the micro ads that dominate the digital landscape.

The result is an explosion of shorter, attention-grabbing spots that have made political messaging all the more blunt and, at times, creative. "It's incumbent upon us as ad makers to adapt as the format changes as well, and not just adapt in terms of reducing the length of an existing video, but actually rethink the creative and express the message in a new way," said Josh Sharp, the chief creative officer at Harbinger Outreach, a Republican events and marketing firm.

With Americans shifting their attention away from television to mobile platforms and social media — Facebook says that more than 50 percent of its daily active users in the United States watch at least one video on the site every day, and Google tells clients that by 2018, 84 percent of all Internet traffic will be for video — it is not surprising that campaigns and outside groups are moving their resources there.

According to an August report by Borrell Associates, an advertising research firm that tracks media trends, digital ad spending is expected to top \$1 billion for the first time in 2016, an increase of nearly 700 percent from 2012, when it reached roughly \$160 million. "Ultimately advertising will always go to where the voters are, and as these new channels are being developed, the campaigns will have to adjust to that," Mr. Sharp said.

The 15-second digital ad is appealing to campaigns for several reasons. First, there is more inventory for shorter online ads, making them easier and cheaper to snap up. Second, the completion rate for well-produced digital ads is often higher than for their television counterparts. "When you're keeping your content bite-sized and tailored to your audience, you have a much better return," said Suzanne Henkels, spokeswoman for NextGen Climate Action, a "super PAC" focused on climate change and founded by Tom Steyer.

Digital ads also allow for a more precise — and often more efficient — way to reach voters. "On YouTube, we can target directly to a congressional district or a state or a metropolitan area," said Lee Dunn, who leads the elections team at Google, which owns YouTube. And political organizations are taking notice. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce

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ran 15-second ads in six competitive Senate states this summer, each aimed at a distinct demographic. “The beauty of this digital stuff is you can tell who’s clicking on it, how long they’re staying on it, and we can track them from cradle to grave — did they vote?” said Scott W. Reed, senior political strategist at the chamber.

Anton Vuljaj, a Republican digital consultant. A new generation of admen and women seems already to have grasped that an effective digital ad is a different beast, and not simply the best 15 seconds from a 30- or 60-second TV spot, cut down for digital. Days after announcing his presidential bid, Senator Rand Paul, Republican of Kentucky, tried a quirky approach to skipable online video, [first popularized by Geico](#). His campaign released a 15-second YouTube ad that began with [an unlikely, and direct, appeal](#): “Please

But while political strategists recognize the importance of digital ads, they also acknowledge the challenge of perfecting the science that makes an online spot successful. “You have a lot more time in a TV ad to present a hook to capture a viewer, but in the social space, it can be milliseconds,” said Matt David, a strategist for New Day, the super PAC supporting Gov. John R. Kasich of Ohio, a Republican. In the digital space, he continued, “you have to be much more creative visually, but also with a much more tight message and hook that’s upfront.” ([A recent Snapchat ad by the group](#) earned praise for authentically and concisely conveying Mr. Kasich’s message in just 10 seconds.)

Though no single formula exists, strategists agree on several basic rules for grabbing voters’ attention. First and foremost is front-loading the ad by placing the most important message in the first few seconds. Dynamic visuals, eye-catching graphics and compelling music can also help. “The content that works best in shorter form is content that’s smart, that’s funny, and that’s inviting,” said Rob Saliterman, head of political advertising at Snapchat, where all content runs a maximum of 10 seconds and requires vertical video format.

During the 2014 election, for example, NextGen released a 15-second digital ad featuring millennials dressed as [dancing bananas and monkeys](#), urging viewers — within the very first second — to remember to vote on Election Day. Smart campaigns are also making sure the message matches the medium. On Facebook and Twitter, videos begin to play automatically, but without sound, which makes attention-grabbing visuals critical. And on Snapchat, the best spots often mimic the authentic, raw and humorous feel of other Snapchat videos.

And, of course, just like television, content reigns supreme. “You can make any 15-second ad you want, but if they’re boring, and people are just overwhelmed with the amount of advertising out there, then they’re not going to stick out,” said

don't skip this video," Mr. Paul says. "We must take our country back."

Another video — released on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and YouTube — featured Mr. Paul [taking a chain saw and a wood chipper to the tax code](#), and underscored the new role of online advertising, both as a growth area for politics and a virtual sandbox for experimentation and even playfulness. "It was unique, it was riveting, and the actual content wasn't a normal boring political spot," said Vincent Harris, Mr. Paul's chief digital strategist. "You don't often see somebody who is an elected official sitting with a chain saw and a wood chipper and lighting things on fire, so that uniqueness piqued people's interest." "That is part of the blessing and the curse of the actual ad format online," he added. "If you are not piquing people's interest, they are just skipping." — *New York Times*

Ever since Jack Dorsey sent the first tweet nine years ago, many people have asked, "Why use Twitter?" On Tuesday, Twitter Inc. is making a bold attempt to answer that question by unveiling a long-anticipated feature called "Moments" that presents a slimmed-down version of the chaotic social-media service. The release, coming a day after Mr. Dorsey's appointment as the company's permanent chief executive, marks Twitter's entrance into content curation as it tries to take on a workload that has led countless users to abandon the service.

With Moments, a team of editors will pick through the roughly half a billion tweets sent each day to find the most interesting content about live events. For example, a "moment" about the South Carolina floods in a prereleased version of the product this week featured a montage of photos and videos taken by residents, reporters and emergency crews. The product aims to highlight Twitter's relevance as a real-time communication tool during breaking-news events and sports contests as well as spotlight lower-brow trends such as viral videos of cute animals. "What we're trying to do is get the content directly in front of you without you having to make decisions," said Madhu Muthukumar, the product manager overseeing Moments.

The feature, which during development was code-named "Project Lightning," comes at a critical time for Twitter. The company has promised bold product changes to appease impatient investors about stalling user growth. The theory is that many people have stayed away from Twitter because it is too difficult to find interesting tweets or know which accounts to follow. By making it easier to use, including cutting out such jargon as hashtags and @replies, Twitter is betting that dormant users will come back.

In developing the product, Mr. Muthukumar said the team focused on people who weren't fans of Twitter. We picked people who specifically said in our surveys in recruiting people for our research, 'No I don't use it, no I don't like it, and no I don't get it.' Those are the people we went after because that's our primary audience," he said. The product initiative is the first major release since the return of Mr. Dorsey, the company's co-founder who is credited with having the idea for Twitter. While the company's business flourished under his predecessor Dick Costolo's five-year tenure, Twitter failed to evolve in a way that compelled new users to sign up as fast as investors expected.

Mr. Dorsey has said Twitter's recent product initiatives to jump-start user growth have so far failed to take off. "This is unacceptable and we're not happy about it," he said on the company's most recent quarterly earnings call in July. Mr. Dorsey has already shown his willingness to pull the service up by its roots to make it work. According to people close to the company, one of his pet projects, code-named "140 Plus," is considering how to extend the 140-character limit on tweets. He has also questioned the service's reverse-chronological timeline, the fundamental way tweets are presented in user feeds.

Moments is the first project in a line of "bold bets" in the works, said Adam Bain, the company's newly appointed operating chief. While Moments was conceived long before Mr. Dorsey returned to lead Twitter on an interim basis this summer, those involved with the product's development say his influence is evident. "Jack's feedback was absolutely

essential, particularly in the final stages of figuring out exactly what this product would be at launch,” said Andrew Fitzgerald, head of Twitter’s curation team.

The idea was born in December during a hack week, a semiannual tradition at the company where employees take time off to brainstorm and work on projects they otherwise wouldn’t. A Twitter designer wanted to re-create her husband’s experience on the service—which involves tracking news about the NFL’s New England Patriots—by populating users’ feeds only with tweets they find interesting. The project gained steam five months ago, especially after the company decided the feature would get its own tab on the Twitter app’s main screen. Users will tap a lightning icon to access Moments, where they will find a guide to about eight of the day’s top stories and trends, such as the winners of the Nobel Prize in medicine or this week’s train derailment in Vermont.

Twitter’s curating editors will look at signals including which tweets are being shared, embedded and interacted with to determine which stories to spotlight. They will then search for the best tweets using various internal company tools. Media partners can also build and contribute their own Moments, which can then be added to the main collection. The initial group of partners include BuzzFeed, Entertainment Weekly, Vogue, Bleacher Report, Getty Images, Major League Baseball, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Mashable, the New York Times, the Washington Post and Fox News. 21st Century Fox, the owner of Fox News, and News Corp, owner of The Wall Street Journal, were until mid-2013 part of the same company.

In terms of revenue potential, Mr. Muthukumar hypothesized that Twitter could extend its advertising business to Moments where marketers can pay to sponsor a particular “moment” they created to be featured. This could be an incentive for media partners to create more exclusive content for Twitter. – *Wall Street Journal*

Port Authority Transit Corporation (PATCO) and Comcast Corp. are going to announce on Tuesday that commuters in all 13 PATCO stations in Philadelphia and South Jersey will have free access to Xfinity WiFi. The service will be available to Comcast and non-Comcast customers alike. PATCO commuters have had access to the high-speed Internet service in beta version since July. The Delaware River Port Authority is the corporate parent of PATCO, which operates aboveground and subway trains between Philadelphia and South Jersey. – *Philadelphia Inquirer*



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