

Understanding your audience and how to reach them is important for any person or business trying to convey a message, but successfully doing so is particularly difficult—especially when your target audience is the entire country. President Obama's February 1<sup>st</sup> Q&A session, which streamed live on YouTube and the White House Web site, proved that Obama truly understands how to use social media to bypass traditional media outlets and reach audiences directly.

Obama is no stranger to social media. During his 2008 campaign, he leveraged online social networks to raise \$55 million in the month of February alone. Although his web address followed closely on the heels of the State of the Union Address, it's clear that Obama understands the different opportunities afforded by each media outlet. Answering questions on YouTube allowed the President to tell the public exactly what he wanted to without any editing or analysis. His words weren't reduced to sound bites chosen by CNN or another network. Audiences that viewed the live session and those that Google it from here on out will hear exactly what Obama wanted them to.

The way that people get information has completely changed, and Obama and his advisors get that. Rather than sitting back and allowing the media to feed them the information that they see fit, people are seeking information out for themselves. Individuals that understand this shift wield immense power as they are able to shape the available body of knowledge. A few

## Obama Understands the Power of Google

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years ago it would have been incredibly difficult for the average citizen to obtain a full transcript or video of a presidential address; but now, as clichéd as it sounds, the internet has put that kind of information at people's fingertips. Obama's web address and the

[channel](#)

he's created on YouTube will ensure that when people Google him, they'll hear the message he wanted to convey.

At the end of the day, it's not the sound bite that runs today or the next few days that matters, it's the recorded interviews and transcripts that will live in perpetuity.

Check out [BusinessWeek](#) for more information on President Obama's address.