MEMORANDUM

TO: Andrew Roos, Sam Swartz, Rob Saliterman, and Jennifer Gross, Google
FROM: Julie Hootkin, Global Strategy Group and Robert Blizzard, POS
RE: Persuadable Voters
DATE: 10.10.12

As the 2012 campaign enters its final weeks, new research suggests that the Internet offers candidates a real opportunity to reach the most sought-after voters – those who have not yet made up their minds. According to a survey of 500 persuadable voters in Florida, Ohio, Nevada, Virginia and Wisconsin conducted between October 2 and October 7, 2012 by Global Strategy Group and Public Opinion Strategies, the Internet is an increasingly important resource when it comes to getting information about this year’s campaigns and elections.¹

Specifically, we find that:

- **Persuadable voters get their news about this year’s campaigns and elections online:** A near majority of persuadable voters (49%) get their news about this year’s campaigns and elections on the Internet, largely on search engines like Google.

- **Persuadable voters “fact check” online:** Fully 64% of voters use the Internet to verify or “fact check” a claim made by a candidate, including 34% who do so weekly, and 58% search for information online about candidates’ voting records or positions on the issues, including more than a quarter (26%) who do so weekly.

- **Persuadable voters trust the information they get online:** A broad majority (58%) believe the Internet exposes them to a wider range of views than they can get in the traditional news media and 62% trust the information they find online – right up there with network news (67%) and print newspapers (62%). A big reason for this is persuadable voters’ belief that it is generally easy to tell what information is true and what is not online (41%), even easier than it is to decipher what is true and what is not on television (32%).

Why is the Internet such an important resource for these persuadable voters? Because it allows them to get the information they want, when they want it. At a time when persuadable voters are being bombarded with political advertising on television, on the radio and in their mailboxes, the Internet offers voters a level of control and convenience and an ease of use that they can’t find anywhere else. More than 6 of 10 persuadable voters (63%) say that being able to access a source of information on their own time when it’s convenient for them is important to them – and the Internet delivers here (73%). Furthermore, persuadable voters believe that the Internet provides them with the information they need (53%).

As campaigns fight for persuadable voters’ attention in the weeks leading up to Election Day, this data suggests that the Internet is a key channel on which to reach them at a time when they are looking for information and are willing to listen. Persuadable voters are online. They are engaged and ready to listen. And they are looking for answers to the questions that will help them make up their minds come November 6.

¹ Persuadable voters are defined as those voters who are currently undecided in the Presidential and/or U.S. Senate races or those who indicate they may change their mind in advance of Election Day.