

## POSSIBILITY OF POLITICAL AD DATA TO BE PRESENTED ONLINE



Internet Explorer 9

At some point during this month, the Mitt Romney campaign purchased a commercial that lasted for approximately 40 seconds and was displayed on KYW-TV. It basically aired on the local news stations in the city of Philadelphia and surrounding areas. The advertisement alone cost the campaign \$1,800. This is definitely not any sort of confidential information, as anyone could easily find out how much the campaign paid for Mitt Romney's commercial advertisement. Anyone who wants to know how much politicians are paying for advertising can easily find it, as these are files that are available to the public. And, while they are made to the public, most people do not take the time out of their day to go through the hassle of having to see the public records. Soon, however, they may not have to do much to find the same exact material. The Federal Communications Commission is thinking of taking this same exact material, which has to be made available to the general public by law, and instead of keeping it in some sort of filing cabinet for people who actually want to come down to see it, it could be placed on the Internet. This would make it a lot easier for people to find out how much the politics are spending on their political advertisements. The FCC will be voting on whether this will become a new rule or not very shortly. In the meantime, the broadcasters are not happy with the possibility that this could become a new rule. They believe that even though the information is already available to the public, putting such information online would simply undermine their business. Several popular broadcasters are outraged, which includes CBS, NBC, ABC, and Fox. With the law as it is now, when an election is up and coming, broadcasters need to sell the political candidates some advertisement space and it needs to be at a lower rate. However, these television station owners are concerned because they feel that stations will compete with rates so that they can get the advertisers for their station. Some rates are really low, only about \$250, which means those charging a thousand or more would end up having to cut their cost dramatically. The president for Post-Newsweek Stations, Alan Frank, believes that the plan FCC has in mind would be full with consequences in the future. He says that there is no problem with online publications of how much money political campaigns are spending on advertisements. However, Frank feels as though they should not get into how much is spent on certain shows that are aired on specific stations, believing it will cause problems in the future for broadcasters.

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