

**Karthik Balasubramanian**

Data Director, Deborah Ross for Senate

**Did you have a "title" on the campaign? Or were you hired as a consultant? Basically, how should I describe your role on the campaign?**

My title on the campaign was "Data Director".

**Jon Bray mentioned that you helped the Ross campaign "on the analytical side of things" - can you tell me a little bit about how you were able to use analytics and data to help the campaign?**

We spent a significant amount of money on paid communication -- across broadcast, cable, radio, and online media. I developed analyses that helped advise these decisions (how much, where, and to who in the case of digital) by integrating cost, internal and external polling, and adversarial spend. I also managed cash-flow and budgeting.

**How do you see the power of big data and increasingly sophisticated technology changing politics the most going forward? Where can data make the biggest differences in terms of winning a race for political office?**

Big data - referring to rich info on voters presents good opportunities, especially in digital advertising. But in my opinion, there's way too much hype around the buzz-word, especially at the expense of just making smart, more basic data-driven decisions.

Far more important is just smart *little* data analyses - for example, if advertising in one broadcast TV media market is x% more expensive than another per target voter, it probably makes sense to underweight on TV in that market. Or, if advertising in one type of online medium is far more expensive than another, without clear evidence that that extra expense is worth it in terms of persuasion or motivation value, then you should probably not use the more expensive online medium.

These types of more basic, less sexy cost-benefit analyses are FAR more important to get right before worrying about fine tuning targeting with *big data*.