

The Upshot
THE 2016 RACE

Google Searches Point to a Strong Showing for Donald Trump

Justin Wolfers @JustinWolfers MARCH 1, 2016

It looks as if Donald Trump is going to have a big night, judging from what could be a newly useful measure, Google searches.

I argued in a post at the start of Super Tuesday that you can get a pretty good guess of results from analyzing Google searches for each candidate in each state on Election Day.

Now, as it gets late into the voting day, Mr. Trump appears to have a commanding lead in Google searches in nearly every state, including Ted Cruz's home state of Texas. It's the sort of result that his rivals have feared.

I'm not sure how seriously to take the finding in Texas. After all, the search volume for Mr. Cruz could be depressed by the fact that few voters would need to do a Google search for their home-state senator. But the argument goes only so far. After all, given Mr. Trump's enormous media presence, why would anyone need to do a Google search for "Donald Trump"?

Oklahoma looks set to be the most interesting contest of the night. Google's numbers show that all three of the leading G.O.P. candidates have attracted a fair bit of attention today. Pushing the data a bit harder — perhaps

harder than one should — Google gives Marco Rubio a slight lead in

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Ben Kasich has attracted
votes, and may even be in

Real news deserves real journalism.

Madhuri, a number-
one at 4:45 p.m.

What is that Mr. Trump is
explains why I'm

reluctant to quantify just how good. Currently around one-fifth of Trump-related searches are for “Donald Drumpf.” We counted only searches for “Donald Trump,” even as Mr. Cruz’s numbers include searches for “Cruz”, “Ted Cruz” and other related terms. So in some sense we’ve stacked the deck against Mr. Trump, and despite that, he appears set for a dominant performance tonight.

In the early primaries, Google’s search data have not been particularly predictive of the Democratic race, so we are not tracking searches for either Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders.

Even for the Republican side, all of this remains rather speculative. We have tracked these data only through a handful of elections, so it is especially worth emphasizing that past performance is no guarantee of future results.

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