

Technology makes it difficult to escape campaign ads

By Scott Canon, Kansas City Star

This is the year you're going to shut out the shouting and the charges and the ominously cheesy voice-overs of campaign commercials. Right?



You'll hit the fast-forward button on your DVR when the spots commence. Or you'll look away from the commercials while you fiddle with your smartphone or explore what's on that handy iPad.

Sorry. There's no escape.

Squads of campaign commandos hired by pols looking for your vote will chase you down.

With increasing sophistication, political organizations are fast adopting the tricks of retailers who've learned how to learn more about you. They're tracking your digital footprints to better wave ads that will push your buttons, getting you outraged and out to the polls. They're going online with talking points increasingly targeted to win elections niche by niche.

Been shopping online for a new gun? When you go to a news website, that could trigger an ad about a candidate's fealty to the 2nd Amendment. Use the Web to identify that bird building a nest in your cottonwood tree? Don't be surprised to see an electronic banner on HuffingtonPost.com trumpeting the same politician's endorsement from the Sierra Club.

Electronic "cookies" usually invisible to you pile up in your

Web browser, surmising your interests and announcing them to political campaigns. In turn, campaign managers use those clues to microtarget messages aimed to persuade or motivate you.

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