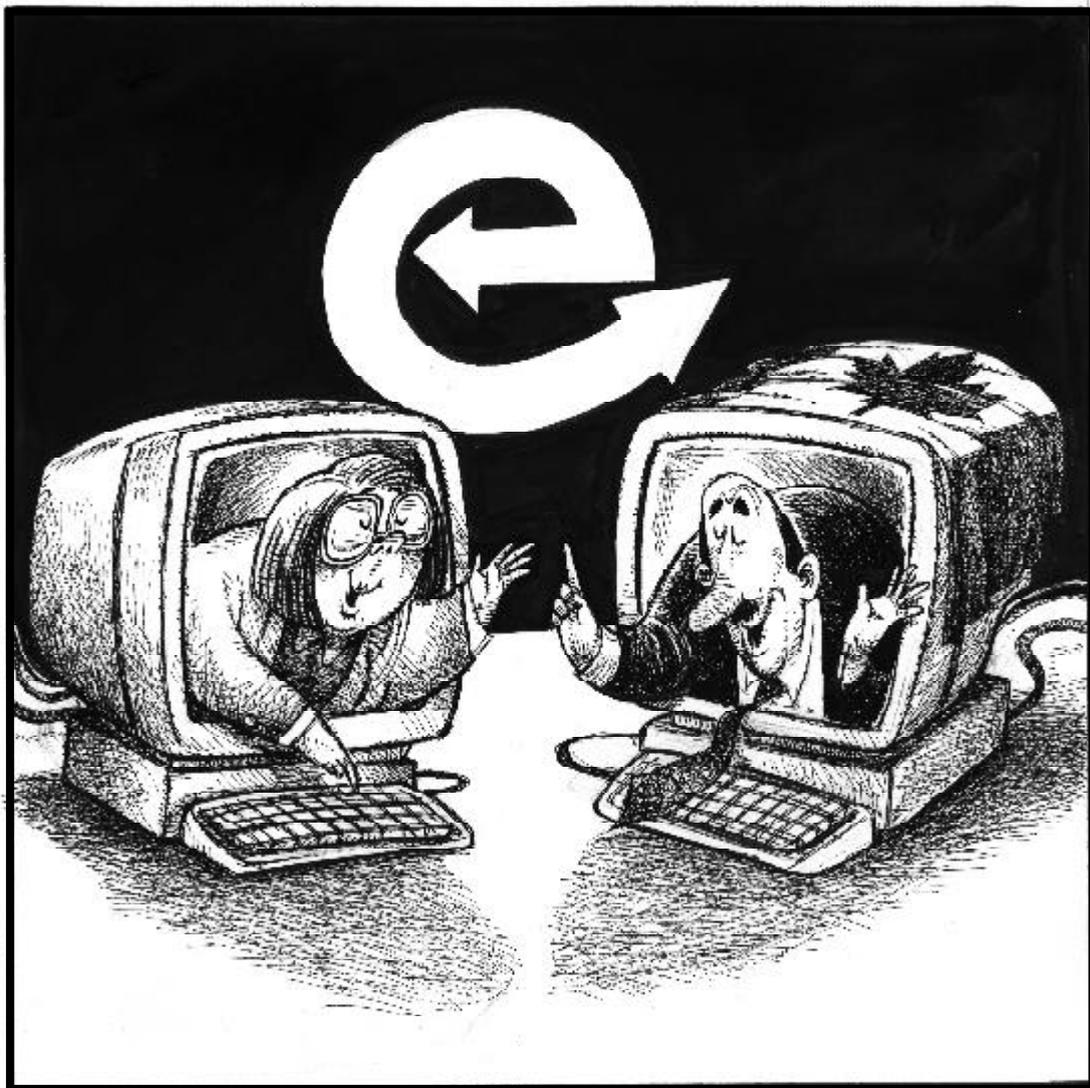


E-GOVERNANCE: SOME
IMPLICATIONS FOR
PARLIAMENTARIANS

OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON

PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT

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Occasional Papers on Parliamentary Government are written, edited and published at the Parliamentary Centre, an independent, non-profit organization. The missions of the Centre include: assisting parliamentarians, in Canada and abroad, to develop their understanding of external relations; helping parliaments to function more effectively; contributing to the professional development of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff; and supporting democratic development worldwide.

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In This Issue...

The Rapid growth of the internet is dramatically changing the expectations held by citizens of parliamentarians while at the same time giving them the capacity to respond. However, a substantial proportion of Canadian MPs are not up to speed on e-government and are therefore unable to respond effectively in that medium.

This issue of Occasional Papers reviews the current experience in Canada and the United States which points to a number of good practices and tools that MPs and their staff can draw on. It also summarizes suggestions for further actions in Canada.

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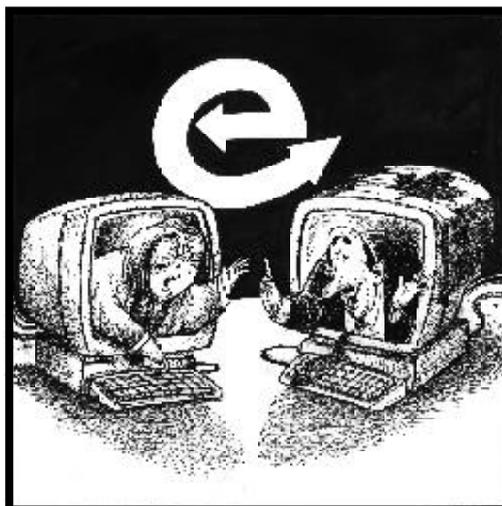
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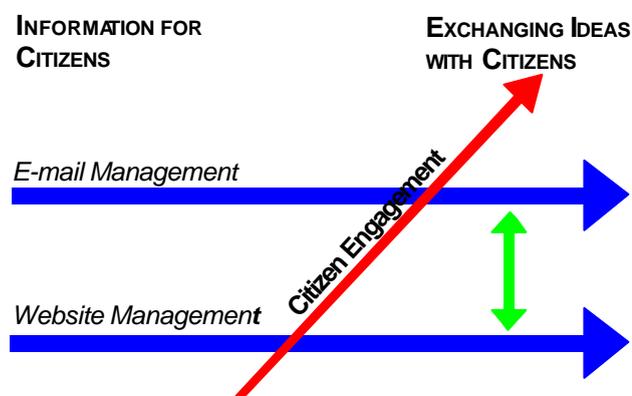
Cartoon by Anthony Jenkins



INTRODUCTION

This paper looks at **the impact of the Internet¹ on the roles of individual Parliamentarians in their relationships with citizens** as one aspect of e-governance, with a view to promoting further discussion and appropriate action.

Both the management and development of Internet websites and e-mail practices are moving from '*one way*' provision of information to citizens to '*two way*' communication. Examples are: from a website with static information to a website with bulletin boards and chat rooms; from simple information e-mails from MPs to citizens to managed response to e-mails from citizens using automation where possible. The underlying thesis is that citizen engagement is also moving to a two way street at the same time as capacity to manage web technologies is evolving. In the sections that follow, we separate website and e-mail management as two different but very much interrelated tools. These ideas are captured in the diagram below for those who prefer a visual representation.



Before we continue, it is important to note that engaging citizens through more traditional channels (in person, mail, fax and telephone, including advanced call centres) needs to be kept 'on the radar screen' at the same time as improvements in the use of Internet.

Stephen Clift suggests that 'wired elected officials' use "the Internet as their primary strategic communications tool...to strengthen and support good old fashioned and highly effective in-person politics. An [official] is more likely to build power and respect through information guiding and sharing than an old style politician who holds on to power through control and selective release of information. A 'wired elected official' understands that other politicians and the public are adrift in a sea of information - they need help, they need direction. What we need are wired politicians at the rudder guiding people through the information sea to what is most important." ²

In addition to the technology and citizen engagement trends described above, our sense of the current state of the art is that:

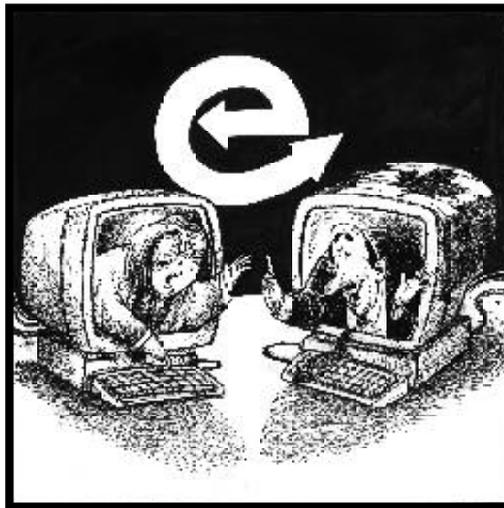
- the Internet is impacting on parliamentarians because it has dramatically changed citizen's expectations and, at the same time, is enabling parliamentarians to respond – see section 1;
- many Canadian parliamentarians are not up to speed on e-government (only 58% have their own websites) and related tools – Section 2 summarizes a recent survey by the Centre for Collaborative Government and provides a starting point for practical actions;
- there is sufficient practical experience to provide lessons learned, good practices and tools that parliamentarians and their staff can draw on – Sections 3 and 4 draw on US experience for websites and e-mail management respectively; and,
- this experience provides a sense of what might be useful steps for Canadian parliamentarians to consider – Section 5 provides a summary of suggestions for further actions.

We expect that using the Internet for citizen engagement, among other things, will increasingly become an essential part of parliamentary practice. This is particularly the case for the new and next generation of voters where one can safely say that if you are not on the Internet then you are not relevant.

In addition to suggesting a "resource centre" to support MPs and their staff on web and e-mail use, this paper suggests five further actions:

- 1. Build individual MPs' knowledge and comfort level** on using the Internet in a step-by-step fashion to overcome the current fear of "too many e-mails" or increased workload.
- 2. Develop a public communications strategy** to explain to Canadians how parliamentarians are aiming to use Internet to strengthen Canadian democracy and to reassure them of their ongoing access to their 'channel of choice' (i.e. ensure that Canadians who are not connected to the Internet or do not wish to use it, have good access through telephone, mail, fax and in person alternatives in citizen engagement exercises). The communications strategy should also address privacy and other issues.
- 3. Develop preliminary guidance for website and e-mail management.** Such a document would serve as a basis for discussions, ensure issues such as privacy and channel choice are an integral part of the approach and develop initial service standards for citizen engagement.
- 4. Organize seminars and other training events to encourage MPs to create and strengthen their websites and manage their e-mail communication more effectively.** Set up "how to connect with constituents" documentation for new MPs.
- 5. Develop a training program for MPs and their staff** that reflects and is sensitive to their capacity for using Internet-based tools. For example, with experience, MPs and staff would have access to more advanced features of website and e-mail management.

The Parliamentary Centre expects to continue to track e-governance practices as related to Parliament and parliamentarians. We invite readers to contact us with comments and observations.



SECTION 1: CITIZEN EXPECTATIONS, OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

In addition to accessible and effective on-line services, surveys and studies indicate that many Canadians also wish to have their voices heard in the policy development and decision-making processes of government. Citizens also want easy access to their respective MPs who may act as ombudsmen³ to resolve various situations.

Engaging citizens on policy matters and decision-making is the more challenging matter. To participate in a way that goes beyond yes/no replies for simple opinion polling, Canadians need clear, objective and up-to-date information on particular policy issues, information which may or may not be found in the daily media. There is a lot of information – indeed often too much – but it needs to be both focused and reliable. The interpretation of information from different perspectives is essential for citizens to participate effectively.

Provision of information of this kind for citizen engagement from or through MPs offices is likely to be particularly valuable. At present this is more of an opportunity than a reality. Yet we expect initiatives to do so since MPs and their staff require access to the same information to play their own roles.

Our understanding is that most individual MPs do not have the staff and time to prepare the material needed in order to engage citizens. The research, analysis and presentation capacity is something that needs to be addressed. The media or some think tanks could play a more important role. The challenge would be to thread the needle through party politics and the fact that not all think tanks are 'objective', many have vested interests, carry a particular political bias or serve very specific interest groups in society. There may also be a role for House of Commons staff, for example, the Library of Parliament, (with the help of federal departments and agencies among others) to support private members in putting together relevant information on key issues of the day.

Internet has increased citizen's expectations but also enables parliamentarians to respond...

Information needs to be managed...

Standing committees could be particularly helpful in this regard. They often conduct detailed studies, accessing and reviewing information from several sources. Committee reports which provide balanced and easily accessible information might be a particularly valuable product of committees.

“Just in time” websites on new or hot issues could also be part of the answer. These websites could provide hyperlinks to information on issues that may be found in Departmental Performance Reports, Departmental Plans and Priorities Reports as well as government-wide reports. In this way citizens would be able to access a ‘cascade’ of information and get to the level of detail they would like to have.

When information is available to citizens, engagement by parliamentarians on policy issues can proceed more effectively. While citizen engagement approaches are now evolving quite rapidly, we will focus on the relatively simple practices that can be managed by individual MPs. The key steps are to analyze citizens’ responses and report back to them. This raises additional issues that need to be considered because citizen engagement, if carried out badly could undermine the public credibility of parliamentarians and Parliament. If, for example, there is no or a slow response, citizens might well feel that they are being ignored. It is important, therefore, that any consultations that are initiated are completed in a timely manner.

This suggests the creation of guidelines and service standards – possibly voluntary – for parliamentarians when using websites and e-mails for citizen engagement. Such standards could help establish reasonable expectations response times, receipt of acknowledgements or how their interventions were used.

Other issues could include some of the following.

- √ Would different standards be needed for national vs constituency level consultation to ensure equitable treatment of Canadians in all parts of Canada? For example, how should party identification be handled?
- √ Should consultation be bilingual even if the constituency has a very high proportion of either French or English speaking citizens?
- √ Should service standards be voluntary?
- √ Is there a reporting dimension and who would be accountable for any monitoring? Is this a dimension of study for the Standing Committee on Procedures and House Affairs?

The development of guidelines and service standards could build on similar work already carried out for the delivery of government services by Internet. The text box illustrates a preliminary set of potential service standards or other factors for discussion purposes.

Another dimension of citizen expectations and engagement is that groups of Canadians, that is, interest groups also want more say and active participation in development of policy and legislation. It is not clear the degree to which parliamentarians would need different Internet tools and

Some dimensions of citizen engagement are:

- √ information to citizens on policy issues
- √ processing of citizen reactions
- √ information to citizens on how their ideas were used

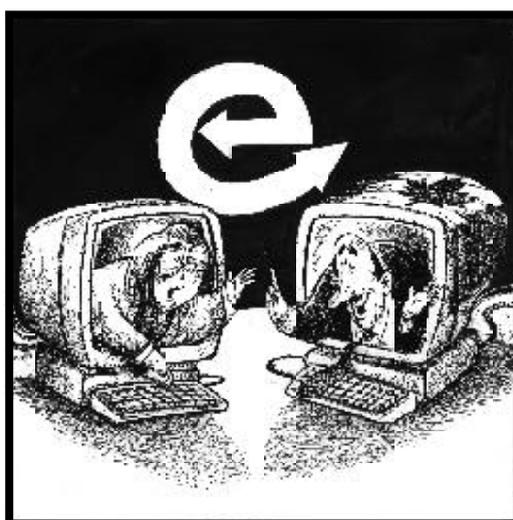
Website and e-mail guidelines and service standards could be developed for parliamentarians for citizen engagement

Generic Service Standards Areas?

- √ easy access and use³
- √ prompt reply
- √ feedback mechanisms
- √ secure channel,
- √ respect of individual privacy
- √ choice of channel⁴

approaches when working with established interest groups, new interest groups or individual Canadians. Clearly interest groups have greater access to parliamentary committees and government. Moreover, many such interest groups are already using Internet to organize themselves and an examination of some of their approaches may provide insights for the parliamentary environment.

While there remains much to be learned, it is evident that the Internet offers parliamentarians an additional way to respond to citizens' expectations in what could be a cost-effective way. The sections that follow describe the current parliamentary Internet capacity. Section 5 offers some suggestions on strengthening this capacity.



SECTION 2: HOW CANADIAN MPs USE THE INTERNET

This section summarizes a recent Canadian survey by the Centre for Collaborative Government⁵ entitled *MPs are missing the web revolution*.

Many parliamentarians are simply not up to speed on e-government and related tools.

The study noted that:

“MPs do not seem to recognize how much these tools are changing the way Canadians make decisions on important issues in their lives... Citizens, businesses and interest groups all use the technology to get government information and services online, to build networks and coalitions online, and even to lead policy debate online. MPs that don’t take advantage of this run the risk of being left out of some very influential aspects of public life.”

The survey found that only 58% of MPs have an official website. Of those with a website, few, if any, use the websites to the full potential that the technology offers, as the chart on this next page suggests.

Only 58% of MPs have an official website

The study notes that in a corporate world, MPs would be out of business. Citizens are demanding at least some information and transactional ability when they deal with companies and these demands will increasingly affect their expectations of “service” from their MPs.

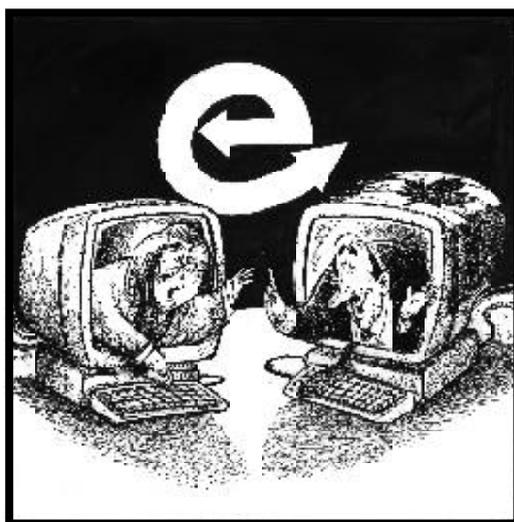
Of the 42% of MPs without a website, only 19% are planning/constructing one, leaving the remaining 23% far behind.

We drew heavily on the work of the Centre for Collaborative Governance shown in the chart above to prepare a practical ‘to do list’ for parliamentarians that appears in section 5. We suggest that a lifecycle approach be

adopted, that is, start with basics and then work on other features as individual parliamentarians' knowledge and comfort levels increase.

A PROFILE OF MP WEBSITES

WEBSITE FEATURES	% OF MPs WITH A CURRENT WEBSITE
<u>The Basics: Information Out to Citizens</u>	
Biography	94%
Contact Information	93%
Links to Other Sites	75%
Provide Press Releases/In the News	73%
Riding Map	68%
Welcome Message	65%
Provide Speeches	63%
Post; their Newsletters and Householders	55%
Post information on issues of concern, the work of committees or their areas of responsibility	40%
<u>More Advanced Features</u>	
Feedback, Request or Contact Forms	37%
Audio/Video Clips	12%
Newsletter Subscription Option	11%
'Frequently Asked Questions' Page	11%
Search Function	10%
Survey/Poll Function	8%
Post Information for Constituents on How to Submit a Petition	7%
MP or House Schedule	6%
MP Voting Record/Stance	2%
Use Bulletin Boards	1%



SECTION 3: USING WEBSITES - LESSONS FROM ACROSS THE BORDER

The Internet allows citizens to convey their views to MPs at everyone's convenience. This information equips MPs to better represent their constituency and make more informed policy decisions. However, how much consultation and information is enough? How can MPs deal with ever-increasing citizen expectations to interact and be heard with limited resources?

For example, MPs have noted that they do not have the staff or resources to deal with the amount of e-mail they receive each day. Nor do they have the resources to develop and maintain a large website.⁸ MPs have also questioned the challenge Internet places on the definition of representative democracy and as noted in a study by the World Bank, there is a fear that the Internet may have the potential to permit a new type of dominance by the loudest voice in policy development? The study also seeks to answer some of the fears voiced by Members and legislative staff regarding information overload and the potential inability to respond to citizen demands and expectations for information and involvement.⁹

The **Congressional Management Foundation (CMF)** has carried out a number of studies to find answers to these questions and ways for elected officials to find a balance between information provision and consultation through the effective and efficient management of new technologies. This section summarizes their findings that are presented in a report entitled *Assessing and Improving Capitol Hill Websites*.¹⁰ The CMF work evaluated all the websites on Capitol Hill and illustrates why websites are useful communication tools and how MPs can develop user-friendly and content rich websites for themselves.

The effective use of technologies and information management is essential to finding a balance between resource constraints and citizen demands for information and consultation. Without such a balance, technologies could intensify the problems of information management, voter apathy and the democratic deficit.⁷

WHY MPs NEED WEBSITES AND HOW TO DESIGN ONE

As noted in How MPs Use Information and Communications Technology, only 58% of Canadian MPs have official websites. Many Canadian MPs and Members of the US Congress still remain unconvinced of the worth of websites given the resources required to develop and maintain them. CMF suggests there are nine reasons for having a website:

1. enhanced service to constituents and the public;
2. enhanced visibility and image;
3. ability to target and recruit specific audiences;
4. unfiltered communications with their audience;
5. opportunities to build coalitions and grass root support;
6. opportunities to foster greater accountability and public trust;
7. increased office productivity;
8. opportunities to receive greater public feedback; and,
9. opportunities to encourage greater participation in government.¹¹

CMF has also developed a set of criteria to assist Members of Congress in developing and managing websites. The CMF details five key areas to consider when designing and managing a website: audience, content, interactivity, usability and innovation.

The Audience

Key to the development of a useful, accessible website is to know the audience and target the information and services to be provided to the audience you have identified. The Internet is not an outreach or broadcast medium but a service medium. The goal is to communicate a single message to a wide audience. The issues or questions being dealt with are no different than those typically dealt with by phone, fax, face-to-face or by post but the use of the website may lower the amount of traffic for the traditional communication mediums.

The audience for MPs websites includes: constituents, reporters, interest groups, students and educators.

Content Development

Once the audience is identified, the most important consideration is the content of the website in order to:

- √ enable constituents and stakeholders to receive excellent services;
- √ support the goals and objectives of the office;
- √ build strong online relationships with their visitors;
- √ attract and retain visitors;
- √ provide answers to frequently asked questions;
- √ save time and money on constituent services;
- √ strengthen the public's understanding of the Congress; and,
- √ foster the public's trust in the democratic process.

Some examples of content that will meet the needs of the identified audiences include:

- √ legislative information;
- √ issue information;

- √ demonstrations of accountability;
- √ educational information about Congress;
- √ constituent services;
- √ references to constituents and the district or state;
- √ contact information;
- √ press information;
- √ member information;
- √ information about current and national issues; and,
- √ links to relevant resources.

Based on other discussions and consultations, we would also recommend that the website include a request/feedback/contact form, a search engine and scheduling information.

Level of Interactivity

There are a variety of ways to facilitate interaction between Members and their constituents including using websites to promote off line interaction by providing contact information and the provision of tools that produce quality interaction without relying on face-to-face or real time interaction. Features that promote interactivity include:

- √ subscriptions to e-mail updates/newsletters;
- √ online surveys and polls;
- √ bulletin boards and chat rooms;
- √ feedback and comment forms;
- √ a zip code based web mail service;
- √ public e-mail address; and,
- √ staff contact information.

While the simplest and most widely used feature is e-mail, the more sophisticated features include online surveys and polls, chat rooms, or bulletin boards. When applied strategically, these advanced features can enhance the relationship between constituents and the Member and may also lessen the workload of staff.

Usability

User friendliness can greatly affect the success of a website. Research has shown that Internet users will only return to a website that is difficult-to-use if the content is extremely good. Otherwise, if they have to work too hard or wait too long to find the information they came for, they are less likely to come back. From a usability perspective, websites therefore must consider of the following aspects:

- √ logically constructed information architecture;
- √ ease of navigation;
- √ readability;
- √ timeliness;
- √ consistency;
- √ load time;
- √ look and feel;

- √ accessibility; and,
- √ privacy.

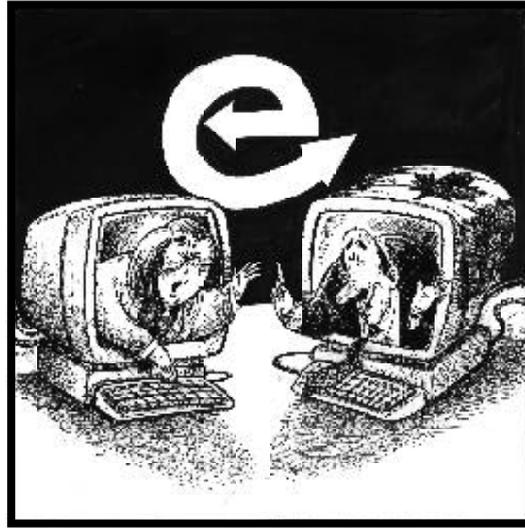
The issue of privacy is paramount. Constituents need to know that they can trust the website and that their personal information will remain personal. The website should explain why personal information is being collected and what it will be used for.

Innovations

Innovations and high-end website products such as multimedia features and high-resolution graphics may or may not enhance audience focused content and interactivity. It comes down to a matter of style.

Nevertheless, innovations may help make a websites more interesting, easier to use, or more valuable to constituents through the inclusion of search engines, feedback forms and online surveys and polls, audio/video files, bulletin boards and chat rooms.

The most valuable and interesting innovations on websites are those that help the audiences find the information they came for quickly and easily such as step-by-step casework guidance, database-driven Member schedules, glossaries of legislative terms, and first-person accounts from the Member about congressional activities. Sometimes, however, tools do inhibit use such as distracting animations, graphics intense “splash” pages, introductory “movies,” and menus that appear only when the cursor is held in a particular spot.



SECTION 4: MANAGING E-MAILS IN A POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

E-mail allows for fast and efficient communication between citizens and MPs and among MPs. As with websites, e-mails are useful only if managed well.

With this in mind, the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) published a report in 2001, *E-mail Overload in Congress: Managing a Communications Crisis*, (updated in 2002).¹² These two reports review the volume of e-mail between Members of Congress and their constituents and ways in which to deal with this volume in a timely manner.

CMF suggests that:

- √ the communication practices of politicians fail to meet the needs of citizens who expect fast, informative and personal responses to their inquiries;
- √ Members of Congress need to rethink communications strategies and practices as well as their budgeting and hiring practices to support communications; and,
- √ solutions to the e-mail issue are not being used to advantage, for example, automation/software to manage e-mail, more effective use of websites and staff training.

AUTOMATING E-MAIL

According to the CMF, automation is the key to effectively manage e-mail communications. Examples include message sorting and the entry of e-mailers' names, addresses, and other information into a database. Software can also provide form letter responses where appropriate.

Four reasons for automating e-mail are offered that all have an impact on staff resources and time, namely:

- √ e-mail is an important constituent service and citizens expect answers by e-mail faster than they expect a paper response;

- √ the amount of time staff need to dedicate to both data entry and developing responses to constituents is decreased;
- √ these databases can be used to interact with constituents in a more specific fashion, that is a Member can target constituents on specific topics they are interested in for automated messages; and,
- √ automation, combined with electronic delivery saves money in terms of postage, paper, and printing costs, particularly with large mailouts such as newsletters.

In addition to automating as much as possible, CMF also suggests three other principles that need to be considered in deciding on how and what to automate to save time and money while increasing the effectiveness of communication with constituents.

1. Establish and Communicate E-mail Policies

A clear policy that is known by all staff and shared with constituents should take some of the following aspects into consideration:

- √ Priority of e-mail – that is, it should be treated with the same respect as other forms of communication including record-keeping and filing procedures.
- √ Tone and content – e-mail messages should use proper and formal language, and avoid slang.
- √ Expected turnaround times - an automatic response can be as simple as notification that the e-mail has been received and will be answered within a certain timeframe.
- √ The degree to which e-mail should be automated – this analysis should ensure that the systems are in place and understood to support the level of automation desired.
- √ Accountability – the e-mail review process should establish who is responsible, what are the “rules” in areas such as the role of the websites and outreach/pro-active e-mail to reduce more costly communication exchanges through traditional means such as mail.
- √ Privacy and other considerations – for example spam, etc.

2. Develop Proactive Communication Strategies and Practices

The combination of interactively managing websites and e-mail allows for proactive communication strategies such as the ability to provide:

- √ regular e-mail issue updates once constituents register for e-mail updates;
- √ information on the website for hot issues and static information that is of concern to constituents;
- √ links to other relevant sites that allow constituents to ‘self-serve’ to lessen demands on political staff;
- √ reduce the volume of inquires with a ‘frequently asked questions and answer’ page on the website;
- √ online issue surveys to allow for constituents to add their opinion on an issue without creating any expectations for a response; and,
- √ online comment forms and guest books as they allow for comments with or without the expectation for a reply.

Part of this proactive communication also involves ensuring that the audience, i.e. the constituents understand the rules and know how to participate effectively using e-mail and websites.

3. Respond in a Timely Fashion

Constituents expect a faster response to an e-mail than a letter or fax – within days if not hours rather than weeks. This means answering e-mails with e-mails taking advantage of concise e-mail form letters on common topics, sending interim e-mail responses to follow up later.

THE IMPACT OF AUTOMATION

As noted in, *Email Overload in Congress – Update*, Members of Congress received 80 million e-mails in 2000. In 2001, there was a 78% increase in the level of e-mail communications while by the end of 2002, the amount was expected to increase by only 2.5%. CMF explains that the lower growth rate in e-mail traffic has been a result of more efficient management of the information and communication tools available – both e-mail and websites.

First of all, many Members of Congress have made great improvements in their IT capabilities. More offices are answering constituent e-mail with e-mail, directing e-mailers to their websites, and using web-based forms – which helps improve turnaround time, reduce workload, and reduce the amount of ‘spam’ being sent to all Members of Congress.

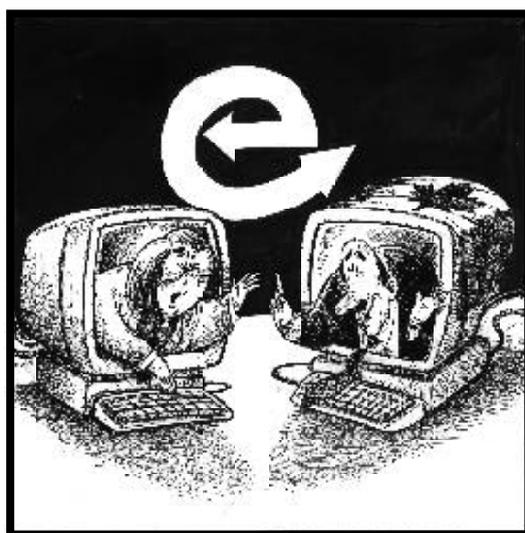
Secondly, online grassroots campaigns have improved their messages and the technologies to help constituents communicate as effectively as possible with their individual Members of Congress, instead of addressing the entire institution.

CMF also notes that there has also been a change in attitude towards e-mail as the ability to “manage the mail” has increased and, as was suggested in the first report, using e-mail to communicate with constituents has actually reduced the workload in some of the Congressional offices.

Additional work is needed to identify lessons learned in other governments as well as experts working in the field of “wired elected officials”. For example, in the UK Stephen Clift advises that MPs may benefit from developing multiple e-mail address identities on the Internet for the following:

- √ public official constituent communication;
- √ internal address for government work; and ,
- √ a personal e-mail address for unofficial campaign/party political communication and other personal communications.

We believe that the lessons learned across the border and elsewhere can contribute to an action plan here in Canada. The topics of automation and website/e-mail policies have therefore been added to the action plan in section 5.



SECTION 5: TOWARDS AN ACTION PLAN

There are MPs who have embraced the Internet and encourage their colleagues to do the same. Some of these MPs have suggested that a 'resource centre' would do much to move the agenda forward. Initiatives by individual political parties are or could be helpful, but these tend to focus on party interests rather than the general role of members to connect with all their constituents. We, therefore, believe that a parliamentary 'resource centre' for developing parliamentarians' Internet capacity is the preferred option.

Such a centre could undertake some of the following activities, among others.

- 1. Build individual MPs' knowledge and comfort level** on using the Internet in a step-by-step fashion to overcome the current fear of "too many e-mails" or increased workload.

The resource centre could also work with House of Commons, MPs' and Senators' staff to ensure that this technological support is fully incorporated in their office practices and to ensure their support. The resource centre could also ensure sowing the seeds for upgrading functions as staff and the MP become comfortable with its management – that is, capacity would be added to reflect the style, interests and capacity of each MP's office.

- 2. Develop a public communications strategy** to explain to Canadians how parliamentarians are aiming to use Internet to strengthen Canadian democracy and to reassure them of their ongoing access to their 'channel of choice' (i.e. ensure that Canadians who are not connected to the Internet or do not wish to use it, have good access through telephone, mail, fax and in person alternatives in citizen engagement exercises). The communications strategy should also address privacy and other issues. This could be a public consultation undertaken by a parliamentary committee or sub-committee.

- 3. Develop preliminary guidance for website and e-mail management.** Such a document would serve as a basis for further discussions with MPs and their staff, ensure issues such as privacy and channel choice are an integral part of the approach and develop initial service standards for web and e-mail based citizen engagement.

4. **Organize seminars and other training events to encourage MPs to create and strengthen their websites and manage their e-mail more effectively.** Set up a special “how to” document with contacts for new MPs. Track lessons learned and best practices both at home and abroad and invite speakers or experts events.
5. **Develop a training program for MPs and their staff** that reflects and is sensitive to their capacity for using Internet based tools. For example, with experience, MPs and staff would have access to more advanced features of website and e-mail management. This training could build on the research done by the Centre for Collaborative Government. The chart below (from section 2) illustrates this idea.

POTENTIAL FEATURES FOR MP WEBSITES

The Basics: Information Out

Welcome Message
Biography
Contact Information
Links to other sites
Press Releases/In the news
Riding Map
Speeches
Newsletters and householders
Annual Report

Start to Communicate with Your Constituents

Create page to list your issues of concern, the work of committees or your areas of responsibility

Moving to More Advanced Features

Feedback, request or contact forms
Audio/Video clips
Newsletter Subscription Option
'Frequently asked questions' page (analysis and creation of new documents makes this information feature more advanced)
Search function
Survey/Poll function
How to submit a petition
MP or House Schedule
MP Voting Record/Stance
Bulletin board

COLLABORATORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To explore the issue of the impact of Internet on Parliamentarians, the Parliamentary Centre held meetings and workshops with parliamentarians, Members of Provincial Legislatures, Members and staff of the U.S. Congress and Maryland State Legislature.

The key collaborators were as follows, (the descriptions below draw on the website material for each organization):

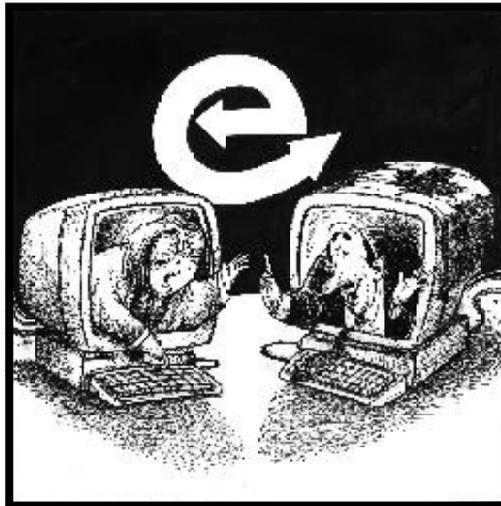
- √ **The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF)** is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to helping Congress become a more productive and effective institution through better management. CMF does not seek to change Congress by lobbying for institutional reform, but rather chooses to work internally with Member offices, committees, and the leadership to foster improved management practices and systems. See: <http://www.cmfweb.org>
- √ **The Centre for Collaborative Government** is the public interest research division of Kaufman Thomas & Associates. Its mission is to promote more effective management of the interdependence between government departments, levels of government, and the private or third sectors. Their approach pools resources and experience from a variety of groups outside the client's organization; and includes the engagement of experts and stakeholders in working groups, roundtables and conferences to share ideas, experiences and best practices. See: http://www.collaborativegovernment.com/site/main_ccg.html
- √ **OT Solutions** is a management consulting partnership built on the core values of mutual trust, support, creativity, and initiative taking. Originally targeted at individual entrepreneurs and start-up companies, it has expanded its service offerings in order to respond to a wider variety of organizations. See: <http://www.otsolutions.net>
- √ **The Centre on Governance** of the University of Ottawa is an interdisciplinary research and teaching unit created to examine the changing patterns of organizational and social co-ordination. Launched in the spring of 1998, it brings together academics from different university faculties and practitioners from the private, public and civic sectors. The Centre's mandate is the study of governance and the development of tools to improve the governance of private, public and civic organizations at the local, regional, national and international level. The research programs fall under three broad categories: innovation, e-business and corporate governance; citizenship and institutional change; and health and the human environment. See: <http://www.governance.uottawa.ca>
- √ **workingideas™** is a boutique strategy, design and research studio that focuses on practical solutions to a broad range of issues, especially in the realms of: work, labour and talent; civic engagement & community development; branding, marketing and communications; and organizational effectiveness. With offices in Montreal and Toronto, working ideas™ draws upon an extensive network of collaborators throughout North America and Europe, serving clients in the corporate, public and civic sectors. See: <http://www.workingideas.com>

Parliamentary Centre staff also made contacts with other think tanks and technology associations. A 'virtual network' of interested stakeholders is emerging on the Internet-Parliament issue as shown here.

Support and advice was also received from public service staff in the House of Commons, Human Resources and Development Canada, Privy Council Office and the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Internet-Parliament, Towards a Virtual Network of Expertise

- √ Centre for Collaborative Government
- √ Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa
- √ Commonwealth Institute for Electronic Government
- √ Congressional Management Foundation
- √ Council for Excellence in Government
- √ IBM Canada
- √ Institute for Electronic Government
- √ OT Solutions
- √ Public Management Program of the OECD
- √ Public Policy Forum
- √ workingideas



ENDNOTES

¹ We have chosen the word “Internet” and later on “website features” instead of “Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)” to be more specific

² Clift, Stephen, *Top Ten Tips for “Weos” – Wired Elected Officials*. Originally published in the “E-Guide for Parliamentarians: How to be an Online Representative” produced by the UK Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government with support from British Telecom. Copyright 2000, Send Publication/Dissemination Requests to: weos@publicus.net

³ Boyer, Patrick, *The MP as Ombudsman*, The Parliamentary Centre of Canada, February 1998.

⁴ There are many indicators for describing ‘easy access and use’, e.g. load time, easy navigation, look and feel, readability, web page logic, contact information.

⁵ e.g. MPs providing public information on mailing addresses, telephone or fax numbers for citizens who are not using Internet

⁶ “MPs are missing the web revolution” http://www.crossingboundaries.ca/materials/MPs_are_missing_the_web_revolution.pdf

⁷ *E-Parliaments and E-Democracy*. World Bank. September 2002. pg 6.

⁸ The lack of resources has been a recurring theme in meetings with MPs, MLAs and Members of Congress.

⁹ *E-Parliaments and e-Democracy*. World Bank. September 2002. pg 6.

¹⁰ The Full Report *Assessing and Improving Capitol Hill Websites* can be found at: <http://www.congressonlineproject.org/webstudy2002.html>

¹¹ *Assessing and Improving Capitol Hill websites*. Congressional Management Foundation. 2001. pgs 7-8.

¹² The Full report *E-mail Overload in Congress: Managing a Communications Crisis* can be found at: <http://www.congressonlineproject.org/email.html> and the *E-mail Overload in Congress - Update* can be found at: <http://www.congressonlineproject.org/pf080702.html#policies>.