E-DEMOCRACY AROUND THE WORLD
A Survey for the Bertelsmann Foundation
by Phil Noble & Associates, Summer 2001
E-Democracy around the World

By Andy Brack and Phil Noble
Phil Noble and Associates
207 East Bay Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401
Phone 843.853.3002 • Fax 123.456.7890
Email politicsonline@politicsonline.com
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Introduction

HOW E-DEMOCRACY IS ON THE WAY, BUT THERE’S STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

A few short years ago when political Internet evangelists described ways the Internet could transform government, they asked audiences to imagine the possibilities – to imagine how citizens could renew licenses, pay bills, ask questions, discover information about government and take part in debate, all while sitting in the comfort of their home in front of their computer.

Today, we no longer have to imagine. The dawn of e-democracy is changing the way people interact with government and politicians. Across the world, people are using the Internet in new ways to get information, use services and participate in democracy. And while it’s not happening as quickly as many visionaries predicted, discussions and practical use of e-democratic tools is reaching critical mass. Put simply, we’re on the cusp and about ready to take off into a brave new world of e-government. As a recent study of First World countries by Accenture noted, “every one of the 22 nations analyzed … has the potential to redefine the eGovernment landscape. But many, if not most of these nations, still have a long way to go.”

In this study for the Bertelsmann Foundation, we provide an overview of how e-democracy exists around the world today. For the purposes of this study, we define “e-democracy” as use of the Internet by government, political parties and advocacy groups to provide information, communicate, deliver services or boost participation to generate a more robust debate among citizens.” While “e-government” includes information, service and participation components, it generally is limited to governmental institutions. E-democratic use of the Internet is broader in nature.
For this study, we’ve reviewed hundreds of documents and surveyed dozens of professionals. While the appendices of this review includes easy-to-use documentation of these myriad sources, our analysis reveals virtually anything involving e-democracy can be split into one of four categories – online information, e-government services, online participation and infrastructure issues. Below is a brief description of each:

**Online Information and communication:** This involves use of the World Wide Web, e-mail and other new technologies to deliver information about democracy and government to the public.

In general, modern governments seem to agree with the concept that they need to provide basic government information via the Internet. More and more governments are providing an online component.

In March 2001, more than 900 international experts and practitioners met in Naples, Italy, at the invitation of the Italian government to take part in the Third Global Forum Fostering Democracy and Development through e-Government. While participants concluded services and online participation were a large part of improving use and implementation of e-democracy, it understood that information was the basic building block of all e-democratic tools.

**Bottom line:** The first big step in improving e-democracy is to provide robust sources of information about government and democratic organizations online and to use the Internet to communicate with people. More detail is provided in Chapter 3.

**E-government services:** This category involves using the World Wide Web, e-mail and other tools to deliver government services to boost efficiency, increase speed of deliver, improve access and more.

These days, much of the focus about e-democracy is on delivery of government services through the Internet. But according to a September 2000 study of more than 1,800 government Web sites in the U.S., online service delivery has a long way to go. Some 78 percent of sites in the study by Brown University political scientist Darrell West offered no online services. Only 5 percent delivered more than one service.
Still, the dot-gov revolution of today seems poised to take place of the dot-com revolution of the late 1990s. New ways of conducting government business online gradually are replacing old ways. Agencies that once were unable to work together have a new online platform where they can integrate projects to make it easier for citizens to use government. “With the Internet, the goal of connecting everybody to everything is within reach,” Thomas R. Davies wrote in the April 2001 issue of Governing magazine.

**Bottom line:** Delivery of e-government services is hot and will continue to expand. More detail is provided in Chapter 4.

**Online participation:** The next level of the use of e-government involves citizen participation and interaction to improve government. Instead of delivery of services, as above, this component involves the public providing direct input into the democratic process – providing information from the citizen to government, not the other way around.

These new ways for the public to interact with government – online voting, chats, forums, petitions, online town halls and the like – have the goal of reducing apathy, boosting positive interactions with government and improving democracy.

President Bill Clinton recognized the opportunities for boosting public participation in government when he launched the U.S. government’s one-stop portal, FirstGov.gov, in September 2000.

Others, such as VoxPolitics.com in the United Kingdom, note that the Internet and technology are becoming the voter’s friend because they are empowering people with information, services and participation tools. Similarly, *The Economist* noted in June 2000 that an upstream flow of information from people to government leaders will be helpful. “The Internet’s real promise for democracy may be less the much-ballyhooed electronic voting than the fact that the medium makes it easier for citizens to debate and inform themselves,” the magazine said in its June 10 issue.

**Bottom line:** The biggest growth potential for e-democracy is in improving citizen participation with government. More detail is in Chapter 5.

**Critical elements for success/infrastructure issues:** While the above categories deal with citizen use of online tools, there are significant infrastructure issues also at the heart of the e-democracy debate. For e-democratic tools to be implemented successfully, critical work must be done in areas such as narrowing digital divide...
between the online haves and have-nots, improving e-leadership, technological infrastructure of developing countries, online access by the population, selecting various models of delivering e-government services and more. Failure to address these issues in a timely manner will result in slow adoption of available technologies.

While the three previous categories of information involve various ways for citizens to use the Net in relation to government, this category focuses on the back-end, non-public infrastructure elements that governments must successfully hurdle before they can have real e-government.

Bottom line: There’s a lot of work to be done behind-the-scenes to develop the full potential of e-government. More detail is in Chapter 6.

What’s ahead

In the pages ahead, we hope to provide a good overview of what’s happening with e-government around the world in the middle of 2001. To make it easier to read and digest the ideas in this analysis, we’re going to provide information as outlined below:

Chapter Two: Literature review. This is a brief description of the major surveys and studies involving e-democracy. This will provide a basis of understanding for subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three: E-Democracy: Online information and communication.

Chapter Four: E-Democracy: Online government services.

Chapter Five: E-Democracy: Online participation.

Chapter Six: E-Democracy: Economic considerations.

Chapter Seven: E-Democracy: Critical elements for success and failure. This section offers a review of other major issues affecting e-democracy, including investment, technological flexibility, access, leadership, privacy, security and training.

Chapter Eight: E-Democracy: Examples from around the world. This chapter provides brief reviews and links of 22 U.S. and Canadian Web sites, provides information on 25 European sites and outlines what’s happening on 16 sites in other parts of the world.
Chapter Nine: Conclusion.

As an added benefit, we’re going to make a special highlight of trends involving e-democracy in each chapter when appropriate. This is how you’ll recognize a trend:

**Trend subject.** Followed by brief explanation of the trend as it relates to the text of the chapter.

Identification of trends during this study has great value because it allows readers to understand each trend in relation to the context of the analysis. At the end of this report, we’ll provide a round-up of trends, which will serve as a good overview of where e-democracy is heading.

Appendices to this study include:

**Appendix One: Trend review.** A succinct summary of the trends identified in the chapters of this report.

**Appendix Two: Top 10 lists.** We provide six lists of tips and information that should be helpful for students of e-democracy at any level.

**Appendix Three: Other resources.** An extensive review of more resources that may be helpful.
E-Democracy: Literature review of major works

A ROUND-UP OF MAJOR SURVEYS, STUDIES AND REPORTS ON E-DEMOCRACY

There literally are hundreds of news stories, surveys, reports, theses, studies and more focusing on e-democracy and e-government. In sifting through many of these, it's clear there are about a dozen that need to be reviewed early to provide a good foundation for understanding basic and advanced concepts of e-democracy.

Many of the works are marked by an enthusiasm for the concept of e-government and how it is being implemented in its nascent stages. Others provide encouraging numbers and ideas.

In this chapter, we will provide a synopsis of important e-democracy works to provide the reader with a good framework to use to review the subject.


In this comprehensive 40-page work, the Council for Excellence in Government gathered more than 350 government, research and non-profit leaders to develop a blueprint for transforming American government into electronic government.
The report – a must-read for students of e-government – outlines a clear vision of what e-government should: easy to use; available to everyone; private and secure; innovative and results-oriented; collaborative; cost-effective; and transformational.

It also highlights specific challenges, including problems with computer access by all citizens, integration of various government systems, infrastructure limitations and the like. It also makes specific policy recommendations on how to incorporate e-government into the American system. (See chart to the left.)

And while the report’s comprehensive theoretical, policy and action agenda are helpful (and a great summary of the state of e-government), perhaps the most important information gleaned from it is found in two national polls on what Americans think about e-government.

In short, they’re for it because they believe it can transform the way government interacts with the citizenry. Among the findings of Hart/Teeter polls in August 2000 and January 2001:

- **Priority.** Almost three in four Americans (73 percent) believe e-government should be at the top of the administration’s to-do list.

- **Easier voting.** Prior to the November presidential election, a majority of Americans were opposed to online voting. Following the election controversy in Florida, however, Americans now want voting machines that work like automated teller bank machines (65 percent to 26 percent).

- **Public-private partnerships.** Two-thirds of Americans believe e-government should be developed by public-private partnerships.

- **Better government.** By a 5-1 margin, Americans believe e-government will mean better government, but only half are familiar with the concept of e-government.

- **Have sites.** Almost all public officials (93 percent) say their agency or department has a Web site and three-fourths say they’re increasing investment in information technologies.

- **Benefits.** The public believes e-government extends beyond e-services. When asked to choose the most important of four benefits of e-government, results show 36 percent said it would make government more accountable; 23 percent said it would provide greater information access; 21 percent said it would make government for efficient and cost-effective; and 13 percent said the best benefit would be more convenient services.
E-Government leadership: Rhetoric vs. Reality – Closing the Gap,

In this sweeping study of e-government practices in 22 nations, the consulting firm Accenture finds progress has been made in implementing e-government services and some leaders are taking on the cause of e-government.

In general, the report found e-government is progressing along the maturity curve, reality is catching up with rhetoric and portals, such as the U.S. government’s FirstGov.gov, are starting to emerge.

Among research findings were five characteristics shared by leading countries adopting e-government:

- **Vision and implementation.** They articulated an early vision of what they wanted from online government and put systems in place for delivery.

- **Citizen-centric – an intentions based approach.** Online presences are based on citizen needs, not bureaucracy.

- **Customer Relationship Management.** They adopt CRM techniques in delivering services to boost efficiencies and lower costs.

- **Volume and complexity.** They’ve moved beyond having sites for every agency to creating innovative solutions for citizens.

- **Portals.** There is increasing use of portals to ease use of e-government services for users.

The survey found that innovative leaders in e-government currently were in Canada, Singapore and the United States. “Visionary followers” include Norway, Australia, Finland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Eight countries were classified as “steady achievers:” New Zealand, Hong Kong, France, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Germany and Belgium. “Platform builders,” who offer a low-level of online services but have great potential, include Brazil, Malaysia, South Africa and Italy.

Bottom line: “The e-government landscape will be unrecognizable in two to three years time.”

**Methodology:** E-mail survey to 88 chief information officers with 40 percent response rate; content analysis of 1,813 government Web sites; e-mail to 200 sites to determine responsiveness.

Brown University political science professor Darrell W. West coordinated a team of researchers in 2000 to produce this seminal study on how e-government is used in the United States.

In this content analysis of 1,813 Web sites for 27 features, West and his team highlighted that state and federal government Web sites are not making the most of the Internet, but chief information officers of state and federal agencies were enthusiastic about using e-government tools to improve service delivery, boost efficiencies and reduce costs.

The study generally found that larger states – Texas, Minnesota, New York and Pennsylvania – tended to have sufficient economies of scale to implement more technological initiatives. Other pertinent results:

- **Few with online services.** Of sites analyzed, only 22 percent offered at least one online service. Only 5 percent offered more than one service.

- **Privacy and security.** Only 5 percent had a security policy; 7 percent had a privacy policy.

- **Access.** About 15 percent of sites offered some kind of disability access, while 4 percent offered foreign language translation features.

- **Responsiveness.** Interestingly, 91 percent of a subsample of sites responded to a sample e-mail requesting official office hours. Almost three-quarters responded within one business day.

The study offered four recommendations for government officials to improve their Web presences:

- Improve site organization and structure.

- Bring state legislative and judicial sites to the standard offered by the executive branch.

- Post all contact information – phone, address and e-mail.

- Boost accessibility for the disabled and non-English speakers.

78 percent of government Web sites in the U.S. offer no online services.
The E-Democracy E-Book: Democracy is Online 2.0, by Steven Clift, 2000.

Steve Clift, a noted and respected e-democracy evangelist, produced this draft “e-book” on e-democracy in 2000 initially for the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Centre for Electronic Governance.

Clift, who operates the Democracies Online Newswire (http://www.e-democracy.org/do), offers this text as the theoretical basis for e-democracy. It is packed with ideas on how e-democracy should work to make citizen interactions with governments more participatory.

Clift breaks down “e-democracy” into several thematic sectors – online government, online media, online politics, online advocacy, infrastructure issues and online civic life. In each section, he provides an outline of how each thematic sector should contribute to e-democracy, provides some examples and draws some conclusions.

This paper is not “easy to read” because Clift quickly delves into advanced e-democracy concepts and Internet lingo, but it provides a useful framework for understanding how e-democracy should work.


EzGov, a commercially-operated e-government technology firm that provides e-government software and service, offers three White Papers that provide good overall views of specific e-democracy issues. While somewhat self-serving, the White Papers provide a framework that helps get non-e-government people “up to speed” on major issues.

E-Government: Making Sense of a Revolution provides definitions and an overview of the value of e-government. It provides good definitions, an examination of efficiencies possible with e-government and added benefits. Most interesting, however, is a series of eight critical questions that it offers for governments seeking to implement or augment e-government services.

“I think a long-term, sustained approach is required to fully realize the potential of the Internet in our public lives...Quit waiting for the pie in the sky plan to be finished or magic funding to get started. The Internet advances based on trial and error with sudden bursts that lead to major improvements based on simple, yet universally applicable radical innovations.”

– Steven Clift

The e-government revolution has gained significant momentum during the last six to nine months. Demand for Internet services has been fueled by the private sector, where citizens have grown accustomed to using the Internet for an ever-growing list of transactions and searches. In turn, government agencies at the local, state, and federal level have recognized the need to provide their services online as well.

E-Government: Privacy, Security and Accessibility looks at policy implications for governments interested in e-government. It concludes that with proper planning and thinking, agencies can develop online systems that will protect privacy, provide security and boost accessibility.

E-Government: Realizing e-Government offers a view of enabling technologies needed to make e-government a reality. This report offers an idea of what e-government will become and outlines a way to create an e-government framework and infrastructure. Most interestingly, it provides characteristics for good e-government software components.


Methodology: 406 randomized interviews pulled from business and citizen sources.

This report sought to provide a benchmark for e-government services and applications. In particular, it asked citizens and businesses what they wanted online from government. Among the findings:

- Almost two out of three online adults (65 percent) have conducted an online governmental transaction at least once. Twenty percent have conducted an e-government transaction within 30 days.

- Almost half said they’d like to use the Internet to renew their driver’s license, vote (38 percent), access one-stop shopping for all government services (36 percent).

- Some 43 percent of business users said they’d like to get or renew professional licenses online, while 39 percent said they’d like to apply for new business licenses and permits online.

- Given a choice 71 percent of citizens and 61 percent of business users said they’d prefer to pay convenience fees for e-government services over taxpayer-funded e-government initiatives.

The report generally concluded that citizens and businesses are more satisfied with e-government experiences than traditional government service experiences. They’re willing to pay for services to boost efficiencies and save money. And governments must address issues of public trust online to build its audience.
Fostering Democracy and Development Through E-Government  
(http://www.globalforum.it), Third Global Forum, March 2001

Representatives from 122 countries met in Italy in March to discuss and explore the potentials of information and communications technologies (ICT) in governments around the world.

The report, while mostly theoretical, provides several conclusions on using e-government to provide better services, transform government, guarantee privacy and security, bridge the digital divide, and build the online government Internet for success.

Among the recommendations of the forum was to “multiply occasions for international best practices sharing and mutual learning on e-government issues.”

VoxPolitics Primer:  How to use the Internet effectively, securely and legally in election campaigns, by Phil Cain, James Crabtree, Dan Jellinek and Tom Steinberg, April 2001.  **Methodology:**  Report based on experience.

VoxPolitics.com is a partnership of The Stationary Office and four leading U.K. think tanks to explain how new technology is changing politics.  The project, which coincided with the recent UK 2001 general elections, offers a detailed, 35-page primer on how candidates and campaigns can use the Internet effectively for politics.

This primer is of particular use because it provides practical tips and steps for implementing successful Internet strategies that deal with citizens and improving democratic discourse.  As we mentioned earlier, e-democracy isn’t all about e-government and services.  It’s about using the Internet to energize debate among the citizenry and to provide value to citizens.

Information gleaned from the *VoxPolitics Primer*, for example, easily can be applied to just about any municipal, state or federal Web presence.  Why?  Because politicians and campaigns are trying to engage the same people that governments are.

The added value of the *VoxPolitics Primer* is that it focuses on building participation by users.  It outlines specific ways that Web sites can build constituencies, communities and more.  For example, it notes in the opening chapter that “E-mail is the killer application” because it’s the quickest and easiest way to provide instant information to
large numbers of people. VoxPolitics also encourages sites to boost interactivity, tailor messages to different audiences and boost accessibility.

Bottom line: The *VoxPolitics Primer* is a fantastic and the best current hands-on guide for using the Internet in politics.


This ground-breaking Canadian report is the result of four roundtable sessions among members of the Canadian Parliament and senior public servants and a cross-country tour to provincial capitals. The paper’s authors met with more than 250 people in the journey.

The paper, which was prepared as a primer for a March 2001 conference on e-government in Ottawa, takes a look at what e-government is and how it could change government processes across Canada. While mostly theoretical and visionary, it provides a framework for Canada to use to move toward integrating e-government into the daily process of traditional government.

The authors concluded, as highlighted at the opening of this chapter, that e-government is on its way in Canada and there’s a lot of enthusiasm for it: “We believe it has the power to galvanize and unite, if only Canadians can see in it an invitation to make history.”


The Digital Opportunity Task Force, created in July 2000 by the G8 Heads of State at the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit, represents 42 teams of experts from developing and non-developing countries. This report identifies ways in which the digital revolution can benefit everyone in the world.

It is of interest in terms of this survey because it focuses on all areas of the world – not just developed countries – and seeks steps to help everyone build digital opportunities. For the purposes of e-democracy, this report addresses many of the concerns related to the digital divide, improving access and building infrastructure to give people the chance to connect to the Internet and use it for e-democratic purposes.
The report identifies a “Genoa Plan of Action,” which is a group of nine action points to help developing economies achieve information and communication technology development. Of particular interest for e-democratic purposes are:

- **Action Point 1** – to “help establish and support developing country and emerging economy National strategies.”

- **Action Point 2** – to “improve connectivity, increase access and lower costs.”

- **Action Point 8** – “National and international effort to support local content and applications creation.”

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**i-Government Working Paper Series**, Institute for Development Policy and Management (http://idpm.man.ac.uk/idpm/idpm_dp.htm#ig), University of Manchester, 2001. **Methodology:** Academic analysis.

Dr. Richard Heeks, a senior lecturer with the Institute for Development Policy & Management at the University of Manchester, offers two sweeping academic reports that he says provides a “comprehensive guide to e-governance.” The reports come with online educators’ guides too.

- **“Understanding e-Governance for Development”** explores the scope, benefits and challenges of e-governance. While there is a lot of academic theorizing in this article, it also provides several real world cases of the uses of information and communications technologies in Egypt, Tanzania, China, South Africa, South Korea, Chile, the Philippines, India and Honduras. Some of these will be reviewed in Chapter 7 of this survey.

- **“Building e-Governance for Development”** provides a framework for implementing e-government. The paper “hopes to point the way forward by describing the contents of a National e-Governance Initiative (NeGI) for developing countries that would address the problems of the past and would grasp the opportunities provided for governance by the new connectivity.”

The ideas offered in this paper could serve as a template for any country that wants to fully implement an e-government strategy for delivery of services. There are no concrete examples in this report.

French political analyst Bernhard Lehmann von Weyhe offered this master’s degree thesis in 1999 to describe, classify and evaluate online government communication in France, Germany and the United States. While the theoretical study is in French, an English-translated abstract outlines his work.

His principal conclusions: government communication on the Internet must not be considered a channel of communication like any other because of the potential for the Internet to affect and change political debate.

The State of the Internet 2000 (http://www.usic.org), a study by the United States Internet Council and ITTA Inc., 2000. **Methodology:** Content analysis done on Internet from public sources.

While this survey provides an overview of what’s happening to the Internet in general, there is a section that addresses government’s role with the Internet. It notes that streamlining government services by going online with them will save money and that online voting soon may be available. In the Arizona Democratic primary election in March 2000, for example, 40,000 people cast ballots online.

According to the Gartner Group, U.S. e-government spending will grow from $1.5 billion in 2000 to more than $6.2 billion by 2005.


The survey also briefly highlights that online government procurement will also ramp up in coming years. Similarly, investments in e-government are expected to grow vastly.

The report says e-government challenges include security, privacy and a cultural change to encourage people to trust online alternatives. Other challenges include accessibility for everyone, and policy and tax initiatives.

Interestingly, the report implies that e-government implementation and general Internet use in Europe may be easier than in the U.S. because non-Americans don’t have the U.S. predisposition against governmental regulation. “In a recent survey of European business executives, the majority felt that Internet commerce would benefit greatly from government oversight and regulation.”

- End of part 1 -
E-Democracy: Online Information and communication

THE BUILDING BLOCK OF E-DEMOCRACY

Information is the building block of e-democracy.

Theoretically, this makes sense. A major driving force of the e-democratic movement is to make democracy, government and the political process more open for everyone to provide everyone with a chance to participate. If institutions don’t provide information about what they’re doing, openness and more input from citizens can’t be received. It’s hard to participate or become engaged in the process, for example, if you don’t know what the leaders are talking about.

“The best way to ensure online citizen involvement in decision-making is to adapt online tools into the official democratic processes,” Steven Clift writes in his E-Democracy E-Book. We need systematic full access to legally public information.”

Most governments and organizations that went online early seemed to have a Field of Dreams view of the Internet – if you build it and pack it with information, they (users) will come.

Beyond theory, it makes practical sense for information to be the basic component of e-democracy. If you look at what has happened over the last few years, delivery of information at the top of most governments’ e-gendas. Most governments and organizations that went online early seemed to have a Field of Dreams view of the Internet – if you build it and pack it with information, they (users) will come. It took everyone awhile to realize that institutions – governments, parties, advocacy groups and the like – had to do more to attract and keep users.

Still, providing quality information remains a vital part to any good Web presence. In political Web sites, for example, surveys show the most requested pages of a candidate’s Web site were the same in 2000 what they were in 1995 – candidate biographical information and issue/policy positions. In other words, what voters who visited political sites continue to want is basic candidate information. Delivery of that
information may have matured to e-mail delivery, listservs, SMS text messaging and more, but when push comes to shove, people want the data first.

The approach most governments seem to have taken over the years is consistent with the political example. Governments first provided information—dates and times of city council meetings, copies of minutes, contact numbers for elected officials and departmental offices, news releases and more. As computer technology got better and the public’s computer skills increased, governments and democracy organizations got better in what they provided to people—service information followed by online services, online payment and participatory features.

While technology has moved forward at light speed over the past few years, governments have been slower to respond. “With some notable exceptions, however, government lags other sectors of American society in its capacity to capitalize on the opportunities offered by information technology,” according to The Council for Excellence in Government’s E-Government report.

Most governments in the United States, for example, seem to view information delivery as the principal component of the Internet. Recall the Brown University study in which 78 percent of 1,813 U.S. Web sites provided no online services. The Brown University study merits more attention because researcher Darrell West and his team analyzed the kinds of information currently on government Web sites in the U.S.

The overwhelming majority of sites included phone contact information (91 percent) and address info (88 percent). Four out of five sites provided links to other Web sites and three in four offered online publications.

But information access drops significantly after these categories of basic information.

“Not many Web sites provide other useful forms of information,” the study notes. “Only 42 percent provide any type of database and a mere 34 percent provide a list of ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ (FAQs) with corresponding answers. Even fewer sites provide an 800 number (25 percent). From here, the percentage of sites with further information sources drops dramatically... Clearly, most government sites have not yet realized these innovative means of providing information to site visitors.”

What has been occurring with increased frequency is “government online.” Government online consists mainly of preliminary forays onto the Internet, which usually take the form of static, non-interactive Web sites. These ventures are often dubbed “portals” but seldom offer citizens more than an aggregation of agency sites—each of which remains a silo or agency Web pages. These Web pages, in turn, typically consist only of general agency information and telephone contact information. Most governments have yet to realize the vision of a personalized, citizen-centric, feature-rich government Web presence.”

— Realizing e-Government, EZ Gov.
For governments fully to realize the goal of providing more information online, there appears to be a trend toward more collaborations – meetings and information-sharing by e-government practitioners and new public-private partnerships.

**Trend one: More collaboration and sharing.** An easy, practical way for e-democracy organizations to move more quickly toward providing better and more information is to learn from others. Look for more sharing of information in the public sector and more public-private collaborations.

In the last year, for example, there seem to have been more meetings, studies, discussions, sites and the like devoted to e-democracy and e-government than in all of the past years combined.

The January 2001 Hart/Teeter poll also recognized that the public believes collaborative efforts are key to moving e-government forward. “The public would prefer that government agencies work with private industry in developing e-government rather than attempting to develop e-government on its own,” according to the study in *E-Government: The Next American Revolution*.

**E-mail**

**Information delivery can advance** to the next generation by using current tools more effectively. In particular, most government Web sites make rare use of e-mail, while political and advocacy sites find e-mail to be “the killer app,” as highlighted by VoxPolitics.com.

**Trend two: E-mail use will increase.** Online government sites, unlike political and advocacy sites, seem to shy away from using the Internet’s most powerful application – e-mail. Look for this to change quickly.

Just this month, for example, new Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi highlighted the power of e-mail by launching his first e-mail magazine. More than 800,000 people received it and an estimated 1 million are now subscribers, according to Wired.

Former Swedish Prime Minister Karl Bildt was an early adopter of using e-mail. While he was in Bosnia as a negotiator in the late 1990s, Bildt was able to maintain effective control of his Moderat Party by providing an e-mail journal to more than 20,000 party members in Sweden.
But examples by leaders such as Koizumi and Bildt are more of the exception than the rule. Look at how the U.S. Congress handles e-mail, for example.

The House and Senate received about 80 million e-mail messages in 2000, according to the Congress Online Project (http://www.congressonlineproject.org). In general when a citizen submits an e-mail to a U.S. House member or senator, the sender quickly receives an automated reply from most offices. But for the citizen to get an answer to a question or more information on an issue, he has to wait for the regular postal mail – congressional offices rarely reply online to inquiries. In addition, offices often will trash messages from people outside the district in which the official lives, which leaves even more people without a response to their inquiry.

“Rather than enhancing democracy – as so many hoped – e-mail has heightened tensions and public disgruntlement with Congress,” the COP report states. “The growing number of citizens are increasingly frustrated by what they perceive to be Congress’ lack of responsiveness to e-mail. At the same time, Congress is frustrated by what it perceives to be e-citizens’ lack of understanding of how Congress works and the constraints under which it must operate.”

In Canada, citizen experiences with e-mail follow a similar path. According to a study cited by Clift, seven out of eight citizens expect a response to a letter in two weeks. But 90 percent expect an e-mail response within four hours. “The current one-size-fits-all auto-response system is not sufficient,” he notes.

Jules Mermelstein, a commissioner for Upper Duplin Township in a small Pennsylvania town northwest of Philadelphia, told the writers of this report that his e-mail address and phone numbers are published on the town’s official Web site (http://www.upperdublin.org/).

He added he believed use of e-mail was more efficient than phone-based contact. “Something in writing is clearer and easier to refer back to than something by voice. I keep in touch with staff by e-mail much better.”

Unlike Mermelstein, most governments apparently haven’t figured out use of e-mail provides a big benefit – it builds communities. While they may provide basic e-mail address information, they don’t often “push” information to constituents.

Politics provides another example. One of the writers of this report, Andy Brack, ran for U.S. Congress in 2000. Months before the election, Brack started building an e-mail list and communicating with
supporters and voters. By November 2000, he had more than 800 people on an e-mail list.

Brack noted, “What e-mail did more than anything else was it provided a way for my campaign to connect with people and build my community very early. In most campaigns, voters don’t think about candidates until the last couple of weeks before the election. But because I had an “e-mail army,” I was able to invigorate hundreds of people and keep them interested in the election well before most people got interested. This helped in organizing, message delivery and in creating a buzz about the campaign.

Further evidence of the importance of e-mail in the information-delivery mix is found in an October 2000 report by the U.S. Department of Commerce. According to *Falling Through the Net: Toward Total Digital Inclusion*, 79.9 percent of American Internet users say e-mail is the most popular online activity. Other popular activities include searching for information (58.8 percent) and checking news (43.2 percent). Only a third or less of American Internet users say participatory activities, such as taking a course (35.4 percent), shopping and paying bills (30 percent), are popular activities.

Clearly, providing information online still is the major activity people want and governments deliver.

**Web sites**

As governments grapple with how to deal with increasing citizen input via e-mail, they also have to manage another potential information-delivery problem – too many Web sites.

In an interview, David Sullivan, the chief information officer of the award-winning City of Virginia Beach Web site (http://www.vbgov.com), noted that it’s a constant struggle to rein in individual agency Web sites. *(See a Case Study of VBGov.com in Chapter 4).*

Each, Sullivan says, wants to maintain its own Web presence because government traditionally has been done in an agency-to-citizen model of delivery (agencies tell citizens what they need to know). But citizens want information, services and participation arranged in an easy-to-understand way. They don’t want to hunt all over the place on the Web to find out what they need. Therefore, one-stop shopping – the portal site – is on the rise.
**Trend Three: Use of portals will rise.** Citizens are becoming increasingly frustrated with the plethora of Web sites out there. They want information in an easy-to-use place. Look for more sites like FirstGov.gov, with its search engine that can access tens of thousands of pages in a second, to provide continuity and make the government Web easier to use.

In its *Rhetoric vs. Reality* report, Accenture finds the rise of portals is the most significant recent development in e-government.

> “Many governments in our survey have now recognized that it is not citizen-friendly to require visits to individual sites, just as they would have visited a range of physical facilities to conduct business.”

> “Portals offer single points of entry to multiple agencies and afford citizens or businesses the opportunity to interact easily and seamlessly with several agencies. Portals are growing in importance and the leading countries have all begun to consolidate their online service delivery into this next generation of government Web presence.”

Interestingly, the Momentum Research Group in 2000 found business users strongly prefer a single federal e-government portal, while “citizens prefer to access information and services through their local e-government portal.”

**Other online communications tools**

While E-mail and Web sites are the most prevalent ways to use the Internet to communicate, there should be a brief discussion of other tools, most of which are components of Web sites. Information-delivery and communications tools, many of which include interactive components that are useful in providing compelling participation activities, include:

**Usenet.** A part of the Internet that’s not often used by the general public is Usenet, a big international discussion board used by millions of people. According to Patrick Crispin’s Roadmap 96, “The basic building block of Usenet is the newsgroup, which is a collection of messages with a related theme (on other networks, these would be called conferences, forums, bboards or special-interest groups). There are now more than [15,000] of these newsgroups, in several different languages, covering everything from art to zoology, from science fiction to South Africa.”
**E-mail outreach/listservs.** One of the best “push” tools for organizations to use to inform members, constituents and shareholders is a routine e-mail newsletter or newbrief or periodic e-mail sent from a moderator of a list of e-mails. Typically, sites allow Internet visitors to join a list to receive information that the group deems necessary. There are free listservs, such as Yahoo! Groups (http://groups.yahoo.com) and Topica (http://www.topica.com). There also are programs that are customized for particular Web site needs. This outreach mechanism is relatively cheap and easy to maintain. Examples: People for the American Way (http://www.pfaw.org), Republican National Committee (http://www.rnc.org/getinvolved/) and Slate (http://www.slate.com).

**Discussion group.** E-mail listservs also can provide discussion groups in that people who receive e-mail news from a trusted source may be able to reply to the e-mail and have it circulate to all members of the group. These discussions can be moderated or free. This is similar to Usenet. Example: Minnesota E-Democracy (http://www.e-democracy.org). Discussion groups are particularly good for niche discussions, such as a survey of best practices. Discussions often are stored so people can refer to them over time. A related version is the message board, such as one found on FreeRepublic.com (http://www.freerepublic.com).

**Online polling and surveys.** Web sites often offer online polls and surveys, the results of which may be transmitted to users and interested parties by e-mail or in real-time online. This type of communication lets people quickly learn how others view particular subjects. An interesting example: Am I Hot or Not? (http://www.aihon.com) – a “rating” service in which users judge the attractiveness of people who submit photos to the site. A more typical example: Epoll (http://www.epoll.com).

**Online chat.** There are myriad places where people talk/communicate in real time over the Internet. Probably the easiest way to understand the power of this tool – which works mainly among interested users – is to go to Yahoo!Chat (http://chat.yahoo.com/). For the purposes of fostering E-Democracy, an online chat would best work in providing a certain time for an online chat with an important person on a Web site. Example: The Washington Post (http://washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/liveonline/politics.htm)

**Instant messaging.** Several services (Yahoo!, American Online, Microsoft Network) offer Instant messaging to allow two or more users to talk online through free software. These are kind of “private discussion rooms.” Text of these discussions generally evaporate when sessions are complete.

**Wireless communication.** More popular are wireless applications, such as delivery of news to handheld devices through services such as AvantGo (http://www.avantgo.com). There’s an increasing use of SMS messaging via cellphones in the US and throughout Europe in political campaigns.
Other tools, such as online voting, online meetings, online protests, online debates, online meetings and more, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

**Examples of innovative communication**

There are several examples of innovative use of technologies to pursue democratic goals. They include:

**MoveOn.** This advocacy group (http://www.moveon.org) generated $2 million following a cutting-edge online campaign opposed to Republican efforts to impeach President Clinton. Tens of thousands of people signed up to participate. More: Chapter 8.

**People for the American Way.** This group (http://www.pfaw.org) used e-mail to oppose a presidential nomination. It generated a lot of media attention. More: Chapter 8.

**The Philippines.** Electronic activists helped bring down a presidency earlier this year. Cybercitizens launched an online campaign to get 1 million signatures to get the president to step down. More: Chapter 8. Site: eLagda.com (http://www.elagda.com).

**China.** Chinese dissidents often use the Internet to publish information about the communist government. More often than not, they’re thrown in jail and tried for crimes against the state. While China’s Internet use is low, it’s growing. It appears that sites located outside the country are responsible for a lot of news that citizens now are reading without government censorship. Note: It is the belief of the authors of this report that one of the best ways to democratize China is through the use of information. The Internet is the perfect platform. To view various stories, go to PoliticsOnline (http://www.politicsonline.com).

**Mexico.** Rebels in the Chiapas region (Zapatistas) have used the Internet for years to complain about conditions and push for governmental change. In general, they use the Net to communicate their message with news media, instead of people. Story: http://www.wired.com/news/technology/1,1282,17633,00.html

**Yugoslavia.** In 1997, Radio B-92 was forced off the air by dictators. For months, it operated and continued to broadcast through the Internet through a site based elsewhere in Europe. Later it went back on the air, but was again taken down. Story: http://www.infoworld.com/cgi-bin/displayStory.pl?99045.eiradio2.htm

**India.** An Indian Web portal, Tehelka.com (http://www.tehelka.com), this year upset the government when reporters posed as arms dealers bribed their way into the
defense ministry to win a spoof contract. The site published the corruption scandal and it shook the government to its foundations. It was an innovative use of the Web to broadcast corruption in democracy and to bring about change through the medium. More: See this story in Financial Times: http://news.ft.com/ft/gx.cgi/ftc?pagename=View&c=Article&cid=FT30WSGBEK C&live=true

**International effort.** The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (http://www.icbl.org) won the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for work to rid the planet of landmines. The group’s work gained momentum, in large part, because of its use of the Internet to bring people together from around the world.

**East Timor.** The East Timor Action Network (http://etan.org/) is one of several advocacy sites that provides detailed information about human rights in East Timor.

NOTE: One of the best resources of stories about how the Internet is being used around the world is the World Headlines archives on PoliticsOnline (http://www.politicsonline.com). It allows users to search for stories about the Internet and politics by country.

**Recommendations**

Perhaps the most useful information and communications tools for e-democracy advocates are:

- E-mail
- E-mail listservs and newsletters
- A Best Practices Web site, which includes online chats with key leaders, online surveys/polls of current events, online discussion groups, message boards and practical access to tools and information on how to use e-democratic tools.

- end of part 2 -
E-Democracy: Online Services

E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES ARE GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS

There are hundreds of examples today of governments, advocacy groups, political parties and other e-democracy organizations providing services through the Internet.

A few examples:

- **Online fund-raising.** It’s almost become routine in the U.S. for political campaigns to raise money online. U.S. Sen. John McCain raised more than $2 million online in 2000 and other presidential candidates raised over $1 million. With easy-to-use Web tools, such as PoliticsOnline’s Instant Online Fundraiser, candidates can provide a simple, secure credit card donation service to supporters.

- **Online permits.** The City of San Jose in California provides a one-stop shop for residential building permits in an attempt to streamline the permitting process and make it more user-friendly. More: SJPermits.com (http://www.sjpermits.com/sjpermit/PreReqs.htm)

- **Online vote-swapping.** Here’s an advocacy example of a “service” provided to voters. In the U.S. in the 2000 presidential election and in 2001 in the U.K. parliamentary elections, citizen-generated Web sites allowed voters to “swap” their votes. Here’s how it worked: a voter in an area where the outcome was certain would make a private agreement through a Web site to swap votes with a person in an area where the margin was close. For example, a Democrat in South Carolina (where Republicans routinely win) might want to swap a vote with a Green Party voter in Florida, who might want to increase the percentage share that his party would get in the other state. The Green Party voter would vote for a Democrat in Florida, while the Democrat in South Carolina would vote for a Green candidate. The benefit: both parties did
better in each state and each voter felt like their vote counted. Examples: Nader Trader (http://www.nadertrader.org) and TacticalVoter (http://www.tacticalvoter.net).

- **Online enrollment.** In an interview, analyst John Budetti showcased the Health-e-App (http://www.healtheapp.org). It is a public-private partnership set up to facilitate electronic enrollment in the state's Medicaid program and its State Children's Health Insurance Program, both of which provide health care coverage to low-income children and families in the state. The applicant, working alone at home or with an eligibility worker at a state office, accesses the Web site and fills out a series of enrollment questions about their income, family status and more. “The Health-e-App program provides a real-time "preliminary" enrollment eligibility determination, the applicant then selects a health plan and/or primary health care provider online, and then submits the final application over the Internet,” Budetti says. “Final determinations are made by the state and counties on the back-end, and an final eligibility decision is sent to the use by e-mail and snail mail.”

- **Online records.** In India, litigants in the Orissa High Court now have free online access to case records. More: Judis (http://www.judis.nic.in/orissajudis/) and Causelist (http://causelists.nic.in/orissa/).

- **Online payment.** New York City’s traffic violators can pay tickets online through the city’s Web site: http://nyc.gov/html/dof/html/payfine1.html

Other examples run the gamut – from users who can use the Internet to get hunting and fishing licenses, file taxes, incorporate businesses and renew drivers’ licenses to those who can use the Net to view government meetings, reserve tee-times on municipal golf courses, register for classes, peruse recreational opportunities and register complaints.

“Old practices are gradually being replaced with new ways of conducting business – ways that are visible only to those intimately involved in the daily operations of government. By all accounts, the greatest changes lie ahead.”

- Thomas R. Davis, Governing, April 2001

**While examples abound,** most sites still don’t offer much in the way of e-services. The data paint a picture that citizens want services, but governments generally aren’t meeting citizen needs.

The Hart/Teeter survey suggests two thirds of Americans (68 percent) believe investing government funds in e-government is a high or medium priority – and that number jumps to 77 percent when respondents are provided with examples of online services. By a 5-1 margin (56 percent to 11 percent), they believe e-government’s impact will be positive in the next five to 10 years.
The Hart/Teeter survey also finds the majority of Internet users in the U.S. are taking advantage of online government. Some 66 percent of Internet users – about 41 percent of the whole population – say they visited at least one government Web site. Of those who visited, seven in 10 rated government sites as good or excellent. More results: *E-Government: The Next American Revolution*.

Findings by the Momentum Research Group for Revolution: *Year 2000 Report on Citizen and Business Demand* backs up the Hart/Teeter results. In the 2000 survey, two out of three online adults (65 percent) said they conducted an e-government transaction at least once.

Contrast how these two surveys paint a picture that American Internet users access and want more e-government services to the comprehensive Brown University survey by West highlights that 72 percent of government sites offer no online service and for those that do, there’s a lot of variation with what’s provided.

West’s study found the most frequent services included ordering publications, subscribing to case information, filing complaints, filing taxes, reserving lodging, ordering vital records and renewing vehicle registration.

Interestingly, the Hart/Teeter survey revealed a different picture of about the use of services on government sites. “Officials at all levels of government report a range of information or services provided through their Web sites. Nearly all the sites offer information, and several allow people to conduct transactions online.”

**Trend Four: Cyberservices are what people want.** Governments will increase efforts to deliver e-services in the next two or three years so that, as the Accenture study says, you won’t recognize online government soon.

The Hart/Teeter survey also revealed that government workers say their agency or department is providing a lot of services:

- 83 percent said their agency or department sites provided documents.
- 72 percent said sites included calendar and event information.
- 66 percent said there was constituent services information
- 64 percent said there were feedback/comment mechanisms on sites.

By one estimate, less than 1 percent of current transactions between government and its customers are online.”


"Consider that the most frequent service found was the ability to order publications. Just 3 percent of all Web sites offered this service, and the ability to order publications comprised approximately 14 percent of site services...The variety of services demonstrates the lack of standardization and coordination between agencies and departments within states, as well as the lack of communication between states.” – Brown University study, 2001.
• 58 percent said they provided search engines.

• 37 percent said they included software that could be downloaded.

Regardless of any of the above results, it’s clear that e-democracy services are increasing day by day. The following case study may provide more depth.

**Case Study: Virginia Beach, Virginia (www.VBGov.com)**

David Sullivan, the chief information officer of the City of Virginia Beach, Va., says his city’s site – noted as one of the best government Web presences in the nation – has taken five years, a lot of planning, a lot of leadership and a lot of input to get to where it is.

The attractive, well-designed site, which offers everything from information about council and its proposals to registration for classes online, offers rich content and uses an easy-to-navigate design. Last year when the mayor made online government a top priority, the city site worked with an advertising campaign to “brand” the site to citizens. It switched focus from an awkward old domain name (www.virginia-beach.va.us) that was hard for consumers to remember to its current VBGov.com.

The site currently gets about 6,000 unique visitors a day and about 20,000 per week. That represents about 5 percent of the city’s population that accesses the site every week. An estimated 77 percent of the people who live in Virginia Beach have online access.

Sullivan said the site is centrally-focused (a local portal) and uses content to drive its features. The site soon will be database-driven, he said, to make it quicker and easier to post information and news.

In Virginia Beach, a central Web team handles the day-to-day technical stuff of Web site. But to ensure that the Web is being responsive, each department has a non-technical “pagemaster” who is tasked with the job of supplying fresh content to the Web team. “Those ingredients have been in place for some time,” Sullivan said, adding that the collaborative effort across departments is a large part of the site’s success in providing what citizens want. But he noted, “We have to struggle all of the time because departments want their own presence.”

The most popular feature on the site is its employment job listings, Sullivan said. Another innovative area is the Real Estate Assessment section that allows people to learn values and histories of real property throughout the city. In July, the city will
unveil a new online feature – video-streamed and archived council meetings. They’ll be indexed online so users can quickly “flip” to parts of the meetings they desire to view.

He added that a challenge for putting e-government on line is that many of the back-office systems throughout government aren’t “Web-enabled.” For government department’s to conduct their business online, investment in infrastructure has to be done to provide agencies with tools they need to do business online.

If there’s been any big lesson Sullivan said he’s learned over the last five years, it’s been to make sure citizens know what is going online before it is posted. With real estate assessment information, for example, the city posted names of owners of each property, which caused a bit of a backlash. While that information is legal public information, citizens weren’t comfortable with it being posted online, Sullivan said. “We assumed the same rules applied to the Internet as anywhere else. They didn’t.”

Services of the future soon will be here

It won’t be long before governments around the world offer a dizzying array of online services.

Trend five: Innovation and responsiveness are increasing. As governments seek new approaches to the way they do business, more innovation will occur. These innovations will spread like wildfire and allow governments that now are behind the curve to offer e-democratic tools more quickly than expected. As governments innovate, they will strive to boost responsiveness to make the citizen-user’s online experience better.

As evident in Sullivan’s comments, governments with good Web presences constantly strive to get better. They do this by polling citizens, getting input through online forums and by collaborating with colleagues.

“Dugger senses that there is tremendous support at all levels of government for doing things differently and trying things that just a few years ago would have been viewed as heresy.”

-- Governing, April 2001

Bradley Dugger, chief information officer for the state of Tennessee, believes the Internet is letting governments break new ground on how they relate to citizens. The Internet, he told Governing magazine in April, has led to an unprecedented degree of innovation and government can take advantage of it.
**Trend six: Governments will integrate services more often.** The Internet provides a platform that will allow various disparate agencies of government to have an online home to provide services that augment each other in one place.

In addition to development of portals, agencies will take advantage of the Internet’s ability to connect everybody – and every agency – to provide better services. As Thomas R. Davies observes, “The Internet is acting as a catalyst for multi-agency integration projects that in a pre-Internet era were simply too difficult, complex, lengthy and risky to undertake.”

**In summary,** services delivered online will continue to increase and get better. Governments will learn from each other and apply lessons to make the citizen-user’s online experience better.

In the long run, this may have a beneficial effect – it may restore public trust in government. That’s how delivery of effective, efficient online services by government over the Internet is transformed into an e-democratic ideal.

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**Effective, efficient delivery of online services may have a broader impact – it may restore public trust in government. And that’s e-democracy at its best.**

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**New services, examples**

To outline all the possibilities of services that can be offered online, we suggest to commission a more targeted survey that can take into account best democracy-related practices and services. Until that is done, it will be difficult to provide a list of “new” or cutting edge services.

Many of the best current services and examples are listed above in this chapter and in Chapter 8.

For other recommendations, see the July 12 memo that accompanies this report.

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- **end of part 3** -
E-Democracy:
Online Participation

THE NEXT BIG, NEW THING – USING E-TOOLS TO GET PEOPLE MORE INVOLVED

At the core of the concept of e-democracy is the idea that more citizen participation in the governing process will result in a more robust, full democracy. Because of the interactive nature of the Internet, regular people, for the first time, have the power to be publishers to the world.

The old maxim, “Information is power,” continues to apply today. But when viewed through the pane of the Internet, more information online means people get more control of their government. In the days ahead, the old smoke-filled rooms where just a few people make major decisions will be less common because of information technologies.

But while the concept of increased participation in democracy because of the Internet sounds good, it’s not quite here yet. It’s still a child waiting to mature.

To date, traditional development of e-democracy online has followed a relatively predictable model – organizations first provide information, add services and then start trying to add more interactive features.

As e-democracy moves toward increasing interactive, participatory features on Web sites, it’s healthy to look at the kinds of activities currently taking place on government, advocacy and political sites:

- **Online chats.** Newspapers like *The Washington Post* (http://www.washingtonpost.com) and political parties such as the Swedish Social Democratic Party (http://www.sap.se) have been offering routine online chats between public officials and the public for at least two years. Some governments have been getting into the swing in Europe, but most tend
to ignore chats as a form of online input. It’s interesting, however, to highlight
the small town of Amesbury, Massachusetts, where a town council member
started a non-government online forum and bulletin board that appears to get
robust use. More, see AmesburyIssues.org (http://www.amesburyissues.org).

- **Online meetings.** It’s becoming more common for state legislatures and
  parliaments to Webcast official meetings. Because many governments already
  air proceedings on local-access cable in the U.S., it’s not a far reach to expect Webcasts to
  become common in the near future. Mark Lanier, who works at the University of North
  Carolina at Wilmington, told us he found the North Carolina state legislature’s streaming
  audio feature (http://ftp.legislature.state.nc.us/) helpful because it allows him to keep up with committee meetings and other
  proceedings when he can’t be there in person. Another example is the
  Scottish Parliament (http://www.scottishparliamentlive.com), which recently
  celebrated the first anniversary of Webcasting its meetings. Other legislative
  examples: State of Virginia (http://legis.state.va.us/); Utah
  (http://www.le.state.ut.us/); and North Carolina

- **Online meeting place.** While governments may
  use Webcasts and streaming to “push”
  information to Internet users and provide
  interaction tools related to those Webcasts, the
  Web also can be an online meeting place for
  citizens to exchange ideas. Perhaps the
  quintessential example of this is Minnesota E-
  Democracy (http://www.e-democracy.org),
  which is “a non-partisan citizen-based
  organization whose mission is to improve
  participation in democracy in Minnesota through the use of information
  networks.” Steven Clift launched this organization in 1994 as an election-
  based Web site. Since then, it has grown into an “online commons” where
  people meet to discuss ideas and democracy. For an extended review of the
effort, take a look at Lincoln Dahlberg’s “Extending the Public Sphere through
Cyberspace: The Case of Minnesota E-Democracy”

**Trend Seven: Public marketplace of ideas.** As more communities and
  governments implement e-democracy tools, the Internet will become a true public
  marketplace where citizens can share successes and failures to improve democracy.
Online debate. Back in 1998, Brack and Clift were part of an effort to launch the first public service campaign on the Internet to encourage voting. Dubbed “Web White and Blue” (http://www.webwhiteblue.org), the site transformed into the place for the nation’s first rolling cyberdebate in the 2000 presidential election. The online forum was a place where candidates met daily toward the end of the election to answer questions and listen to voters. This effort is a model for actively involving more people over a long period of time in issues of public importance.

Online protests. In the fall of 2000, activists in the United Kingdom brought the country to a halt by using the Internet to protest fuel price increases. By coordinating online and with cell phones, they effectively mounted a democratic protest that caused politicians to take notice and change policies. This example – and dozens of others – showcase how advocacy groups can use online protest tools to influence public policies in ways that would have been difficult a few years ago. To get an overview of the crisis, see The Register (http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/1/13237.html).

Online town halls. Sweden’s Democracy Square (http://www.demokratitorget.gov.se) is a government-led effort to encourage visitors to take an active part in democratic debate. The site, offered by the Swedish Commission of Inquiry on Democracy, offers reports and writings online in PDF format. It also provides opportunities for organizations to apply for money for democracy projects. Politicians frequently use televised town hall meetings to get input (and make headlines). Some experimented with online town halls in the 2000 presidential campaign. In the near future, more governments will provide extended-hour town halls to get input on public policy.

Online voting. One of the most talked-about online participatory topics is the possibility of online voting. While the Arizona Democratic Party last year held a binding primary election online, there remains a lot of privacy and security skepticism about online voting by governments. Citizens, however, seem somewhat eager about the concept. In the United Kingdom, half of Internet users polled in May say they would vote online if they could – an indication that one-fifth of U.K. voters would vote online, according to Forrester Research. In Canada, two-thirds of Internet users would vote over the net if they could, according to a May survey by the CF Group. In the U.S., results are less clear. As highlighted earlier, voters were opposed to online voting prior to November, but after the election problems they said by a 65 percent to 26 percent margin that they were for the government modernizing voting systems that could work like automated teller machines, according to the Council for Excellence in Government report.
Online petitions. A participation tool that’s growing in popularity is the use of online petitions. Not only do advocacy groups, such as People for the American Way (http://www.pfaw.org) use these tools, but government sites appear to be getting into the fray. In March 2001, for example, news reports highlighted a petition on the official Web site of the Charlotte County government in Florida (http://www.charlottecountyfl.com/petition/petition.htm). The county launched the petition to collect signatures of citizens in an effort to stop phosphate mining in the region.

It's still early

While the above examples may leave the impression that there is a lot of e-democratic participatory activity online, there’s not. The examples above were provided to highlight just what is possible online if political, advocacy and governmental groups put their minds to it.

The limited data on the subject bear out the observation that there’s little e-participation online and virtually no consistent, extended efforts, with notable exceptions.

In the Brown University study, West notes “one of the most promising aspects of e-government is its ability to bring citizens closer to their governments. While the technology to facilitate this connection is readily available, many government sites have not taken full advantage of its benefits, as highlighted by the chart to the left.

Of particular interest is the observation that the more participatory features of Web sites generally score in single digits in the Brown University analysis. In fact, only seven out of the 1,813 sites analyzed had personalization features, West reported. The study’s numbers support the conclusion that e-participation features have a long way to go.

Trend Eight: Openness will foster better democracy. A benefit of increasing online participation for democratic purposes is that it will generate a new spirit of openness about government. Just as offering more services online should instill more public confidence in government, creating a more transparent, open process – the sense that governments aren’t trying to hide anything from citizens – should boost public trust in democratic institutions.
Gary Selnow, a professor of communication at San Francisco State University and the executive director of World Internet Resources for Education and Development, said in an October 2000 speech that he witnessed the power of the Internet during the Kosovo conflict. The Internet, he said, brought people together and provided information in a society that had not been free. Here’s a key point in the speech:

“Like print, the Internet provides public information. Like the telephone, it permits interpersonal exchange. Like books and manuals, it offers tutorials and like movies and TV, it provides entertainment. The Internet is a remarkable Swiss Army knife of information and communication, and unlike other media, it does the job simultaneously in print, audio and video. But the Net has unique features unknown to traditional media – feedback and interactivity. These are the keys to the personalization of communication. The real promise of the Net for democracy-building is how people use it. Unlike the traditional one-way flow of information where audiences remain passive receptacles, the Internet gives users an active role as it enables them to fulfill personal requests.”

**What's next**

It’s legitimate to ask whether governments and citizens are ready for an Internet that’s participatory. Here are a couple of thoughts:

- **Governments are building.** Development of online services and participation tools by governments and advocacy groups are a kind of 21st Century arms race – everybody is building to have their tools in place, almost regardless of what anybody else is doing.

- **Advocacy groups and NGOs are building.** These groups seems to be more cutting-edge and hip to experimenting and testing new democracy tools.

- **It’s on the way.** Like it or not, participatory tools are on the way. Citizens are virtually guaranteed to get these tools in the near future or in the nearer future, depending on access, bandwidth and infrastructure issues. Citizens may not be quite ready for online democracy tools – just as they were unprepared for the fall of the Berlin Wall – but they’re going to get them.

- **Unclear whether they'll be used.** It’s still unclear – and we probably really won’t know for a couple of years – whether a great number of citizens will adopt use of online services and participatory tools in ways that will enhance democracy. Time will tell. Right now, the trend seems to be supply before demand.
• **White space opportunities.** There are at least three white space opportunities for research institutions or other NGOs interested in fostering E-Democracy:

  o **Training.** A big white space *opportunity* is to provide proper training for government, NGO and advocacy leaders and groups to provide quality products that work.

  o **Public relations.** Citizens need to be prepared to use the tools that are being created – kind of an intensive technology public relations campaign that will motivate *people to use tools and improve them.*

  o **Citizen surveys.** At this point, it’s unclear whether citizens will use the Internet to participate in democracy. A benchmark survey or series of surveys and focus groups might shed light on what citizens really want from online government and NGOs.
E-Democracy: Economic considerations

SOME MODELS TO CONSIDER AND MORE RESEARCH IS NEEDED TO CLARIFY PICTURE

Ramping onto the information superhighway is expensive as governments have to modernize and upgrade back-end operations, train workers, invest in software and market online products.

At the heart of the e-democracy debate is the overriding assumption that any moves toward online government and participation tools will lead to more efficiencies in government.

While we have found little hard data on that point, the assumption appears to be correct, as highlighted in these examples:

- Australian government departments and agencies should achieve AU$300 million in savings in 2001 because of moving services online, according to The Industry Standard (April 30, 2001). The report, based on a survey of 100 departments and agencies by APT Strategies (http://www.aptstrategies.com.au), concluded “federal and state bodies should try harder to document and publicize their cost savings and ensure that these savings are passed on to taxpayers.”

- Leeds City Council in the United Kingdom formed a partnership with a telecommunications company to provide one-stop service centers. Efficiency savings are expected to reach 450,000 pounds sterling, according to information available through the Society of Information Technology Management (http://www.socitm.gov.uk/ppp/pppmater/PPP2 1 intro & Drivers v1.ppt).

- The same report highlighted that Manchester City Council expects to save $100,000 pounds from a partnership designed to achieve more efficient business systems.
While efficiencies obviously are achieved, the EgovernmentReport (http://www.egovernmentreport.com) by Momentum Research points out that serious investment will have to get done to achieve true e-government.

“Governments must invest significant financial and human resources into a technology infrastructure to support e-government transactions. These investments will be expected to yield both increased quality in government services and their delivery as well as create tax dollar savings. Citizens and Congress will have very high expectations for significant return-on-investment for e-government initiatives,” the report said.

It’s interesting to consider that efficiency – perhaps the major driving force for governments to offer online services – isn’t necessarily why citizens say they want online government.

According to the Hart/Teeter surveys for the Council for Excellence in Government, when respondents were asked to choose among four important outcomes of e-government, saving money showed up third. (See chart to left.) More people thought it was important for e-government to improve accountability and provide greater access to information than they did to save money. More convenient services as a benefit of e-government scored the lowest. Interestingly, scores were somewhat similar for citizens and government officials.

Governments are slated to spend more – a lot more – on e-government in the short term. As highlighted elsewhere in the next chapter, U.S. governments are expected increase spending in e-government by $4.7 billion over the next five years, according to the Gartner Group. In the United Kingdom, the commercial market for providing and implementing e-government services will amount to $1 billion by 2005, according to Forrester Research.

“The research house says that government departments in the UK are currently wasting the opportunity to save GPB3.7 billion (USD5.4 billion) in their implementation of online services. Government agencies need to establish partnerships with private-sector organizations and be open to radical business models such as revenue-sharing, according to a report on NUA (http://www.nua.ie/surveys/?f=VS&art_id=905356419&rel=true).
Models for investment

There appear to be three basic models for governments to move toward e-government, and ultimately provide more e-democracy. We’ve found no research that develops which is better.

- **Government-funded.** As in the case of many countries, the government is paying for much of the move toward e-government. The advantage of this is that government can closely control what it is putting online. The disadvantage is it may not be as quick or efficient.

- **Private sector partnerships.** As related in the above British examples, some governments partner with private companies to provide solutions for e-government services. A fuller discussion on partnerships is available in “Ready? Net. Go!”, a report by McConnell International (http://www.mcconnellinternational.com).

- **Outsourcing.** There are an increasing number of public companies, such as EzGov (http://www.ezgov.com) and Accenture (http://www.accenture.com) that provide consulting and software to governments to allow them to move government services online.

The last two models are similar in their pros and cons. Advantages include putting services online quickly and use of cutting-edge products. Disadvantages likely include cost – while governments may save money with implementing online services, they may pay more for consultants and outsourced products than otherwise considered.

What to do

**More research.** It’s unclear which model works best. More research is needed. There doesn’t seem to be much data or information available, which may provide an opportunity to add to the debate in a significant way.

**No data on economic growth.** On another note, we looked for information on whether the introduction of e-government services provided an economic stimulus or growth to areas that use the services or to the economy at-large. We’ve found no research addressing questions surrounding that issue. The guess is that further research within dedicated general equilibrium models may have the best chances of quantifying effects the exogenous introduction of e-Government and e-Democracy have on GDP and employment. This research does not yet exist. It will, however, need to take up the full complexity of the issue in order to provide facts instead of “potentials” (esp. the trade-off between efficiency gains through ICT use in the public sector on the one hand, the efficiency losses through the necessity to have the public investments financed through taxation on the other need to be approached).
Cost neutral? There’s a great likelihood that the spin about e-government and e-democracy being a good thing because of the money it will save and efficiencies is just a spin. It could be cost neutral – or because of the back-end infrastructure investment, it could increase overall costs to organizations. Surely there will be savings in human capital – organizations may be able to cut some clerical and lower-end positions because automation and computer processing takes their place. But there still likely will be increases in costs to cover infrastructure and data processing positions needed to make e-democratic tools work. An opportunity may exist to do studies – more than likely anecdotal, interviews or content analysis – to determine whether the move of government and advocacy online really will save money.

Possible best path. It is our view that the most effective model would be for governments to collaborate with each other on innovative solutions for e-democracy tools and, at the same time, use commercially-available solutions when they offer advantages not available through open source, government-shared solutions.
E-Democracy: Critical keys and barriers to success

TECHNOLOGICAL, HUMAN, SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES MUST BE ADDRESSED

In conjunction with providing citizens with online tools for information, service and participation, it’s clear from a review of the literature there are several key issues that must be addressed if e-democracy strategies are to be implemented successfully.

In this chapter, we’ll take a brief look at these issues, which we broadly characterize as infrastructure issues. “Infrastructure” should be considered as more than technological issues — it includes back-end, behind-the-scenes keys to success that includes investment, security, privacy, training and leadership, as well as technical issues. Please note: We do not pretend to be technical experts, but provide this chapter as a starting point to paint a more complete picture, provide some direction and allow the readers to consider next steps.

"This task, however, is filled with obstacles. Many public-sector e-commerce efforts have been disjointed. For instance, the federal government has more than 20,000 Web sites that use different formats and standards.”
— ComputerWorld, April 2000.

Critical key: Investment

For e-democracy systems to be built, it’s going to cost money. Fortunately, leaders are recognizing the need for massive investment to provide information and communications technologies to fuel the dot-gov revolution.

And while federal and state information offices are scrambling to catch up with the private sector, analysts say they expect government spending in the U.S. to rise from $1.5 billion in 2000 to $6.2 billion by 2005, according to the Gartner Group.
Trend Nine: Investment in e-government will skyrocket. As governments and leaders across the world realize the efficiencies and sharing power of e-government, they’ll rush to invest in e-democratic tools. When they figure out that in the long run, near-term investment will save lots of money in the long term, they’ll move to put government online.

Potential barrier: Technological flexibility

Because hundreds – perhaps thousands – of governments around the world are experimenting with the Internet and e-government, there are a lot of platforms being used to provide information, services and participation tools. In other words, there’s a lot of redundancy in expenditures because a lot of people are working to develop unique solutions to similar problems. As identified earlier in this report, collaboration likely will become more important as time passes.

But as e-government changes – and it’s expected to change significantly over the next few years – it’s important for technological foundations of e-government to be flexible.

EZGov suggests that a proper foundation for e-government includes “robust message brokering and system management” that supports various software components, such as searching, workplace engines, payment processing and online forms which, in turn, can power e-government applications such as online license applications, ticket payments, permits and more.

It should be noted that this technological flexibility should include language considerations. While much of e-government that’s online is in English, the overwhelming majority of the world’s population does not communicate in English. There needs to be flexibility to transform open standards for technological innovation to include language translation components.

“Most of the technologies that drive the e-space, such as Java, are predicated on a system of open standards. A system infrastructure based upon open standards ensures a high degree of interoperability between different hardware, software and vendors. If the “foundation” of the system is centered on open standards, it follows that the software components and software applications that run atop this system infrastructure will observe open standards as well. This, in turn, means flexibility—or, more specifically, the ability to evolve with the electronic government space.”

– Realizing e-Government, EzGov.
**Potential barrier: Access and the digital divide**

Some 429 million people around the world have access to the Internet, according to new Nielsen/NetRatings estimates (http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/6/19645.html). Some 41 percent of the world's Net users are in the U.S. and Canada, while Europe, the Middle East and Africa account for 27 percent. Twenty percent of users are in the Asian Pacific region, while Latin American users account for 4 percent of the total. Bottom line: the vast majority of the World is not online. (Remember the Digital Opportunity Task Force noted one third of the world’s people has never made a telephone call).

Recognizing that the whole world is not online, there are critical access issues for e-democracy. If government transforms to e-government without attention paid to providing online access for everyone, then a lot of people will be left out. In other words, it’s quite possible for e-government to be successful, but for e-democracy to fail. Why? Because if only Internet users are accessing e-government and the majority of people don’t have access to the Internet, the “technology haves” will drive political and social agendas, not everyone.

The DOT Force concluded, “When wisely applied, information and communications offer enormous opportunities to narrow social and economic inequalities and support sustainable local wealth creation, and thus help to achieve the broader development goals that the international community has set. ICT cannot of course act as a panacea for all development problems, but by dramatically improving communication and exchange of information, they can create powerful social and economic networks, which in turn provide the basis for major advances in development.”

Ways that the developed nations of the world can help bridge the digital divide include working with developing national governments to set e-policies, increasing access by lowering costs, providing technology training opportunities and building collaborative efforts.

**Critical key: Leadership**

Great Britain and Sweden have taken active steps to incorporate e-government into traditional government, analyst Steven Clift says.

“Policies for bridging the digital divide cannot substitute for interventions in the basic fields of education and health care, but should complement and reinforce them, in a new holistic vision of development assistance.”

In Britain for example, Prime Minister Tony Blair created an Office of E-envoy, which has the job of transitioning all government services to the Internet by 2005. More: Office of E-Envoy (http://www.open.gov.uk/index.htm).

In the United States, the new administration in Washington appears to be putting e-government high on the to-do list.

Mark A. Forman, a former official with the computer firm Unisys, this month was named to be the federal government’s Internet czar (formally known as the associate director for information technology and e-government for the Office of Management and Budget. “Mr. Forman will work to fulfill the President's vision of using the Internet to create a citizen-centric government,” according to a June 14 news release. “As the leading federal e-government executive, he will be responsible for ensuring that the federal government takes maximum advantage of digital technology and best practices to improve quality, effectiveness, and efficiency. He will also lead the development and implementation of federal information technology policy.”

In addition, two leading U.S. senators have introduced the Electronic Government Act of 2001 “to provide the leadership and resources necessary to leverage the Internet and other information technologies to create a more accountable, and cost-effective government.” More: http://www.senate.gov/~gov_affairs/050101_press-outline.htm

**Other governments** that are tops in e-government leadership, according to the Accenture report, Canada, Singapore, the Netherlands, Finland, Australia and Norway.

But most governments – local, state and federal – currently lack leaders with commitment and vision to jumpstart their governments into the e-democracy age.

David Sullivan of Virginia Beach told us how leadership of the city’s mayor was key to building a committed constituency to back e-government and the VBGov.com Web presence.

For e-government and e-democratic principles to move forward quickly, there will need to be committed political and bureaucratic leadership to make the investments needed to transform government.

**Trend Ten: More e-leaders will emerge soon.** Politicians from local to federal levels soon will figure out that e-government is a good political issue and they’ll rush to join the bandwagon all over the world to be viewed by the public as responsible e-leaders. This should provide the impetus for more
investment and focus on the benefits of e-government, and in turn, e-democracy.

**Potential barriers: Privacy and security**

Just as people who use e-commerce strategies want to make sure no one else knows what they’re buying or learns their credit card number, citizens are very concerned that e-government services and e-democratic communications be private and secure.

Unless these two barriers can be successfully met – and increasing use of e-commerce by Internet users is helping people to get over this hurdle – e-democratic tools won’t spread and grow.

In the United States, for example, while citizens say there is high support for making e-government a high priority, they remain skeptical. By a 2 to 1 margin, American say they would rather proceed slowly than quickly because of privacy and security concerns, according to the Hart/Teeter poll results in the Council for Excellence in Government studies.

The survey found that two-thirds of Americans were “extremely concerned” about hackers and other infiltrators breaking into government computer systems.

Other data indicate American concerns about security and privacy may be well-placed. The Brown University study found that at best, less than one in four government sites post a security policy online. Some 23 percent of federal Web sites had a security policy. The top-ranked state in the survey – Kansas – only had 21 percent of sites with security statements. Fifteen states failed to have any sites with security policies listed.

The Brown study found comparable results with privacy statements – some 35 percent of federal government sites posted privacy policies and the best state – Michigan – had 20 percent of government Web sites with online policies.

While American skepticism likely arises from a political environment that encourages “rugged individualism,” one analyst offers encouragement for European governments in

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**The vast majority of state and federal Web sites in the U.S. don’t post security or privacy policies.**

“There’s more civic trust and cohesion in Europe and less rugged individualism.”

relation to privacy and security.

Marc Strassman of Citizens United for Excellence in E-Government notes Europeans have a culture in which they tend to trust governments more. By extension, it likely will be easier to implement e-government services and e-democratic tools because of the cultural environment.

**Critical key: Training**

Another key element that must be considered for successful e-democracy implementation is training – investing resources in human capital to ensure that people know how to use tools so they can take part in democratic debate and processes.

Training should be considered in at least three aspects:

- **Training of public officials** to ensure they understand the tools and use them as proof of leadership to push e-democratic principles.

- **Training of government workers** to ensure they’re up-to-date on current software, hardware and tools. If the government workers don’t have proper training, they can’t deliver what leaders and people want.

- **Training of citizens.** Governments and democratic institutions that seek to grow e-democracy should also ensure they invest training funds with the people. If people who are supposed to use e-democratic tools don’t know how to use them, e-government becomes an exercise in futility.

There appears to be enormous potential in this training area for commercial as well as non-commercial offerings because it could help develop and provide collaborative resources to governments and citizen groups to give e-democracy a big boost. More will be discussed in the conclusion.

**Other potential barriers**

*Lack of sophistication.* If tools are too sophisticated or require software/hardware that most people don’t have, sites won’t be used.

*Lack of bandwidth.* If people can’t get information more quickly, it won’t be used anytime soon. When information moves almost instantly – at the speed
of T1 lines for the average person – then people will swarm to using e-dem tools.

**Laziness.** If people don’t know about sites – or if sites aren’t promoted properly – people won’t use them. Part of the use of the Net by communities has to be an active promotions campaign.
E-Democracy: Examples from around the world

A LOOK AT HOW GOVERNMENTS AND GROUPS ARE USING E-DEMOCRATIC TOOLS

In this section, we’ll provide dozens of ways e-democratic tools and e-government are being achieved throughout the world. We’ll split this “best practices” chapter into three parts – U.S./Canadian examples, European cases, and examples from the rest of the world.

U.S./Canadian E-Democracy examples

Because there are so many sites in the U.S. and Canada that offer e-democracy components, we thought it might be best to split those sites into three categories: federal/national; state and local:

Federal/national sites

FirstGov (http://www.firstgov.gov). This massive U.S. portal of portals offers richness, speed and depth. Built in just 90 days, it is one-stop shopping for the 20,000 Web sites of the U.S. federal government. More details are earlier in this report.


Internal Revenue Service (http://www.irs.gov). This Web site gets rave reviews from users who now can file federal taxes online. The site is filled with helpful information and can serve as a model of an e-services site.
U.S. Census (http://www.census.gov). This site is packed with useful information, but it’s kind of hard to find exactly what you’re looking for. It’s more of a pull site – a place where people can get lots of information – than a push site, in which the department provides personalized information to those who seek it. Look for developments here in the future that lead toward personalization.

MoveOn (http://www.moveon.org). This citizen action Web site generated a lot of press and a lot of debate during the Lewinsky scandal involving President Clinton. First, it sent hundreds of thousands of e-mails to Congress and generated pledges of $13 million in support to use against Republicans who opposed the president. Then during the 2000 elections, it raised and distributed more than $2 million from activists to candidates in key races across the country (keeping its pledge to oust Clinton opponents). Results? In five targeted Senate races, the candidates it supported won four. If you’re looking for a site with a record of online activism, this is the place.

People for the American Way (http://www.pfaw.org). This activist site is a good place to learn more about how to mount e-mail campaigns.

Government of Canada (http://canada.gc.ca/main_e.html). This site is a gateway to Canadian government. While it prominently features information and service gateways for citizens, businesses and visitors, it takes a lot of clicks to find things. Interesting features – the site offers about two dozen interactive forums and has at least three online shops.

Connecting Canadians (http://www.connect.gc.ca/). The site’s mission statement says it all: “Connecting Canadians is the federal government's vision and plan to make Canada the most connected country in the world. In an increasingly competitive and knowledge-based global economy, Canada can benefit by becoming a world leader in the development and use of advanced information and communications technologies.” It’s Canada On-line feature says it’s helping to establish 10,000 public access Internet sites in rural and urban areas all over the country. This effort is worth reviewing in terms of its public outreach model and investment in technical backbones. Also take a look at its Smart Communities Toolkit.

State sites

North Carolina @ your service (http://www.ncgov.com) was named top state Web site in 2000 by Governing Technology magazine (http://www.govtech.net/bow00/). It is easy to use and categorized for use by citizens, business and state employees. What’s more is it provides personalization that’s difficult to find anywhere on the Web.

PaPowerPort (http://www.state.pa.us). Pennsylvania’s portal also offers customization. The site is clean and easy to use. It provides an array of citizen services, from access of state library collections to regional news.
AccessWashington (http://www.access.wa.gov) offers an interesting feature we haven't seen elsewhere – the ability for users to open a secure account to transact business with state government. It also puts a “spotlight on service” and has a clever search engine, “Ask George.” Other features include allowing citizens to look up job listings and criminal histories.

AccessArkansas (http://www.state.ar.us) offers a huge number of online services at first glance. Further investigation shows most of them are license and permit registrations. It's still an interesting site to view to look at the complexity and depth of what can be offered.

Access Kansas (http://www.accesskansas.org) is an online portal where users can find jobs, look up vital statistics, pay taxes and more. Interestingly, it’s got a robust legislative section which allows users to sign up for e-mail alerts for changes to bills at the Statehouse.

Utah.gov (http://www.utah.gov) is another site that focuses on citizen online services. Of particular note is its Notify Me! Function that lets registered users know when new online services are available.

Minnesota E-Democracy (http://www.e-democracy.org). If you want to see how a non-profit site can spur online debate and help do positive things in a democracy, check out this granddaddy of all e-democracy sites. More is described in the paper above.

Local sites

In general, cities seem to provide richer and more practical citizen services. Here are some of the top sites in the U.S.:

Arlington County, Virginia (http://www.co.arlington.va.us/scripts/default.asp). Rated as the best municipal site in the country by MuninetGuide.com (http://www.muninetguide.com), this site offers election results and free e-mail service for interested users (how’s that for providing an e-democratic service!) There’s also several ways to report problems and interact with officials and departments.

Chicago, Illinois (http://www.ci.chi.il.us) – The Windy City’s Web presence focuses on services and offers local news headlines. The most interesting thing on the site, though, is the Citizen ICAM, a service that allows the public to search the local police department’s database of reported crimes. It also provides a place for interactive maps.

IndyGov (http://www.ci.indianapolis.in.us). The City of Indianapolis' Web site has been performing e-government and providing e-democracy services just about longer than any other municipality in the U.S. The site is packed with experience. While most
municipal sites offer information and some services, Indianapolis proves the rubric that the longer e-government is offered, the more it moves toward implementing e-participation tools. This site includes citizen surveys and interactive bulletin boards. There’s also a city budget simulator.

**San Diego, California** (http://www.sannet.gov). San Diego’s site is remarkable for the depth of information and services it provides. It has “quick find” menus that are user-friendly and audio/video Webcasts of council meetings.

**Seattle, Washington** (http://www.cityofseattle.net). Seattle’s site, named best local government Web site by *Government Technology* magazine, is easy to use and has many of the services listed above. It’s a model for any e-government site.

**VBGov.com** (http://www.vbgov.com). The city of Virginia Beach’s citizen site is robust, appealing and packed with content. This site is best described as an online town hall. See Case Study in Chapter 4.

**Fairfax County, Virginia** (http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/). More than a million visitors a month reportedly access this high-quality Web site, according to the U.S. Department of State’s *Global Issues* journal (http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgie/1100/iige/gj02.htm). It features a citizen communications tracking system that allows government employees to track citizen e-mails. It also offers a host of services, such as a building permit fee calculator.

### European E-Democracy examples

A 2000 report by PoliticsOnline ranked Sweden as the top scorer in the second Internet Intelligence study conducted with Amsterdam-Maastricht Summer University. Other top performers were the United Kingdom, Greece and Ireland. For a look at the full study, see Appendix 2. Below are specific trends and site examples in various countries:

**European Union.** More than eight heads of European governments and two heads of state reportedly support **EU Student Vote** (http://www.eu-studentvote.org), an online project that’s calls for an online election of a European Union Student Council in March 2002. The project is notable it specifically recognizes its use of the Internet as part of the “development of new democratic public spaces.” The site includes an e-democracy section.

**Sweden.** Sweden, the top-ranked country in the PoliticsOnline survey last year, has a number of e-democratic sites of note. Its Democracy Square (http://www.demodrarratorget.gov.se) is a place for people to take an active part in debates on democracy. **Virtual Sweden** (http://www.Sweden.se) is the country’s online gateway. An English-version of the Swedish Government (http://www.regeringen.se/inenglish/index.htm) provides Webcasts and other tools.
Outside of the scope of government, Stockholm-based International IDEA (http://www.idea.int) offers a public sphere for debate about e-democracy. A commercial site, Votia Empowerment (http://www.votia.com) is working with communities to promote online voting and e-democracy tools.

**United Kingdom.** Great Britain is filled with e-democracy and e-government examples. Prime Minister Tony Blair (http://www.number-10.gov.uk/) ordered all government services to be online by 2005. In addition, he’s created the Office of E-Envoy (http://www.open.gov.uk/index.htm) as a hub for moving government to the Web. The UK Online Citizens Portal (http://www.ukonline.gov.uk/) allows an online platform for citizens to have discussions about government and take part in consultations about the direction of government. Other developments – the government recent announced, for example, that it has budgeted $43 million pounds sterling to integrate the Internet into its court system. Local communities can take part in an online consultation about neighborhood renewal at Communities Online (http://www.communities.org.uk). Further power of the Web was highlighted during the spring Foot and Mouth Disease panic when more than a half million people turned to the government’s Web site for information, according to a Jupiter Media Metrix study. For links to academic resources, see Appendix 3. Activists also use the Web creatively in the U.K. When fuel prices rose last year, they turned to cell phones and the Internet to organize and get government’s attention, as outlined earlier. Examples: Boycott the pumps (http://www.boycott-the-pumps.com) and PetrolBusters! (http://www.petrolbusters.com). They also turned to the Web in an attempt to influence the recent election outcome through vote trading, as evidenced by TacticalVoter (http://www.tacticalvoter.net).

**Scotland.** While Scotland is part of the U.K., its attention to the Internet merits a special look. Not only has the parliament (http://www.scottishparliamentonline.com) been online for more than a year, it makes frequent use of the Web to gather information, such as the Scottish Highlands Health into the Future (http://www.think-net.org) discussion. Another resource is the International Teledemocracy Centre (http://www.teledemocracy.org) in Edinborough, which offers a great e-democracy toolkit and more.

**Germany.** It’s important to note that German local governments are moving online. According to FAZ (http://www.faz.com), some 2,500 of Germany’s 14,000 cities and municipalities have a home page. Of these, 80 percent provide little more than office hours and a list of services, according to a Feb. 21 news report. The new national portal – Bund.de – is an attempt to modernize the country’s bureaucracy and provide online services to citizens. Also, the government recently announced plans for all of the nation’s 350 federal agencies to have its services online by 2005. Location-based electronic voting is expected to be available by 2006. Outside of the sphere of government, political parties are catching up with the rest of the world. The Green Party, for example, recently added an online fund-raising component to its Web site. Other parties are expected to follow.
France. In France, the Internet remains in its infancy, consultant Michel de Rocca said in an online discussion for this report. “There is a long way to go before the Internet becomes a tool of consultation and discussion between the public and its elected representatives, thus increasing citizens’ involvement in public life,” he said. While the National Assembly (http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr) and Senate (http://www.senat.fr) have sites that include legislative information, participation is low in online forums. The chambers do, however, broadcast proceedings on the Web, he said. All cities of more than 100,000 people and 55 percent of cities with more than 5,000 people have Web sites, according to La Tribune, but most offer few services. In general, local authorities refer Internet users to a national portal (http://www.service-public.fr) for national procedures, de Rocca said.

Austria. More and more things can be done online through the Internet in Austria, Daniel A.J. Sokolov told the writers of this report. Of immediate interest is the government’s e-democracy effort to make Austria have the first modern administration in Europe, as outlined on Help (http://www.help.gv.at). The City of Vienna offers a rich Web site filled with information and e-services (http://www.wien.gv.at/english/). Two other Austrian political examples merit attention. The Green Party in Vienna used discussion features and advanced programming on its 2001 election site (http://wien.gruene.at). In particular, look at a 3-D model (in German) about issues and more (http://www.wien.gruene.at/kurswechsel/). An advocacy site – LobauAutobahn -- that got worldwide attention was the campaign against building a new highway through a national park (http://www.lobauautobahn.at).

Portugal. This country offers a portal site – Infocid (http://www.infocid.pt) – on public administration information and issues. It provides the names and addresses of government and public organizations, relevant documents, debates and more.

Estonia. Estonia is on the cutting-edge of the Internet wave. “Not only are new technologies widely spread, they are also used in a number of innovative ways,” said doctoral student Jerzy Celichowski in an interview. “You can pay for parking using your mobile phone and you can fill your tax break through the Internet as a result of cooperation between the government and banks. Altogether, 82 percent of banking transactions are carried out via the Internet.” Celichowski said the government also is a keen user of technologies. Last year, for example, it introduced a computer-based paperless information system for government meetings. Ministers can now participate in them from anywhere in the world, the most spectacular example being a minister joining his colleagues from Australia via his laptop. Savings on the cost of photocopying in the range of over $150,000 per year have been achieved, not an insignificant figure for a country with the population of less than 1.5 million. Government sessions are shorter and, thanks to electronic signature, paperwork is virtually eliminated. The government also plans for electronic voting as early as the 2003 parliamentary elections. Voters, when registered as e-voters, can sign their ballots electronically using a digital signature. Finally, the Estonian parliament in early 2000 approved a proposal to guarantee Internet access as a constitutional right to all citizens.
More: Eriik, the government’s portal (http://www.riik.ee/en/); Prime Minister (http://www.peaminister.ee/).

Other E-Democracy examples

While most e-democracy advances have been made in the United States and Europe, there are some notable exceptions throughout the world. Here’s what’s going on in a dozen more countries around the world:

Singapore. The Singapore government is recognized as a worldwide innovator for its efforts to provide e-government services. Its eCitizens Center (http://app.internet.gov.sg/data/sgip/main.html) provides users with a wide variety of features, from applying for scholarships and registering motor vehicles to reviewing pension funds and sending e-feedback to almost any government department. Interestingly, Singapore became the world’s first country this year to use the Internet as a tool to conduct a population census, according to Internet.com. Experts also say it’s relatively easy for Singapore to move toward e-government because its population of 4 million is concentrated in a compact, urban area. The most popular online service, according to the Associated Press, is the government’s online income tax filing service, which is used by 40 percent of the nation’s taxpayers. Singapore’s e-government center is overwhelmingly supported by tax dollars. Over the next three years, the government reported plans to spend US$870 million on e-government.


New Zealand. A recent study, “The Government Online: Information or Infotainment” (http://www.scim.vuw.ac.nz/research/govtonline/press_release.html) outlines that the country suffers from three main problems with its online presences: lack of a clear purpose on government Web sites, lack of good meta-data (for search engine classifications) and lack of good contacts for feedback and information updates. Users of sites were ho-hum, according to the study, which appeared to be non-random. Half of the 700 who participated said they weren’t able to get the information they needed. The country’s e-government headquarters (http://www.e-government.govt.nz/) announced a new strategy in April. The survey reported that the Land Transport Safety Authority site (http://www.ltsa.govt.nz/) was rated as
the most popular for those who participated in the study. The government’s portal, NZGo (http://www.govt.nz) is attractive and offers several online services.

Japan. The world took notice in June 2001 when new Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi sent his first e-mail magazine. It went to more than 800,000 people – believed to be an all-time record – especially for a first-time e-mail. This is an extremely e-democratic use of the Web. The prime minister’s Web site (http://www.kantei.go.jp/) includes an e-strategy. The site appears to be complex. Part of it can be viewed in English.

The Philippines. The Internet and information technologies brought down a president here this year. Thousands of protesters connected by cell phones and united through e-mail and Web protests marched on the palace and instigated the removal of Joseph Estrada from office. In late 2000, cybercitizens launched an online offensive to get 1 million online signatures for petitions for Estrada to step down. Among the leading sites in the effort was eLagda.com (http://www.elagda.com). While they didn’t get 1 million signatures, the site offers multiple citizen-action tools that outline the possibilities for democratic activism.

Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico. The World Bank offers a report that classifies federal, state and local government Web sites in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico on three dimensions – search, communication and links. The report (http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/egov/LA_EgovSites.doc) offers dozens of government links and offers commentaries on the e-government approach in each country. Here’s a brief summary of each:

- **Argentina**’s national modernization plan for e-democracy (http://www.gobiernoelectronico.ar/sitio/gobierno_electronico/gobierno_electronico.htm) is run by the Modernization Secretary. It recognizes the need for “efficient vertical integration” to facilitate services. The country’s portal is Nacion.ar (http://www.nacion.ar).

- For **Brazil**, the study outlines e-government policies for the state of Bahia (http://www.homepagepadrao.ba.gov.br) and notes there’s a regulation that seeks for general services to be online.

- In **Colombia**, an example of a federal e-government initiative is Connectivity Agenda (http://www.agenda.gov.co), which reportedly focuses efforts on building communities, market growth and more efficient government. It also requires all entities to have Web sites by the end of 2000 and at least one service by the end of 2001.

- **Mexico** currently has more than 500 government domains registered, the report said. “Although government sites contain very good information for data and contacts, most of them, except for those of Mexico City’s offices, are
only a one-way source of information with limited interaction applications,” it said. Only 5 percent of Mexico’s 97 million people have computers, it added. Mexico’s new site for access to government information is Precisa (http://www.precisa.gov.mx). While written in Spanish, it appears to be a Yahoo!-like directory of government.

**India.** As outlined earlier in the report, the Orissa High Court now provides free Internet access to case records. The service allows litigants to find the location of his courtroom and its listing. More: Judis (http://www.judis.nic.in/orissajudis/) and Causelist (http://causelists.nic.in/orissa/). Another site of interest is in the division of Jabalpur, where the administration has an interactive site and CD that contains all government information. More: Suvidha.org (http://www.suvidha.org). The national government’s Web presence on e-governance is at: http://www.mit.gov.in/eg/home.htm.

**Pakistan.** The Punjab Government’s site (http://www.Punjab.gov.pk) includes a lot of information on the economy, culture and government and also goes a step further. It says the government will adopt an online model of governance that will provide transparency and openness and include public participation in the process.

**Israel.** The Israeli government’s portal (http://www.index.gov.il/eng/mainpage.asp), written in English and Hebrew, provides online e-mail services and an index of citizen services, including a place to petition the prime minister. Most of the site is in Hebrew.
E-Democracy: Conclusions

FINAL THOUGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Marc Strassman, a guy in California who is heading a small, but determined push for excellence in e-government, might have put it best when assessing the current state of e-democracy:

“In terms of the human life span, e-democracy is still a child under 5 years old. The issue is whether this 5-year-old child can become a Nobel prize winner (for e-democracy) or a mass murderer. It’s too early to tell.”

As governments and organization continue to move and improve online, they’ll add e-democracy components to sites. More than likely, they’ll follow the three-step process generally outlined in this report:

- **Information and communication.** First, they’ll post as much information about their organization online.

- **Services.** Then they’ll try to provide some services – from paying bills and renewing licenses for e-governments to online fund-raising for political and advocacy organizations.

- **Participation.** And finally, they’ll start working to use the key ingredient of the Internet – its interactivity – to provide two-way communications with citizens and users. It’s this area where the most potential currently exists.

But as Steven Clift noted earlier in this report, there’s no reason for governments and organizations to follow the three-step procedure, one step at a time. They can put participatory tools online immediately – if they can learn how to do it.

“Technology is a tool, neither good or bad in itself. How technology is used will be a measure of success for any e-government program. For instance, if e-government becomes an excuse to expand government rather than shrink it, ... the promised efficiencies from e-government will evaporate.”

-- Sonia Arrison, Center for Freedom and Technology, in NetPulse 5.11, June 2001.
Regardless, Clift, Strassman and hundreds of others are very optimistic about the Internet’s benefits and possibilities to democratic systems. Not only will e-democracy boost accountability, provide more information, add convenience, improve service delivery and create efficiencies, the implementation of e-democratic tools will provide ways for citizens to become more involved in their democracies.

A roundup of trends highlighted in this report is provided in Appendix 1.

There are, however, boulders in the paths along the way. In the near future, governments will have to struggle with what to offer online, how to pay for it, how to ensure all citizens have access, how to develop it and more.

In fact, there are a lot of general questions that continue to exist and need to be addresses as the 5-year-old child matures:

- Are e-government tools really enhancing the ideals of e-democracy?
- What statistical proof is there that the Internet improves democracy?
- Does e-democracy truly make the government more accountable?
- Is e-democracy making government processes more transparent?
- Do average citizens really care about e-democracy or is it a pie-in-the-sky dream for theoreticians?
- Can e-democratic tools restore public trust and confidence in democratic systems?
- Can e-democratic tools be used to uproot non-democratic institutions?

In light of these kinds of questions, there still appear to be several opportunities to contribute significantly in the development of the e-democracy process and the adoption of e-democratic tools.
Trend review

A REVIEW OF E-DEMOCRATIC TRENDS

Trend one: More collaboration and sharing. An easy, practical way for e-democracy organizations to move more quickly toward providing better and more information is to learn from others. Look for more sharing of information in the public sector and more public-private collaborations.

Trend two: E-mail use will increase. Online government sites, unlike political and advocacy sites, seem to shy away from using the Internet’s most powerful application – e-mail. Look for this to change quickly.

Trend three: Use of portals will rise. Citizens are becoming increasingly frustrated with the plethora of Web sites out there. They want information in an easy-to-use place. Look for more sites like FirstGov.gov, with its search engine that can access tens of thousands of pages in a second, to provide continuity and make the government Web easier to use.

Trend four: Cyberservices are what people want. Governments will increase efforts to deliver e-services in the next two or three years so that, as the Accenture study says, you won’t recognize online government soon.

Trend five: Innovation and responsiveness are increasing. As governments seek new approaches to the way they do business, more innovation will occur. These innovations will spread like wildfire and allow governments that now are behind the curve to offer e-democratic tools more quickly than expected. As governments innovate, they will strive to boost responsiveness to make the citizen-user’s online experience better.

Trend six: Governments will integrate services more often. The Internet provides a platform that will allow various disparate agencies of government to have an online home to provide services that augment each other in one place.
**Trend seven: Public marketplace of ideas.** As more communities and governments implement e-democracy tools, the Internet will become a true public marketplace where citizens can share successes and failures to improve democracy.

**Trend eight: Openness will foster better democracy.** A benefit of increasing online participation for democratic purposes is that it will generate a new spirit of openness about government. Just as offering more services online should instill more public confidence in government, creating a more transparent, open process – the sense that governments aren’t trying to hide anything from citizens – should boost public trust in democratic institutions.

**Trend Nine: Investment in e-government will skyrocket.** As governments and leaders across the world realize the efficiencies and sharing power of e-government, they’ll rush to invest in e-democratic tools. When they figure out that in the long run, near-term investment will save lots of money in the long term, they’ll move to put government online.

**Trend Ten: More e-leaders will emerge soon.** Politicians from local to federal levels soon will figure out that e-government is a good political issue and they’ll rush to join the bandwagon all over the world to be viewed by the public as responsible e-leaders. This should provide the impetus for more investment and focus on the benefits of e-government, and in turn, e-democracy.
Top 10 lists

A VARIETY OF PRACTICAL RESOURCES TO BOOST E-DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

In this appendix, we provide several practical lists and studies that outline practices and resources to help implementation of e-democratic principles. Lists include:

- “National Internet Intelligence Test for Governments and Politicians of the EU”
- “Top Ten E-Democracy ‘To Do List’ for Governments Around the World”
- “The 10 golden rules of Internet campaigning”
- “Ten things I want people to know about voting technology”
- “Top Ten Tips for Wired Elected Officials”
- “How to start an online public commons”
- “25 Who Are Changing the Internet and Politics”
Ireland Finishes On Top in 3rd Annual EU NetIntelligence Test

Ireland Government sites were rated best of the EU government sites in the third Internet Intelligence study conducted by PoliticsOnline, Inc. and Amsterdam-Maastricht Summer University. Ireland reached a score of 81 out of a total of 100 possible points. Ireland was followed by England at 79. Sweden dropped from a first place to the fourth, while Finland reached the fifth spot at 68.

The Internet Test was designed and conducted by Noble, Dutch political consultant Jacques Monasch, Bernhard Lehmann von Weyhe of Saarbruecken University, Germany, and Stanislav Saling of Slovak non-government Pro Europa, and students in the University's course Political Campaigns, the Internet and Democracy. Websites of prime ministers, parliaments, and governmental ministries from each of the fifteen EU member nations were evaluated in the course of the test.

The main results of the tested websites are:

**Overall Performance**

- **Best:** Ireland
- **Worst:** Spain

**Website of Prime Minister**

- **Best:** UK
- **Worst:** Spain

**Parliamentary Website**

- **Best:** Ireland
- **Worst:** Belgium and Spain

**Websites of Economic and/or Social Ministries**

- **Best:** Finland (Economics), Ireland (Social)
- **Worst:** Portugal, Spain (Economics), France, Spain (Social)

This study showed that the governments of the EU have taken the Internet seriously and are making a real effort to use it effectively," said Noble, who supervised the study with Stanislav Saling. "We are a long way from seeing truly interactive government but things are headed in the right direction."

The top ranking of Ireland in 2 categories and the best overall proves that the Irish Republic has really become a key player of the e-government and e-politics
issues. United Kingdom performed a standard high quality marks at the study which reflects also the efforts of Tony Blair to have fully digitised government by 2005. Denmark and Sweden were tied for third followed by Finland and the Netherlands. Big looser is the Spanish government who provides information and services almost exclusively in Spanish and the Prime Minister's web-site was very poor.

"A group of 20 average internet users evaluated these sites according to the same criteria for the third year. The study documents the approach and speed of innovation taken by the EU governments towards e-government" according to Stanislav Saling.

"The study is about making information available to the average citizen and that is why we evaluated these government' sites and conducted this study," said course leader Jacques Monasch.

Results of the Third comparative National Internet Intelligence Test for Governments and Politicians of the EU:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Prime Minister</th>
<th>Minist. 1 (econ)</th>
<th>Minist. 2 (social)</th>
<th>Parl.</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-National Average</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>62</td>
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Comment: 25 points are the maximum for each case; 100 points are the total maximum for all four categories in each country. These results were collected by a special three-day research project at the Amsterdam-Maastricht Summer University. The panel reflects the impressions and evaluations of 20 average Internet users in Europe.
Top Ten E-Democracy “To Do List” for Governments Around the World


1. **Announce all public meetings online in a systematic and reliable way.** Include the time, place, agenda, and information on citizen testimony, participation, or observation options. Use the Internet to build trust in person democracy.

2. **Put a "Democracy Button" on your site’s top page** which brings them to a special section detailing the agencies/government units purpose and mission, top decision-makers, links to enabling laws, budget details and other accountability information. Share real information that help a citizen better understand the legitimacy of your government agency and powers. Give citizens real information on how to best influence the policy course of the agency. This could include links to the appropriate parliamentary or local council committees and bodies.

3. **Implement "Service Democracy."** Yes, most citizens simply want better, more efficient access to service transactions and information products your agency produces. Learn from these relationships. Actively use comment forms, online surveys, citizen focus groups to garner the input required to be a responsive e-government. Don’t automate services that people no longer want or need. Use the Internet to learn about what you can do better and not just as a one-way self-service tool designed to limit public interaction and input.

4. **End the "Representative Democracy Online Deficit."** With the vast majority of government information technology spending focused on the administrative side government, the representative institutions from the local level on up to the Federal government are growing increasingly weak. Invest in the technology and communications infrastructure of those institutions designed to represent the people. Investing in elected officials’ voice through technology is investing in the voice of the people. Cynicism aside, options for more direct democracy can be explored, but invest in what we have today - representative democracy.

5. **Internet-enable existing representative and advisory processes.** Create "Virtual Committee Rooms" and public hearings that allow in-person events to be available in totality via the Internet. Require in-person handouts and testimony to be submitted in HTML for immediate online availability to those watching or listening on the Internet or via broadcasting. Get ready to datacast such items via digital television. Encourage citizens to also testify via the Internet over video conferencing and allow online submission of written
testimony. The most sustainable "e-democracy" activities will be those incorporated into existing and legitimate governance processes.

6. **Embrace the two-way nature of the Internet.** Create the tools required to respond to e-mail in an effective and timely manner. E-mail is the most personal and cherished Internet tool used by the average citizen. How a government deals with incoming e-mail and enables access to automatic informational notices based on citizen preferences will differentiate popular governments from those that are viewed as out of touch. Have a clear e-mail response policy and start by auto-responding with the time and date received, the estimated time for a response, what to do if none is received, and a copy of their original message. Give people the tools to help hold you accountable.

7. **Hold government sponsored online consultations.** Complement in-person consultations with time-based, asynchronous online events (one to three weeks) that allow people to become educated on public policy issues and interact with agency staff, decision-makers, and each other. Online consultations must be highly structured events designed to have a real impact on the policy process. Don’t do this for show. The biggest plus with these kinds of events is that people may participate on their own time from homes, schools, libraries and workplaces and greater diversity of opinions, perspectives, and geography can increase the richness of the policy process. Make clear the government staff response permissions to allow quick responses to informational queries. Have a set process to deal with more controversial topics in a very timely (24-48 hours) fashion with direct responses from decision-makers and top agency staff. Do this right and your agency will want to do this at least quarterly every year. Do it wrong the first time and it will take quarter of a century to build the internal support for another try. Check on the work in Canada, The Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom in particular and you’ll discover government that are up to some exciting work.

8. **Develop e-democracy legislation.** Tweak laws and seek the budgetary investments required to support governance in information age. Not everything can be left voluntary – some government entities need a push. What is so important that government must be required to comply? There is a limit to what can be squeezed out of existing budgets. Even with the infrastructure in place the investment in the online writers, communicators, designers, programmers, and facilitators must be increased to make Internet-enhanced democracy something of real value to most citizens and governments alike.

9. **Educate elected officials on the use of the Internet in their representative work.** Get them set-up technologically and encourage national and international peer-to-peer policy exchanges among representatives and staff. Be careful to prevent use this technology infrastructure for incumbency
protection. Have well designed laws or rules to prevent use of technology and information assets in unknown ways. Don’t be overly restrictive, but e-mail gathered by an elected official’s office shouldn’t suddenly be added to a campaign e-mail list.

10. **Create open source democracy online applications.** Don’t waste tax dollars on unique tools required for common governmental IT and democracy needs. Share your best in-house technology with other governments around the world. Leverage your service infrastructure, be it proprietary or open source, for democratic purposes. With vast resources being spent on making administrative government more efficient, a bit of these resources should be used "inefficiently." Democracy is the inefficiency in decision-making and the exercise of power required for the best public choices and outcomes. Even intentional democratic inefficiency can be made more effective with IT.

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**The 10 golden rules of Internet campaigning**

By VoxPolitics.com

The following are our 10 golden rules of Internet campaigning. Some of them overlap, some are relatively straightforward and some have many sub-sections. But all are vital to running an efficient, effective, secure and legal online election campaign.

**Rule 1 - Email is the ‘killer application’**
Email, not the web, is the key to instant, focused and widespread communication

**Rule 2 – Interactivity, not just lip service**
Allow real people to have real input into your campaign

**Rule 3 – Dodge funding controversies**
Make sure your Internet campaign is properly accounted for

**Rule 4 – Keep the right side of the law**
Stay legal with the right precautions and disclaimers

**Rule 5 – Spread the word**
Use traditional and Internet channels to publicize your online campaign

**Rule 6 – Information ‘channels’ for different users**
Tailor messages and information to key groups

**Rule 7 – Prevent security breaches**
Don’t let external or internal threats damage your campaign
Rule 8 – Use humour, it’s infectious
- Jokes with a serious political message could spread like wildfire

Rule 9 – Accessibility for all
Stick to a simple structure with no glitzy graphics

Rule 10 – Look inwards as well as outwards
Use the net to oil the wheels of your campaign

(NOTE: These rules are explained in detail in the VoxPolitics Primer (http://www.voxpolitics.com/primer.shtml). While this document focuses on politics, its common-sense rules easily can be applied to e-government sites.)

Ten things I want people to know about voting technology

By Kim Alexander, California Voter Foundation (http://www.calvoter.org)

1. Voting is not like any other transaction.

The first remark I usually hear on the subject of Internet voting is, "I can shop online, I can bank online, why can’t I vote online?" The answer is that voting is not like those transactions. Credit card companies and banks tolerate a degree of fraud in all of their transactions. We could not similarly accept some degree of fraud in the voting process. And, when you make a deposit to your checking account over the Internet, your bank sends you back a message confirming the transaction and the amount of your deposit. But if we are to preserve our right to cast a secret ballot, then we would not want to vote online and have our election agencies send back to us a note confirming our choices.

Casting a secret ballot in a fair and democratic election is, in fact, unlike any other kind of transaction. Think about it: each person only gets to vote once, in a limited time frame, and every voter must be authenticated while at the same time preserving that voter's right to cast a secret ballot. Voters must be confident that their votes have been accurately recorded and the voting system must create an audit trail in case a recount is needed that also preserves the secret ballot. It is not impossible to build an online voting system, but it's important to realize that to do so creates unique challenges because voting is unlike any other transaction.

2. There are two kinds of Internet voting: polling place Internet voting, and remote Internet voting.

It's important to distinguish between polling place Internet voting and remote Internet voting, which is voting from home or work. Both remote and polling place Internet voting use computers in the voting process and both use the
Internet to transfer ballots to the central counting center. The important
difference between the two methods is ownership of the computer that's acting as
a voting machine. With polling place Internet voting, the voting machine is owned
and controlled by election officials. With remote Internet voting, the voting
machine is owned and controlled by either the voter or their employer.

In our January 2000 report, the California Internet Voting Task Force made this
important distinction between polling place and remote Internet voting, and
concluded that while polling place Internet voting can and should be explored,
remote Internet voting could greatly expose the voting process to fraud. For this
reason we made no prediction of when, if ever, remote Internet voting would be
possible.

3. Remote Internet voting is highly susceptible to voter fraud.

A voting machine owned and maintained by a county election office can be
controlled, but a third party machine, owned by the voter or their employer, is
highly susceptible to attack. For example, a remote Internet voter could
unknowingly download a "Trojan Horse" or virus that sits on the voter's
computer. When the voter opens his Internet ballot on his computer desktop, at
that point the ballot is no longer encrypted and would therefore be susceptible to
manipulation by a virus or malicious code. A Trojan horse could then, for
example, rearrange the appearance of the voting boxes on the ballot, leading you
to believe, for example, that you voted for the incumbent but actually returning
your ballot with a vote for the challenger. You would then send your ballot back
encrypted to your election agency, and since we cast a secret ballot neither you nor
your election agency would know that your vote had not been properly recorded.

If you think this scenario is far-fetched, consider this: already some Internet users
have unknowingly downloaded programs known as "spyware" that keep track of
their computer usage and page visits without their knowing it and report this
information via the user's Internet connection to commercial and marketing
interests. Already the vast majority of Internet users visit web sites that set
"cookies" in their web browsers used to track their online movements. Few even
know what a cookie is, let alone know how to remove one or how to set their
browser preferences to refuse them altogether.

Consider also the fact that remote Internet voting will give rise to a whole new
wave of voter fraud attacks from people living in foreign countries as well as those
who previously had no interest in elections but enjoy a good hacking challenge.
The Pentagon detected more than 22,000 attempts to probe, scan, hack into,
infect with viruses or disable its computers in 1999 alone, and anticipates the
number of attacks will only increase with time. And let's not be naive about our
country's record on voter fraud. Though voter fraud is not as much of a problem
here as it has been in other countries, history shows that in close races some
campaigns do resort to cheating in order to win. Automating the voting process gives one person the ability to make a much greater impact when they attempt to cheat.

When you consider the likely increase in attempts at voter fraud, combined with the low level of computer literacy we have now, both among users and the election community, it is unrealistic to think we are ready for remote Internet voting anytime soon.

4. Remote Internet voting may erode our right to cast a secret ballot and lead to political coercion in the workplace.

Currently we cast our ballots in a private polling booth, and in some counties voters place their ballots inside an envelope so that poll workers and other voters won't catch a glimpse of their votes before they drop their ballot into the ballot box. Polling place Internet voting can preserve the secret ballot and the sanctity and privacy of the polling place. Remote Internet voting, on the other hand, can lead to voting from work, which is where most of us connect to the Internet during the day. And for many of us, our workplace computers are far from private.

If we were to vote from work, our coworkers or supervisors might casually or deliberately watch us as we make our choices. Even if they aren't standing over your shoulder, the company intranet could easily retain a copy of your ballot. These are not insurmountable obstacles, but it does mean that if we allow for voting in the workplace, we'll need new policies to protect employees from potential political coercion in the workplace. New policies would need to be developed to protect the right to cast a secret ballot in the workplace on your employer's computer, and such policies would contradict with existing laws that assert an employer's right to review any material their employees create on a company computer, including personal email. Simply put, voting in the workplace could be a nightmare for employers and employees alike, and if we were to move forward with remote Internet voting in the future we'd be wise to prohibit voting in the workplace altogether.

5. Remote Internet voting poses a threat to personal privacy.

How would we authenticate remote Internet voters? Authenticating voters is one of the primary steps we take to protect our elections from fraud. We have to make sure that people are eligible to vote, vote only once, and cast their own ballots. Using a pin number in combination with other pieces of personally identifiable information, as the Arizona Democratic Party did in its March 2000 Primary, is not sufficient to protect our elections from vote selling, vote swapping, and voter fraud. Digital signatures may be an option, and we have a long way to go before
that technology is widely understood and accepted by the public, and digital signatures still cannot protect Internet voters' ballots from a Trojan horse attack.

The most secure way to authenticate voters is to use biometric scanning procedures, such as retinal or finger-printing scans. I, like many Americans, find such security measures invasive, and believe it would be unwise to sanction government agencies to begin collecting sensitive biometric data on American citizens. There is a general rule I follow: for every degree of convenience we gain through technology there is usually a corresponding loss of privacy. Remote Internet voting would make voting more convenient, but that convenience will come at a price that, in my opinion, is too high.

6. There is a huge politics and technology information gap.

In my seven years of working in politics and technology, I have found there are unfortunately too few people who have a working knowledge of both fields. This huge gap between politics and technology appears to be widening, not closing over time, and is becoming increasingly evident around the issue of Internet voting. Many of the political experts who talk about Internet voting don't appreciate the technological dangers of voting online. Then there's the technologically-savvy but politically naive people who say, "Wouldn't it be great if we could vote on everything?", failing to understand either the benefits of representative democracy or the complexities of the voting process. If we are going to close the politics and technology gap, we are all going to have to make a great effort to educate the experts and bring people from diverse fields together online and offline through conferences and public meetings. It's going to take a lot of work, but if we address the politics and technology information gap it will make for better public policy in every area impacted by technology.

7. There is a generational technology gap.

Older people are not as familiar with new technology as younger people are, and surveys show that younger voters are sometimes intimidated by existing voting technology. The generational technology gap turns up in many places. The Democracy Online Project's post-2000 general election survey found that the younger the voter, the more likely they used the Internet to access election information.

Internet voting polls also find that younger voters find the idea of Internet voting much more appealing than older voters do. For example, a poll conducted by ABC News in 1999 found that only 19 percent of Americans age 65 and over would support Internet voting even if it could be made secure from fraud. Similarly, a year ago the Public Policy Institute of California surveyed Californians and found that public support for Internet voting is highest among 18-34 year olds (59 percent) and lowest among those 55 and over (27 percent). There is no
doubt that new technology provides an unprecedented opportunity to engage alienated young people in the democratic process, but we must be careful that we don’t alienate older voters along the way.

8. **Changing technology alone isn't enough; voter education is also needed.**

It made me angry to hear people ridicule Florida's voters for casting their votes incorrectly. As an experienced voter educator, it no longer surprises me to hear about the elements in our voting process that voters find confusing. There is an intolerable lack of reliable, nonpartisan voting information available for U.S. voters; most of what passes for election information comes in the form of campaign mailers and thirty second spots designed to confuse, manipulate or scare voters and do just about anything but inform them.

We take so much for granted when it comes to voter education, and it is shameful that the United States poses as a model democracy for other countries to emulate when we make virtually no effort to educate our own voters and prepare them to vote on Election Day. We can begin to address this problem by appropriating federal and state funds to nonpartisan voter education efforts. We already spend $31 million a year on the National Endowment for Democracy to advance democracy abroad; we can certainly afford to spend at least the same amount to advance democracy at home.

9. **Transparency in the voting process fosters voter confidence and security.**

Whatever changes we make to our voting technology, we must not sacrifice the trust that is gained by having a transparent vote casting and counting process. The old voting technology that we are talking about replacing, in particular the punch card ballot, functions in a way that is transparent to the voter. You mark or punch your ballot, you drop it into a locked box, and the box is transported to the central counting center by pollworkers where the public can (and often does) watch the counting of ballots.

Now, as we consider introducing computers into the voting process, we must look at how transparency may be affected. Whether we are talking about Internet voting or any kind of computerized voting, one inevitable result is that very few people, and certainly not your typical voter, have the expertise to review the software used for a computerized system and know that it is functioning properly. Consequently, it will require much more faith on the part of the voter in both the voting technology and their election officials to trust that a computerized system accurately records and counts their votes. And faith, unfortunately, is something that's in short supply right now in our democracy, so we must be careful that we don't erode it any further when we upgrade our voting technology.
10. **Software used in the voting process should be open to public inspection.**

One way to build public confidence in computerized voting is to require voting software code be made public. Election officials often cringe at this suggestion for two reasons: they think that making voting technology source code public will undermine the security of the voting process; and they expect that voting technology companies will object to revealing their source code because it undermines their competitiveness in the marketplace. In fact, many of the leading voting technology companies are not necessarily opposed to public source software, and some have already indicated they will comply with a public source code requirement if it's imposed on everyone.

The first concern -- the public source undermines the security of the voting process -- reflects the misguided "security through obscurity" approach to software, which is the idea that keeping your source code secret makes your technology more secure. In fact, there is consensus in the security industry that public source code leads to more secure computer systems than closed source.

In fact, the Pentagon, our number one military agency, recently decided to no longer purchase closed source, commercial software programs from companies such as Microsoft, Netscape and Lotus to use in its most sensitive systems. The reason given by a Pentagon official, speaking anonymously to the Washington Post, is because they found that these closed source programs had too many holes, backdoors and trapdoors that place the department in greater danger of a computer attack than using public and open source software would.

No software program is perfect, and any voting software program will inevitably have holes and some problems. If the source code is closed, those who want to manipulate the outcome of an election will eventually find and exploit those holes. If the source code is open and public, then the good guys in the security industry can find the holes first and help fix the software.

One high-profile example of this shift toward public source for high-security operations is the National Security Agency's initiative to develop "Security Enhanced Linux". This is a new, security-enhanced operating system that was just released this month. It's based on Linux, a very successful open source operating system, and anyone in the world can go online to www.nsa.gov/selinux/ and download its source code. If the agency entrusted with protecting our national security finds public source code more secure than closed source code, it should be a clear signal that the election community would be wise to follow suit.
Of course, we can't assume the good guys are going to forever be reviewing voting software code, so it's crucial that a continuous recertification process is also established. Computerized voting machines, unlike punch cards, are based on dynamic, not static technology. We must anticipate that any computerized system will need to have security holes fixed, upgrades made, and new computer and Internet protocols supported.

Even if we have public source voting software, we will still have a limited number of experts capable of evaluating its reliability. And what some security experts are saying is that it will be difficult, if not impossible to know for certain if the software that's been certified and is publicly available is the same software that's running on your voting machine. It's worth noting that some of the strongest objections to computerized voting are made by computer security experts. For this reason, and also to foster voter confidence in new voting technology, it would be wise to consider a way to use a mix of paper ballots and computers in the voting process, and to require that paper ballots be counted along with digital ballots so that we could create a paper audit trail and thwart attempts to rig voting software.

**Top Ten Tips for Wired Elected Officials**

By Steven Clift (http://www.publicus.net/articles/weos.html), © 2000.

*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.*

1. **Use the Internet to communicate.** Whether it is private one-to-one or public group communication, interaction is the most transformative and powerful political application on the Internet. Speech on the Internet is meaningless unless there is free electronic association.

2. **Use the Internet to disseminate information.** Whether as part of your official duties or party/campaign work, encourage your constituents or political supporters to join your one-way e-mail list(s). The web is passive from an organizer's perspective because people rarely visit the same site twice. You want people to join or "opt-in" to your e-mail lists so you can share your message widely little or no cost.

3. **Develop multiple e-mail address identities on the Internet.** Have one e-mail address for public official constituent communication, one internal address for official government work, and at least one personal e-mail address for unofficial campaign/party political communication and other personal communication.
4. **Promote "E-Democracy"** within your existing representative structures to enable "wired" public participation. Take your existing processes such as committee hearings, public testimony, constituent communication and adapt them to the information age. Active integration of information and communication technology into legally representative democracy is essential to maintain legitimacy and improve democracy. Pass model "E-Democracy laws" that require representative and consultative features of the administrative side of government and other government bodies to be fully accessible online. Start by requiring that all public meeting notices and agendas be posted online through a uniform system.

5. **Use the Internet to connect with peers around the world.** The Internet is a terrific way to establish intentional and value-added opportunities for peer-to-peer information sharing among people with similar interests or goals. Take any public policy topic of interest and create networks for you and your staff. Don't wait for others to build global policy network of elected officials. Become a known global expert in a topic area by taking the initiative now.

6. **Use the Internet to access information.** It is an information maze out there. Be patient and you will often find what you need. Use your peer connections and assist each other with research requests and needs. Sending a query to the group will often result in references to useful information just as proactively sharing the results of your online research will provide value to others. Think of this as "just-in-time-democracy" through the use of your expert and other's online "best practitioner" networks.

7. **Use the Internet to access information smartly.** Settle on a search engine like Google (http://google.com) and subject trees like the Open Directory (http://dmoz.org) and Yahoo (http://yahoo.com). Learn how they work. Find similar sites by reverse searching - for example "link: http://www.e-democracy.org" will find all pages indexed at Google or Alta Vista (http://altavista.com) linking to that page. Try the reverse search to find out who links to your site.

8. **Use the Internet to be fed information automatically.** Subscribe to select e-mail newsletters and announcements list on the web sites you find most useful. Let them tell you when they have something new. Use e-mail filtering (ask your technical staff for help) to sort your incoming e-mail into different folders to keep e-mail list messages separate from e-mail sent personally to you.

9. **Use the Internet for intelligence.** Whether it is a site you find useful or the site of your political opponents, use the Internet to monitor their public activities and documents. You can use tools like Spy On It (http://spyonit.com) to set automatic page watchers that will notify you when
something new is posted on a web site. Some of the best public policy information is not promoted beyond placement on a web page. Let a web reminder tell you something has been changed or added.

10. **Promote integrated services for all elected officials across the organization.** Uniform systems, networks, and equipment should be overhead covered by the representative institution itself and not a cost to members directly (at least for the essential technology base). This is a balance of power issue. If the administrative side of government invests billions in their information infrastructure, the representative side must invest as well to remain a relevant voice for an increasingly wired society. The same goes for those in political party based elections - promote an integrated and aggregated campaign information infrastructure that may be used securely and strategically by all party candidates.

### How to start an online public commons

By Steven Clift (http://www.c-democracy.org/do/commons.html), reprinted by permission.

Despite hundreds of political online discussions an active "online public commons" e-mail list probably does not exist for your town, region, or nation.

Most online discussions are based on a specific topic, cause, or hosted by someone with an ax to grind. What we need are geography/democracy-based multi-topic online public spaces sponsored in a non-partisan way (by a group of individuals through a new club, non-profit, or community partnership etc.) where citizens within their own democracy from across the political spectrum gather for online issue discussions on real public agenda.

E-mail discussions work because subscribers only have to commitment once then the join, not every time they log on like the web. The job of the host is to build and maintain a participatory audience by keeping message volume in check and mediating disputes in a fair manner.

Step-by-step. You can do it.

1. **Your Democracy** - Pick your geographic area according to a political jurisdiction. Democracy is based on geography - so your town, county, state/province, or country would work. Consider starting with an area under 6 million in population.

2. **Charter** - Draft a discussion charter, rules, and guidelines. This is essential. Your two paragraph description of the forum will set the tone
for the e-mail list. It is much easier to start with rules than to add them later. We have found great success with two rules - 1. No one may post more than twice a day. 2. All posts must be signed with the persons full real name and city. See the Background Resources in the right column for models to use.

3. **Working Group** - Create a working group or club to serve as the non-partisan, likely non-profit, trusted, neutral host for the discussion list. The host organization must be issue neutral for a true online public commons to develop. Get your working group to discuss in detail and agree to the draft charter that one person initially drafts. Develop and assign specific list management roles.

4. **E-mail List** - Set-up the e-mail list and web archives. If you can find a local site to donated services all the better. If not try one of the recommended free services in the right column. With these free services it only take a few minutes to technically set-up a list. Don't let this fool you. The hard work is yet to come. You might consider one list for unmoderated discussion and one for moderated announcements if your area has a large population or lots of subscribers. Be sure to place a text footer at the bottom of each list message that tells someone how to subscribe/unsubscribe. This will reduce the number of technical requests and turn every forwarded message into a marketing tool to promote the forum.

5. **Recruit** - Your discussion subscribers must be recruited one at a time. Period. Build it and they will never come unless you tell them it is there. Set a minimum number of subscribers you want (say 100) before opening the discussion for postings. Develop a recruitment list with others involved and e-mail, call, and physically visit such people as community leaders, elected official, and local journalists to get them on the list. Average citizens will not waste their time presenting their views if they feel no one who matters is listening. However, don't put the success of the forum on the shoulders of elected officials - invite everyone to join as citizens. Politicians will talk because like others they will see the discussion as an agenda setting tool. Also, the more people subscribed when you open a list the broader and deeper the sense of community ownership.

6. **Publicity** - Be sure to open with a coordinated publicity campaign in the early stages. Use your initial pre-opening members to help recruit others and to develop a regional press list. Be sure to get the e-mail subscribe instructions everywhere. Web addresses by themselves greatly limit the number of people who sign up. You will get one major press hit. You might try special online events, like a candidate E-Debate to generate
publicity and awareness of the forum. Celebrate anniversaries and encourage picnics and happy hours.

7. **Facilitate** - Make all subscribers feel welcome and send private encouraging posts to those who participate. You will have much better success gearing toward local issue discussions and away from flame wars if you first get on their good side. Send public notes on an occasional basis and seed new topics to keep the discussion interesting or to shift attention away from another thread. Do not publicly ask people to stop a thread or criticize it specifically. Always address the abstract discussion trend or group as a whole whenever possible.

8. **Reminders** - Send monthly reminders about the list that remind people of the charter and rules and encourages the subscribers to recruit more participants.

9. **Join Others** - The best way to connect with others around the world who are building online public commons in their democracy is to join the Democracies Online Newswire. Please share your public announcements and send queries to your peers.

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**25 Who Are Changing the Internet and Politics**


**POLITICSONLINE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, AND THE AAPC ANNOUNCE THE 25 WHO ARE CHANGING THE WORLD (AND 5 TO WATCH)**

In recent years, the Internet and burgeoning information technologies have inexorably altered our body politic, fundamentally changing the way we do democracy. Friday, at the American Association of Political Consultants 2\textsuperscript{nd} Annual Academic Outreach Conference at the Institute of Politics of Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, PoliticsOnline recognized the best of the best -- the innovators and pioneers who blazed the e-political trails.

PoliticsOnline asked it’s 25,000 readers and subscribers to name the people, organizations and companies that are changing the world of Internet and politics. From these nominations, twenty-five world changers and five rising stars were selected.
“From the beginning, politics has been about two things – ideas and the people that make these ideas realities,” said PoliticsOnline President Phil Noble, an AAPC board member who is spending the spring term in Cambridge as a fellow at the Institute of Politics. “With this announcement, we honor the most innovative ideas and the most influential individuals.

“With so many people doing so much in this field, whittling the list down to so few proved a more difficult task than we ever could have imagined – we thank everyone that submitted nominations, and we congratulate all those that were nominated. As with any list of the best, debate is sure to follow. We certainly hope it well, and that the ongoing conversation about the Internet and politics is carried further.”

Noble, PoliticsOnline, NetPulse editor Andy Brack, and other PoliticsOnline affiliates were not eligible for recognition.

The following is the list of honorees.

The 25 Who Are Changing the World

1. Kim Alexander
   Cal Voter
   www.calvoter.org
   Working tirelessly, Ms. Alexander has created this strictly non-partisan "First stop" resource that serves the online public. In addition, by advocating full disclosure of campaign funding and electoral reform, Ms. Alexander and the California Voter Foundation have become powerful, effective advocates for making governmental information available free to the public.

2. Doug Bailey
   Freedom Channel
   www.freedomchannel.org
   Armed with a great vision and his experience as a consultant, Doug pioneered digital political. Among his creations are the Hotline – the web’s best daily newswire -- and FreedomChannel.com -- the streaming video forum for candidates. Most recently, he has taken to training a new generation of voters with YouthEVote.net. He is the gold standard by which all will be measured.

3. Wes Boyd and Joan Blades
   MoveOn.org
   www.moveon.org
   Creators of the first online PAC, MoveOn.Org, Wes and Joan gave us the earliest glimpse of the grassroots potential of the Net to raise money and mobilize citizens to a cause.
4. **Steve Case & Kathleen deLaski at AOL**
AOL is AOL. Steve Case has repeatedly talked about using the Internet to change politics and society as a whole. Kathleen is making this vision a reality.

5. **Chris Casey**
Casey-Dorin Internet Productions
www.caseydorin.com
Chris Casey earned his stripes early as one of the Democratic Party’s top online dogs, when he convinced Ted Kennedy and then the rest of the Senate that they needed to be online.

6. **Steven Clift**
Minnesota E-Democracy, DO-Wire
www.publicus.net
As the Board Chair of Minnesota E-Democracy and the main man on the DO-Wire, Steve Clift is one of the best known and best-traveled people in the e-politics field, encouraging online discourse wherever he goes in the US and around the world. He is a one-man cyber-rolodex of Internet politicians.

7. **Mike Connell**
New Media Communications
www.newmediacommunications.com
As the President/CEO of New Media Communications, Mike Connell has played vital roles in the elections on one high profile Republican after another, including the Bush-Cheney campaign.

8. **Michael Cornfield**
Graduate School of Political Management at The George Washington University
The Democracy Online Project
www.democracyonline.org
As the maestro of GW’s annual PoliticsOnline conference, one of the industry’s premiere events, and as head of the Democracy Online project, Mike is engaged in providing platforms for all of us to make our success stories known and to advance professionally.

9. **Matt Drudge**
The Drudge Report
www.drudgereport.com
The net’s best known and best read gadfly has become an unavoidable, and unignorable, figure in American politics. Few have grabbed a hold of the net’s gossip/journalism potential more successfully than Matt Drudge.
10. **Election.com**  
[www.election.com](http://www.election.com)  
In 2000, Elections.com broke ground by conducting the Arizona Democratic presidential primary online – the first legally binding online election. Now, they’re putting their experience to work around the world, making their global vision a reality.

11. **Ben Green/Al Gore**  
Commerce One Global Services  
[www.commerceone.com](http://www.commerceone.com)  
Over the last few years, both Ben Green and Al Gore have put together built resumes of unmatched tech suavity. The 2000 campaign cycle brought them together for an impressive, net-driven run for the White House.

12. **Jose Maria Figures, former pres. of Costa Rica**  
World Economic Forum  
[www.worldeconomicforum.org](http://www.worldeconomicforum.org)  
As pres of Costa Rica, he showed what technology can do in the developing world. As leader of the UN’s effort to close the digital divide and the World Economic Forum in Davos, he’s proved himself to be a bold visionary who is strategically placed to make a difference in the world….we think he will.

13. **Max Fose & Sen. John McCain**  
[www.StraightTalkAmerican.org](http://www.StraightTalkAmerican.org)  
Max Fose did a lot of innovative work for the McCain campaign, raising $1 million online in just 48 hours. McCain's personal commitment to experimenting with online campaigning -- even invited people to the Web site at every opportunity -- was a first for so high profile a candidate.

14. **Bill Gates & Michael Kinsley**  
Microsoft/Slate  
[www.slate.msn.com](http://www.slate.msn.com)  
Anything that Bill Gates and Microsoft do impacts the world. MS’s Slate, edited by Michael Kinsley, quickly became the hippest, hottest political destination on the web with its unique combination of wry wit and informative content and analysis.

15. **Capitol Advantage and the e-advocates**  
[www.capitoladvantage.com](http://www.capitoladvantage.com)  
[www.e-advocates.com](http://www.e-advocates.com)  
Bob Hansan, President, Capitol Advantage, is an old man in Internet years: At 36, he’s one of the grandfathers of Internet politics. In 1986, he opened the doors at Capitol Advantage with pooled resources and basement office space donated by
his parents. Fifteen years later, the company – along Pam Fielding and Nicole
Durwitz at the affiliated e-advocates – has one of the most impressive client lists
in the country.

16. Phil Madsen & Jesse Ventura
www.jesseventura.com
The XFL’s best known color man has said his election to the Minnesota
Governor’s Mansion would not have been possible with the Internet. Translation:
his election would not have been possible without his in-house Internet expert,
Phil Madsen.

17. The Markle Foundation & Pew Charitable Trusts
www.markle.org
www.pewtrusts.com
If there it’s a non-profit political dot-com doing good stuff, chances are one or
both of the great Foundations fund it. Without the Pew and Markle’s shared
commitment to political discourse and online democracy, the number of online
pioneers would be far, far less. While other mainline foundations have been
skittish, these have boldly charged ahead. They are true heroes.

18. Politik Digital
www.politikdigital.de
This is the premier German language e-political destination. Their initial focus has
been on bringing officials and citizens together through chat and webcasts. They
show the savvy and skills needed to dominate and change Germany language
online politics.

19. Larry Purpuro
www.rnc.org
The RNC’s Internet guru, Larry pioneered the use of zaplet and other new
technology on the road to a Bush victory. Larry shows an understanding and a
vision of what a modern political party needs to do with the Internet.

20. Rebecca Fairley Rainey
www.nytimes.com
Rainey is the dean of online political reporters. When the NY Times hired her as
the first journalist with the Internet and politics assignment, they broke new
ground. Rebecca is still way out in front.

21. Lynn Reed
www.netpoliticsgroup.com
President of Net Politics Group
Among Lynn’s achievements: Webmaster of the Clinton Gore ’96 reelection
campaign; webmaster of the first inaugural web site in 1997; webmaster for the
Bradley campaign in 2000 – the first to raise a $1million online. Lynn went on
the produce over two dozen political web sites in 2000. There are none any better on the Democratic side.

22. **Votia Empowerment**  
[www.votia.com](http://www.votia.com)  
Sweden’s Votia Empowerment has made ground-breaking e-democracy projects come true, making voting and participation possible for members and citizens via letter, fax, telephone and the web, and combining chat, info, forums and active voting. Sweden has been a leader in e-democracy and Votia has led the Vikings online.

23. **Stephan Shakespeare/YouGov**  
[www.yougov.com](http://www.yougov.com)  
The UK is a major player in the world of online politics and Stephan Shakespeare and YouGov are stars. Their unique mix of both news stories, online polling and political commentary provide both great content and an interesting new business model.

24. **Son et Lumiere**  
[www.sonetlumiere.it](http://www.sonetlumiere.it)  
This Italian company is both a business and political success specializing in building online communities. They use innovative webcast and chat sessions with leading national political and government leaders to attack and build communities around social and political issues.

25. **Tehelka.com**  
[www.tehelka.com](http://www.tehelka.com)  
If you thought Matt Drudge could rake mud, you haven’t seen India’s Tehelka.com, the independent online news site leaving a path of political chaos and disgraced officials in its wake.

The Five to Watch

1. **Fritz Bogans**  
   Teenagers for Bush  
   [www.teenagersforbush.com](http://www.teenagersforbush.com)  
The head of Teenagers for Bush may be the AAPC’s youngest member, but at 16, is already a political veteran. Through its site, his organization helped to organize thousands of Republican youth across the country.

2. **Chinese Dissidents**  
   China has become an online powderkeg – the net has provided a new medium for activists to voice their opinions, while the government struggles in uncharted
territory, figuring out how to control it all. This is a situation we must all follow closely.

3. **Peter Schurman**
   GenerationNet.org and MoveOn.org
   The founder of GenerationNet.org, a unique political portal for young people, looks to be on the fast track as the new head of MoveOn.org. Young, savvy and bright and teamed up with a proven online powerhouse.

4. **Jonah Seiger and Shabbir Safdar**
   Mindshare Internet Campaigns, LLC
   [www.mindshare.net](http://www.mindshare.net)
   Collaborators since 1994, Seiger and Safdar began as activists in battles over free expression, privacy, and democratic values on the Internet. Together, Seiger and Safdar organized some of the first major online grass roots campaigns and demonstrations. In 2000, Mindshare's client sites received more than 22 million page views. Mindshare has built its name as one of top firms in the country, and we expect big things in the next election cycle.

5. **EU-Youth Vote**
   [www.eu-studentvote.org](http://www.eu-studentvote.org)
   This is a hot one. At the end of November 2001 EU-StudentVote, the first European online election, will take place. It will allow millions of European students to elect the first "European Student Council", which will represent students to the European Institutions. The goal is one million online votes.
Other resources

MORE SOURCES AND LINKS FOR GOOD E-DEMOCRACY INFORMATION

In the course of gathering material to develop this paper, there are several sources, Web sites and other material that provide more detail on many of the themes addressed above. Below you'll find a list of resources you may want to view.

Academic links

Assessing E-Government: The Internet, Democracy, and Service Delivery by State and Federal Governments (http://www.insidepolitics.org/egovreport00.html) – This is the link for the landmark study on U.S. e-government by political scientist Darrell West and his team at Brown University.

Congress Online Project (http://www.congressonlineproject.org/) – a project of the Pew Charitable Trust and George Washington University to examine the U.S. Congress and the Internet.

Democracy Online Project (http://democracyonline.org/) – a George Washington University project studying Internet, politics and democracy.

Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester (http://idpm.man.ac.uk/idpm/homepg01.htm) – British site filled with academic papers about iGovernment..

FOEV Speyer (http://foev.dhv-speyer.de/ruvii/litagw00.htm) – German academic site with a lot of links to research. In German.

Society of Information Technology Management (http://www.socitm.gov.uk/index.htm) – This British site’s e-government index is one of the richest sources of academic information around. It includes a page full of e-government stories on the U.K. and another with worldwide studies.
Commercial Web sites

PoliticsOnline.com (http://www.politicsonline.com) – a one-stop portal for information about how the Internet is used in politics. Features a free bi-weekly newsletter, NetPulse, that’s read by thousands of political professionals worldwide.

Accenture’s Rhetoric vs. Reality study (http://www.accenture.com/xd/xd.asp?it=enWeb&xd=Industries\Government\gov e_study.xml) – a good look at what’s happening in 22 nations around the world. The site also provides other useful resources.

EzGov’s White Papers (http://www.ezgov.com/white_papers_art3_1.jsp) – three White Papers on e-government. Also helpful – its resources page: http://www.ezgov.com/other_industry_sources.jsp

Grassroots.com (http://www.grassroots.com) – An online advocacy site

McConnell International (http://www.mcconnellinternational.com/eradiness/default.cfm) – a consultancy that’s got e-government related reports that survey various countries.

TalkToGov.com (http://www.talktogov.com) – a site that lets users register to receive e-mail updates about federal legislation.

E-government sites

Democracies Online (http://www.mail-archive.com/do-wire@tc.umn.edu/) – the best roundup of recent stories about e-government.


Digital Opportunity Task Force report (http://www.markle.org/DigitalOpportunitiesforAll.pdf) – Here’s where you can find a report about online opportunities commissioned by the G8 Heads of State. While it’s not directly about e-government, it has significant implications for the future.
EgovLinks.com (http://www.egovlinks.com/index.html) – This site provides the most comprehensive grouping of links to e-government sites in local governments, states and countries.


International Teledemocracy Centre (http://www.teledemocracy.org) – a Scottish resource that provides a toolkit on e-democracy and an article on how to educate young people about e-democracy.


Third Global Forum (http://www.globalforum.it) – This report is the result of a meeting involving 900 experts from 122 countries and has overall visionary implications for e-government.

Government sites

Crossing Boundaries (http://www.crossingboundaries.ca) – This Canadian report outlines the synergy in e-government occurring in Canada.


Office of the E-Envoy (http://www.open.gov.uk/index.htm) – This British site provides good e-democracy resources. Note: On July 1, the URL will change to: http://www.ukonline.gov.uk

Publications

The E-Democracy E-Book (http://www.publicus.net) – Steve Clift offers this mostly theoretical vision of e-government.


Top-rated sites from an industry publication. Another good resource is the magazines Government Center (http://www.govtech.net/govcenter/).

MuninetGuide.com (http://www.muninetguide.com) – this site offers lists of good municipal Web sites and other resources.

Voxpolitics (http://www.voxpolitics.com) – a British resource that analyzes the relationship between technology, politics and democracy.