
Campaign Politics and the Digital Divide

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Much has been written about the digital divide in recent years. Yet while scholars have closely examined citizen Internet use, the factors that inspire candidates to campaign online have received little notice. No one can visit campaign Websites if candidates don't put them online in the first place.

The article (coauthored with Paul Herrnson and Atiya Stokes-Brown) uses a large, national survey of state legislative candidates in an attempt to figure out what, exactly, drives office seekers to invest in email and the Web. While constituency characteristics matter, strategic considerations and candidate background play a larger and more consistent role.

[Click here](#) for a .pdf file of the paper, which appeared in Political Research Quarterly. Full citation and abstract below the fold.

Citation:

Herrnson, Paul, Atiya Stokes-Brown, and Matthew Hindman. 2007. "Campaign Politics and the Digital Divide: Constituency Characteristics, Strategic Considerations, and Candidate Internet Use in State Legislative Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 60(1):31-42. Abstract:

The Internet has created a digital and a political divide. Just as the elderly, those less well educated, and some minorities are less likely to use the Internet than other Americans, candidates for lower-level offices are less likely to use it than presidential and congressional candidates. Beyond this, little is known about candidates' Internet use. Using data describing state legislative candidates' characteristics, campaigns, and districts, the authors find that candidates who have younger and better-educated constituents do more campaigning online. The number of years a candidate has spent in electoral politics also is relevant. The strategic and structural circumstances of the race have a major impact on candidates' Internet use.