PANEL II: The Internet in Japanese – Its Use by Different Political Actors in Japan

Summary of the Results of a Panel at the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) Conference, Toronto, October 2003

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Internet Use in Japan

Just as in South Korea and Taiwan, Internet usage rates are relatively high in Japan, and they continue to rise steadily. A recent White Paper gives 69 million, or about half the population, as an estimate for Japan's user population as of December 2002 (MPHPT 2003: 6). However, most statistics show only the *potential* access, including access via Internet-connected mobile phones. This number is very high in Japan, as Fig. 1 shows.

Figure 1: Number of Internet Users (As oj July 31, 2003)
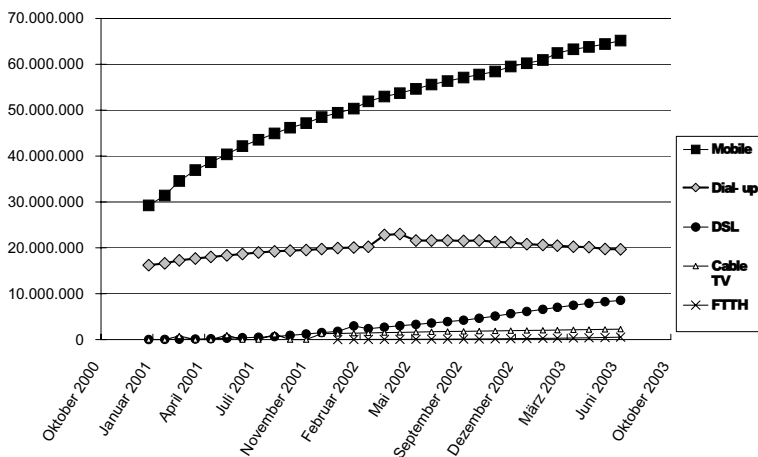
Source: Sōmushō 29.08.2003, own representation.

The mobile Internet users included in this statistic consist of all those who can technically use e-mail and/or mobile web sites via their mobile phones – the Japanese version of SMS (Short Messaging System) is indeed a "real" Internet-based e-mail service. In fact, some may not even use the e-mail function, and it is likely that access to mobile web sites is again lower. Accordingly, total access to the World Wide Web is presumably much lower than such statistics suggest. Compared to South Korea and Taiwan, broadband access is somewhat less widespread but has recently increased due to several IT promotion laws, most of them dating from 2001 (MPHPT 2003).

The interest in the political aspects of the Internet is, as nearly everywhere else, rather low compared to such features as personal e-mail and practical information. On the World Wide Web, search sites are the top destination both for users accessing via PC and those using mobile phones (accessed by around 80 % of users), followed by travel, news, weather, and music. However, access to governmental offices seems to be increasing: in 2001, 19.3 % of PC users (there is no such statistic for mobile phone users) accessed these sites, compared to 15.4 % in 2000, and the share of viewers of specifically political/election sites reached 6.4 % in 2001 (*The World Internet Project Japan* 2002: 44; 72). Access to political sites has reportedly grown from 9 % in 2000 to over 20 % by the end of 2003 (Video Research 2004, Internet). Most political actors have web sites: practically all parties and members of parliament and a majority of electoral candidates are online, government offices may have several web sites, and by 2002, over 50 % of NGOs had their own web site (Wieczorek 17.10.2003, presentation).

The section on Japan is based on a panel held at the Association of Internet Researchers Conference (AoIR) in Toronto in October 2003. Three presenters at the panel, Isa Ducke, Iris Wieczorek and Leslie Tkach-Kawasaki, all covered different political actors in Japan and their use of the Internet. The findings of the panel, together with details from two of the studies and a brief synopsis of the third, are summarised here.

Citizens' Groups in Japan

Internet Use and "Success"

Isa Ducke

This part presents some findings from a study on Internet use by citizens' groups in Japan. The cases researched for this study include nearly 150 citizens' groups active in Japan between 2001 and 2003 in one or more of eight issues: foreigners, human rights, textbooks, whaling, women, dam construction, abduction, and peace movements. The term "citizens' groups" is used rather than the vague term "NGO," originally denoting certain international non-profit groups engaged in developmental and humanitarian work and listed by the UN as reliable cooperation partners, but also used in a much broader sense, sometimes including almost any non-profit group working for "a good cause." The citizens' groups in this study include this latter type of NGOs. Their formal status is either the relatively new one of a non-profit organisation (NPO), or of a foundation or another type of organisation. They also include "networks" without any formal "organisational" status but which are non-profit and arguably groups of citizens concerned about a certain issue. All groups have at least a name and some sort of statute. They cover the whole range of the political spectrum, although at least in the issues covered here, groups on the political right accounted for a smaller share than those on the left. Although this should not pose a problem from a methodological stand-point in itself (cf. Castells 1997: 3), some related factors such as personal connections have to be considered in the analysis.

The groups were selected for their involvement in one of the issues mentioned above and were studied over the course of a few months per issue, between summer 2001 and summer 2003. Thus, the data for all groups in the same issue are from roughly the same time, while the research period for different issues can be somewhat further apart. The issues are not purely local ones (in which case direct communication might be easier than using the Internet) and ideally involved a decision or another measurable outcome during the period of research. The studied groups are all based in Japan but some local (Japanese) chapters of international organisations were also included.

These groups and their web sites were examined from two different aspects: their use of the Internet and their success, using a variety of vari-

ables to define Internet use and the success factor. Further details on the definition of the variables and the framework of the study can be found in Ducke 2003.

INTERNET USE

The collected data (see Fig. 2, Fig. 3, Table 1) illustrate the trends also shown in official statistics and user surveys regarding the steady increase of Internet use and penetration rates (Sōmushō 29.08.2003, The World Internet Project Japan 2002). A large majority of groups use e-mail regularly (more than 80 %) and have their own homepage (83 %), and in interviews most of them confirm that their Internet activity has increased in the past few years – many only set up their own homepage in the late 1990s or later. Often, they admit to still being in the experimental stages and are uncertain about the actual effects of their Internet use.

Information about most of the groups that have no homepage of their own can at least be found elsewhere on the World Wide Web. For most groups, the presence on the Internet is no major investment but is pursued almost as a matter of course and without a specific strategy. Many interactive features that the Internet makes possible rather easily – compared to traditional means of communication such as print newsletters – are still only rarely used on the citizens' groups web sites: very few groups offer Bulletin Board Systems (BBS), and none of the groups covered here had a chat feature. And even though a high Internet access rate via mobile phone is one of the key features of the Japanese Internet landscape (Sōmushō 29.08.2003), very few groups offer a web site accessible in this manner. The following graphics give an overview of some of the most relevant findings regarding factual Internet use by the Japanese citizens' groups researched in this study.

Most examined groups only spend a very small part of their budget on Internet presence. Often, their only costs are the provider and access fees for an e-mail account that comes with some web space. Most groups have no budget planning or clearly formulated strategies for their homepage, which frequently becomes obvious in a failure to update the site regularly. In many cases, the web site was once set up by a short-term volunteer or supporter and has since remained unchanged.

A majority of groups does not answer e-mail requests directed to an e-mail address provided on the homepage or otherwise publicly available, even if the request apparently comes from a potential supporter. Very few offer a BBS or even a web site for mobile phone users (see Table 1).

Figure 2:   Use of e-mail by citizens' groups. N=143.

Use of E-Mail

use e-mail
80.4%

very little
2.8%

not at all
.7%
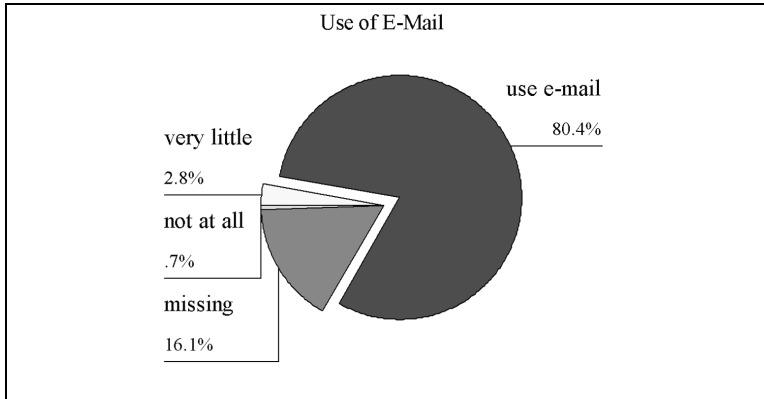
missing
16.1%

Note: Missing values are included since it can be assumed that a higher per-
centage of the groups where no data could be obtained do not use e-mail
at all. However, the groups that do not use e-mail at all presumably do
not exceed a few percent.

Figure 3:   Internet presence of citizens' groups. N=143.

Own Homepage

No
9.8%

Info in other HP
7.7%

Yes
82.5%
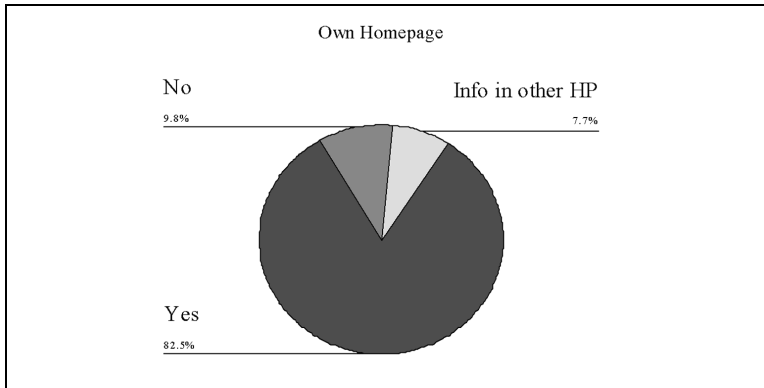
Note: Most groups have their own homepage, and nearly half of the remain-
ing groups are mentioned on other sites (NGO directories or local gov-
ernment sites) with some contact information.

Table 1: Percentage of groups offering different Internet services:

	No	Yes
Prompt response to a simple e-mail question	55 %	45 %
Bulletin Board System (BBS)	82 %	18 %
Web site for mobile phone users	88 %	12 %

CATEGORIES FOR INTERNET USE AND SUCCESS

The study rated Internet use in a number of categories based on those used by Taylor, Kent, and White (2001) for web site analysis for mostly larger activist organisations. Each category includes a number of variables, some of which (e. g. image maps, chat rooms) are barely used by smaller activist groups. Others have been added which cannot be deducted from web site analysis but require surveys and interviews. The categories include some of a general type (e. g. whether e-mail is used at all) as well as Size and Effort, Ease of Interface, Usefulness of Information, Conservation of Visitors, Generation of Return Visits, and Dialogic Loop. Ordinal scales for these were calculated from a number of variables each (between three and seven). An additional scale, Total Internet Use, combines all these categories. At the same time, the success of groups was also ranked in several categories, considering both success factors for the individual group as well as those for the issue they were campaigning for.

The success factors most directly related to each group are various forms of *feedback* and the *visibility* of the group, e. g. on the Internet and in print media, and the shift of that visibility over time. Feedback factors include the number of hits (downloads) registered on a group's web site, the increase in e-mail contacts, and the group's general satisfaction with its Internet presence. Visibility is somewhat easier to measure by counting references to the name of the group in various media, both online and offline.

Another part of the "success" variable for each group was made up from the actual political success a group had in the issue it was campaigning for. Since it was clearly impossible to attempt to ascribe such success values to each individual group's efforts, the same values were used for all groups involved in the same issue and fighting on the same side in a controversy. For example, the same values were used for all groups opposing a controversial new textbook and another set of values for the groups supporting the book. For each issue, research was carried out to rate the success in getting the issue on the agenda at all, in promoting deeper discussion, the success in opinion polls, procedural and substantial policy changes, and other forms of success (e. g. recognition by a government, even in negative terms). The resulting six categories, based on Hubert 1988, were then combined to a variable describing the success in the issue at hand. The eight different issues and the success ratings for each of them are described in more detail in Ducke 2003.

The data gathered for all groups were compared in order to detect associations between certain features of "Internet use" and of "success." Seeing that most of the resulting variables are not metric, results must obviously be considered with caution, but the graphical and descriptive methods employed often give a good impression of the general relationship between variables, which can then be explored further. Additional interpretation of the data (including information that did not enter the standardised variables) permits some conclusions from these findings.

I. Internet Use and Success

The broadest assumption that can be made about the Internet's impact on the effectiveness of citizens' groups is that there is a statistical association between the way the groups use the Internet and the success they have. The graph in Fig. 4 implies a link between the intensity of Internet use and the success of a group. Based on the data collected, these variables show a statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.001$ in an ANOVA test).[1]

Figure 4: Relationship between Internet use and success. The marked groups are: 61 – Tsukurukai, 94 – WWF Japan, 112 – Sukuukai, 147 – Consumers Union of Japan, 148 – Japan Scientists' Association.

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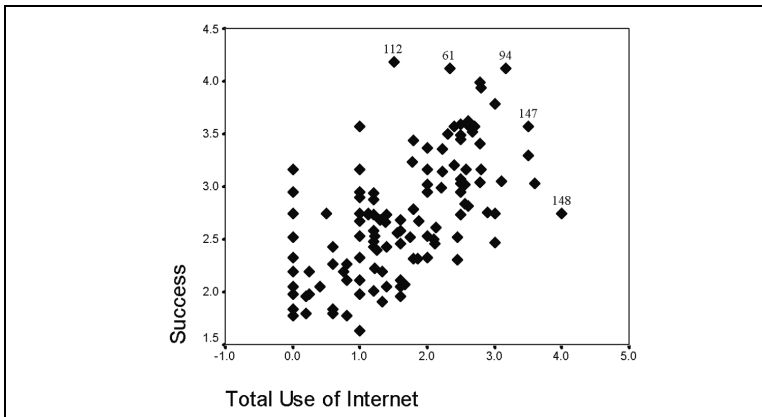
[1] "p" gives the probability of making a mistake by rejecting the null hypothesis, i. e. the hypothesis claiming just the opposite of the hypothesis researched. In this case, the null hypothesis is that any connection between "Internet use" and "success" is purely coincidental. It is more than 99.9 % safe to reject this null-hypothesis; only in 0.1 % of comparable situations would it be mistaken.

This is especially noteworthy as the graph and the statistical calculation include a number of outlying cases that can be explained by the circumstances of the issue. For example, the mechanisms of the Sukuukai (marked as number 112), a small but influential conservative group in the abduction issue, are very different from those of most other citizens' groups, and it certainly did not need or use the Internet for empowerment.

These findings seem to support the theory of a "levelling of the playing field," assuming that many "ordinary citizens" can use the Internet to their advantage because it is relatively cheap, available, and easy to use (compared to TV commercials, for example). Those who use it would on average be more successful. However, government agencies and big companies also use the Internet and might also be more successful the more they do so. It is therefore important to find out whether citizens or marginalized groups can catch up with more powerful actors by using the Internet and whether the success gap closes. For this purpose, it is imperative to look more closely at individual aspects of Internet use and consider which of these factors are really easily available to small groups: if all the most success-producing features were those that require expert skills, expensive computer and network technology, and a whole team of maintenance staff, then citizens' groups would again lag behind governments and big companies.

II. Links, Directories, and Search Engines

Indeed, the data also confirmed that the time, effort, and resources dedicated to maintaining each group's Internet presence also correlated to the success of each group, which might contradict the "levelling the playing field" idea. However, another interesting finding was a clear correlation between success and the visibility (or "detectability") of the group in the Internet – such as their registration in Internet directories or the number of links from other pages (Fig. 5).

The correlation ($p < 0.001$) does not necessarily mean that successful groups are successful *because* they are easier to find than others, but in many cases this factor can be expected to contribute to their success. A prominent exception to this assumption is the Tsukurukai, marked in the graph as number 61. The group authored a controversial textbook, which was at the centre of one of the issues researched here. The issue was widely discussed, and accordingly, the group was also very visible. Numerous other pages linked to its homepage, which also appeared prominently in directories and search engine results. In this case, success was clearly the cause for the ease of finding the homepage, but in most other cases, in

Figure 5: Success of a group and the ease of finding it on the Internet.
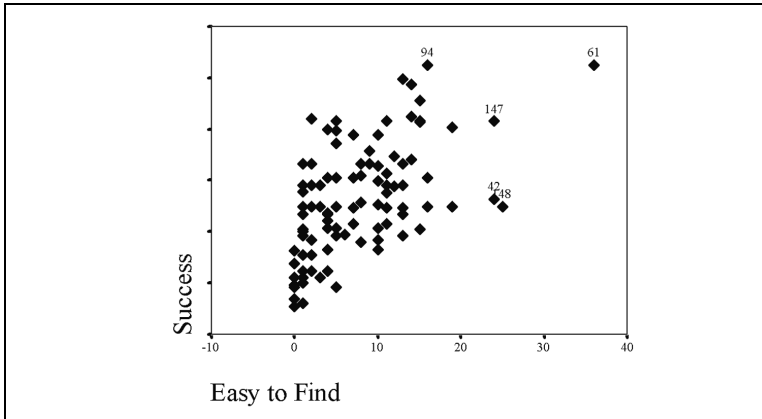
Note: Dots on the right mark groups that are easier to find than those on the left. The numbered groups are: 42 – Save the Children Japan, 61 – Tsukurukai, 94 – WWF Japan, 147 – Consumers Union of Japan, 148 – The Japan Scientists' Association.

reverse causality, the PR efforts of the group (including the homepage, presumably alongside other activities) were probably factors in increasing their success.

This result is important because this kind of visibility is relatively easy to accomplish and requires few resources, compared to an expansive homepage or many interactive features, for example. Registration in the relevant sections of a web directory is usually free, and a carefully selected set of key terms can ensure that the site is listed on the results pages of search engines. Links from other pages are a matter of networking with similar and sympathetic groups, and setting mutual links is obviously a cheap and efficient way of increasing audiences on both sides.

III. Ease of Interface: Navigation Bar

Another feature with a strong correlation to the success variable was the ease of interface observed in a group's homepage. This not only includes elaborate features that require certain skills or investment in a professional web design – an integrated site search, for example – but also simple tools like a navigation bar or a site map.

Among the features included on the "ease of interface" scale, the presence or absence of a navigation bar especially was found to be strongly related to the value on the success scale, with $p < 0.001$ (see Fig. 6).

Figure 6: Relationship between the presence of a navigation bar on a group's homepage and the group's success.
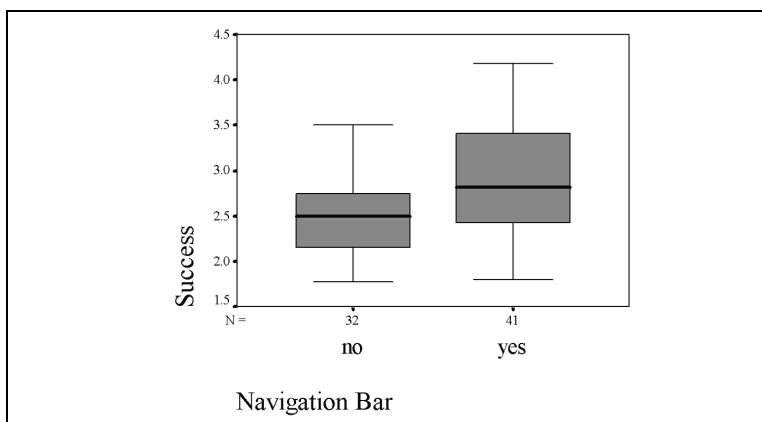

This finding, too, suggests a high potential for resource-poor groups, since it would require no major effort to create even often small and simple web sites with a navigation bar. This would help visitors (including group members) to find the information they need and would make the site – and the group – more attractive. It is not unlikely that a certain causality lies behind the correlation, and in this case, this simple measure could indeed affect the group's success.

IV. Generation of Return Visits

Another case of a strong correlation between certain Internet use factors and the success of the group was found in the category of return visit generation (see Fig. 7), i.e. the number or intensity of features on the web site that increase the likelihood for occasional visitors to come back to this site – be it an outright appeal to visit the page again or to set a bookmark, or features that can be expected to be useful to visit again, such as a calendar of events or a list of links.

A particularly important feature within this category appeared to be the option of registering for an online newsletter, clearly a useful tool for reminders of the web site and the group itself. The resources required by the variables in this category differ; while a "don't forget to set a bookmark" appeal is easily written, providing annotated links and up-to-date events information adds to the workload of maintaining the site, and technical skills are necessary to offer an online registration form or an automatic bookmarking feature.

Figure 7: Success value of groups in relation to their homepages' generation of return visits.
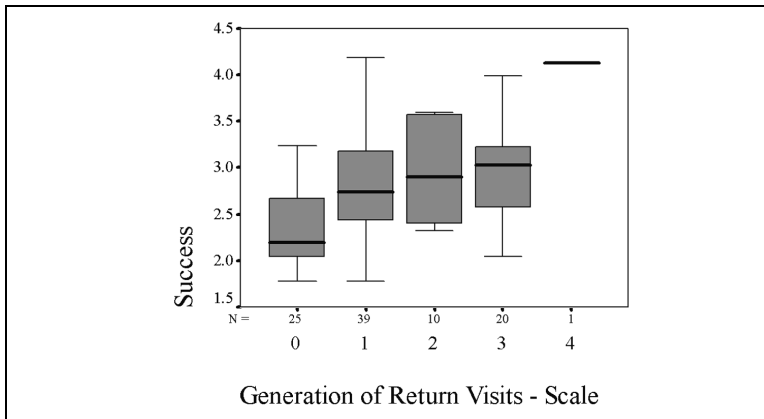

V. Dialogic Loop

One of the categories for Internet use employed by Taylor, Kent, and White (2001) is that of a "dialogic loop." This is perhaps the most interesting but also one of the most elusive categories because it marks the highest degree of interactivity. On the one hand, interactive aspects of the Internet have been most hailed for their *potential* to change relationships between political actors and the political landscape as a whole, but on the other hand this potential is often not exploited (Åström 2001, Norris 2001).

In this study, the "dialogic loop" scale is calculated from several variables, including the presence or absence of comment forms or BBS features that would at least theoretically enable users to enter into a dialogue with the group or with other visitors of the web site. An experiment also tested whether groups responded to simple e-mail inquiries, and if they did, whether they had additional information on file to send directly via e-mail. Graphs and statistical tests indicate a significant correlation ($p=0.002$) between this dialogic loop scale and the success of the group (see Fig. 8).

Interestingly, no strong correlation could be established between the dialogic loop and any of the individual variables making up the "success" variable. On the other hand, the correlation between prompt responses to e-mail requests and the success of the group turned out to be highly sig-

Figure 8: Relationship between dialogic features of a group's Internet use and the group's success.

Dialogic Loop - Scale: None - High
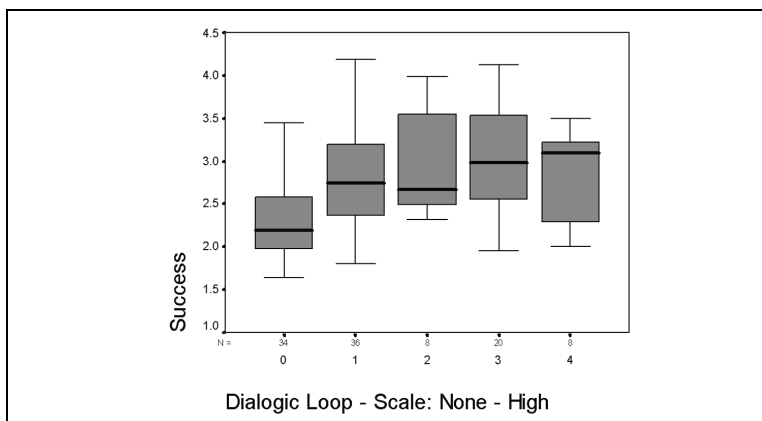
nificant (p=0.003). Presumably, the benefit of responding to e-mails is not only the technical dispersion of additional information, but also the trust and attachment generated if someone actually answers a request.

VI. Women's Groups Use the Internet Less

Regarding Internet use by different types of citizens' groups, one of the accompanying findings that would merit further attention was an indication of a gender gap in Internet use. Some of the groups in this sample are specifically included for their involvement in women's issues, and some other groups in the foreigner and human rights areas also deal with women's issues. In addition, groups predominantly made up of women who may mainly work on another issue but are organised *as women*[2] are also included in a category of women's groups. On average, groups in this category used the Internet less (and were less successful) than the other groups. Since research into this topic was not a specific aim of the study, the number of groups classified as women's groups is not sufficient to make any clear statement, but it is certainly noteworthy that in this sample the ratings for Internet use are significantly lower for women's groups than on

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[2] For example, groups like the pro-whaling organisation Women's Forum Fish or the peace group No! Rape No! Women at the Bases' Association (NO! レイプNO! ベース女たちの会).

average (see Fig. 9). Evidence from interviews supports this notion: Members of some of the groups mentioned that many of their supporters – and of the women they are trying to help – do not have access to computers. Most do however have mobile phones with e-mail and Internet access. Accordingly, much of their Internet use is still limited to e-mails, and they are likely to shift their emphasis to homepages for mobile phones in the future.

Figure 9:   Use of Internet by women's groups and other groups.
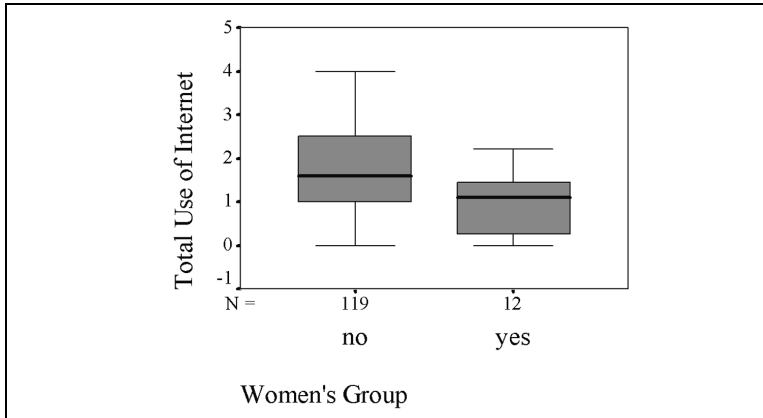
SUMMARY

In the majority of groups researched here, Internet use was limited to some standard features, mostly e-mail and basic web site features. The study confirmed previous research showing that one-way communication dominates the Internet in spite of the potential for dialogical communication. The main aim of the study was to isolate certain features of Internet use that have strong correlations with success and thus indicate a very efficient way of using the Internet. Some of these features coinciding with success turned out to be relatively easy to attain even with limited funds. A high potential can especially be seen in registering a web site with Internet directories, cross-linking with other groups, adding navigation bars or newsletter registration, and improving e-mail responses.

The selection of groups around different issues also showed that the use and effectiveness of the Internet depended to some extent on the issue at hand. This categorisation into issues further suggested the existence of a digital divide between groups working on different issues, in this case a gender gap.

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CAN THE INTERNET PROPEL THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ROLE OF JAPANESE NGOS?

A CASE STUDY OF ANTI-DAM ACTIVISM IN JAPAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Iris Wieczorek

Due to the "closed" structure of the Japanese political system, non-profit or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had until the 1990s hardly any opportunity to actively participate in the political decision making process. Environmental activists in Japan, for example, never formed a strong social movement at the national level as they did in many other industrialized countries. Since the mid-1990s, however, the political opportunity structures in Japan have been gradually changing, and NGOs appear to band together in national issue oriented networks to challenge the political elite. A re-evaluation of the relationship between the state and NGOs is taking place in Japan. But obstacles continue to exist. For example, the government still does not accept NGOs as a genuine partner in the political decision making process.

In this context, the new opportunities the Internet offers are of particular value for NGOs in Japan in terms of bringing about political and social changes. The Internet can function as an instrument and platform for NGOs to articulate their dissatisfaction and political aims, to gain and exchange information domestically and internationally, to build up local and cross-national networks and to mobilise the public. This paper is based on the assumption that in view of still existing domestic barriers in Japan – like the closed political opportunity structures – the Internet can be a effective tool for Japanese protest groups to form a social movement with sufficient power to challenge the political elite.

In order to examine whether and how Japanese NGOs and protest groups use the potential of the Internet to join forces in a social movement, anti-dam activism in Japan, which dates back to the 1960s, was chosen as a case study. The web sites of 15 protest groups were selected for a content analysis. For a social movement a collective identity or frames of reference, mobilisational activities and a network of organizations aiming at achieving political or social goals are the most important elements. The analysis of the web sites thus focused on these issues, which have been intensively discussed in social movement theory. The web sites were

analysed by means of a list of criteria classifying them on their framing, mobilization and networking functions.

The findings of the case study – representing a snap shot of the present situation of 15 anti-dam protest groups' web sites – can be summarized as follows: the majority of the web sites get high scores on their information and framing function. Members and other visitors can learn about the organization and what it does/does not stand for. Moreover, the majority of the web sites subscribe to a common view ("frames of reference") on the anti-dam issue and thus offer a kind of collective identity. There is a consensus on the dam issue, by framing it as an economic problem that has negative consequences for the environment. The approach of the Japanese government to put economic benefits and thus dam-construction before the protection of the environment is discussed in detail on several web sites. Also the political aspects connected to the problem – lack of democracy and the closed political opportunity structures in Japan – are contested. On the other hand, the web sites get relatively low scores on their interactivity function. Opportunities to exchange and discuss views and ideas on the anti-dam issue, e. g. through forums or chat groups, are provided only by some web sites.

On their mobilisational function the majority of the websites get relatively high scores. They use comparatively passive mechanisms to mobilise people by giving visitors the opportunity to join or to support the organisation; they offer online registration forms to become a member, donate money or buy promotional goods. Most of the web sites also use more active mechanisms: almost all web sites host some kind of online-calendar of the upcoming activities to oppose dam construction. Visitors are usually encouraged to participate and are given detailed information on how to do so. Most sites provide some information on how to use or improve certain action techniques, or refer to manuals or other organisations for more activist training. Thus, most of the web sites actively mobilise people – to a greater or lesser extent – to demonstrate against the construction of dams. But they are far less used as an action tool on their own. Only a few of the organisations use some form of online action, such as online petitions or protest e-mails to politicians.

With regard to the networking function, the analysed web sites are all indirectly linked to one another and there exists a national network of related organisations. But links to international organisations are rare and the majority of the anti-dam protest groups offer only Japanese language web sites.

To sum up, the research results indicate that Japanese non-profit organizations and groups are using the potential of the Internet more and more professionally to express their views and to offer "frames of refer-

ence" in order to build a collective identity, to mobilize the public, and to build a strong network – even if the examined web sites still lack value when it comes to functions like interactivity or online-protest activities. Thus one can assume that the Internet supports the transformation of anti-dam protests into a national social movement which might challenge the political elite. Although there is little evidence that the Internet is becoming a substitute for traditional forms of protest, it can propel the political and social role of Japanese NGOs.

JAPANESE CANDIDATES ONLINE IN 2001

RESEARCH REPORT

Leslie M. Tkach-Kawasaki

Most of the debate surrounding the relationship between the Internet and political activities during the 1990s and into the twenty-first century has focused on the potential of the Internet to change politics. In the early 1990s, it was idealized that the Internet could allow the general public to more fully participate in political debates and discussions (Grossman 1995; Rheingold 1993), contact elected officials (Rash 1997), and gain access to a wide variety of political information. In addition, the use of the Internet has certainly offered a means for candidates vying for public office to distribute political information and conduct campaign activities on a wide-ranging scale.

Yet since the mid- to late 1990s, these optimistic scenarios have been tempered with more sober arguments based on more experience with the technology. Empirical research concerning how political actors were using the Internet suggests that rather than utilizing it in ways that could revolutionize politics, political actors were not using it to its full advantage in promoting new forms of political participation (Gibson and Ward 1998; Kamarck 1999; Margolis and Resnick 2000). In fact, rather than promoting political participation, empirical studies conducted in the U.S. and the U.K. indicate that the use of the Internet by political parties and candidates has been more oriented towards political marketing rather than political participation (Bowers-Brown 2003).

Despite uncertainly regarding the actual impact of the Internet on various political systems, it is clear that it is becoming more and more accepted – and expected – as a mainstream political campaign medium in most democratic nations throughout the world. And, commensurate with expanding Internet diffusion, we have more opportunities to assess how the Internet is being used for political activities in various national settings. In response to the growth of the Internet and increasingly aware of its political potential, governments throughout the world have taken steps to address the political use of the Internet either by enacting new laws or applying current legislation to its use as a political media channel. Through these experiences, it is becoming increasingly apparent that rather than having a direct impact on political activities, the use of the

Internet is being subsumed within national political media environments and political campaign media regulations.

Japanese political actors, similar to their counterparts in other advanced democratic nations in the world, have also rallied to the use of the Internet as a political campaign media channel. However, their use of the Internet has also been shaped by Japan's distinctive political media environment. Since 1995, the Public Offices Election Law (POEL), which strictly governs political campaign media in Japan, has been applied to the use of the Internet during election campaign periods. While progressively growing numbers of Japanese politicians and candidates have become aware of and have been utilizing the Internet during national election cycles in 1998 and 2000, they have also been somewhat restricted by the POEL in terms of specific campaign-oriented content on their web sites. In Japan, although there is growing recognition of the merits of the Internet as a means to inform and communicate with the electorate, there is also uncertainty as to how to effectively utilize it within the confines of the POEL.

Japan's political context has also contributed to the shaping of the Internet as a political campaign medium. Since 1995, opposition political parties such as the now-defunct New Party Sakigake and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) have led the way in promoting the use of the Internet during political campaign periods. However, up until the 2001 Upper House election, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has responded by firmly insisting that the active use of the Internet as a political campaign medium may promote defamation and potentially run afoul of the POEL. These different perspectives concerning the political use of the Internet suggest that there may be some differences along party lines with regard to the active use of the Internet for political campaign purposes.

Thus, given this background, the purpose of this research report is to assess the use of the Internet by Japanese candidates running in the 2001 Upper House election by situating it within Japan's political context. In this report, I address the following research questions: (1) Are there any differences in terms of online presence of candidates with regard to electoral system,[1] political party, or age? (2) Do candidates

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[1] Upper House (House of Councilors) elections in Japan are held every six years, with half of the 280 seats elected at three-year intervals. Two electoral systems are used: In the proportional system, seats are allotted according to prefecture, with anywhere from two to eight seats per prefecture. In the party-list system, candidates are ranked within their parties. Candidates may also run simultaneously in both systems.

demonstrate any differences with regard to active campaigning online in terms of political party affiliation? And (3) Are there any apparent differences in how candidates show party affiliation through their web sites?

After providing a brief outline of the merits and demerits of using the Internet for political campaign purposes in Japan, with a specific focus on how the POEL has been applied to the use of the Internet during election campaigns since 1995, I discuss certain events relating to the political use of the Internet that may have affected attitudes towards its political use during the July 2001 Upper House election campaign period. Using a content-analysis approach, I assess and compare the web sites of 228 candidates running in both electoral systems in terms of how they used their web sites for active online campaigning and how they demonstrated their party affiliation on their sites. This detailed comparison by party affiliation indicates that while candidates demonstrated distinct individuality in terms of the features they chose to include on their web sites, there were also some surprisingly similar trends in how candidates of certain parties utilized the Internet during this campaign period.

WHY GO ONLINE?

In the early 1990s, the start of widespread public use of the Internet gave rise to enthusiasm regarding its potential as a platform for enhancing democracy by promoting widespread public participation in the political process. Early speculation, based mainly in the U.S., suggested that the Internet's capacity for high transmission speed, low-cost communications, unlimited information amount, and decentralization could enhance certain features of election campaigning (Abramson et al 1988). These rather technological deterministic outlooks suggested that once the tools were put in the hands of the public, mobilization towards political participation could be made much easier through the Internet (Norris 2001). As a result, it was surmised that these merits of using the Internet could usher in a new era of political involvement by citizens (Rheingold 1993; Rash 1997, Grossman 1995).

Yet, empirical evaluations of how political actors, mainly political parties and candidates, were using the Internet in the mid-1990s suggested different outcomes concerning the political use of the Internet. Studies conducted in the U.S. and the U.K. concluded that political actors were utilizing the Internet not as a means of involving the public in the political process but rather as "top-down" political marketing tools (Gibson and

Ward 1998, Margolis et al 1997). Furthermore, other researchers pointed out that there were certain barriers to involvement on the part of the public such as technological literacy, time commitment, and additional financial resources necessary for participation (Davis 1999). Rather than a tool to mobilize the public, it appeared that established political actors were utilizing the Internet more as a means of reinforcing existing power structures rather than promoting involvement in the political process (Norris 2001).

It is important to note that most studies regarding the political use of the Internet have been undertaken in democratic nations such as the U. S. and the U. K. where there are almost no restrictions on its use as a political campaign medium. As studies regarding the political utilization of the Internet have greatly increased along with Internet diffusion throughout the world, there have more opportunities to assess its use in different political environments. As a response to the Internet, a number of nations such as Singapore and Japan have either established new campaign media regulations to address the Internet or applied legislation to its use. For example, in 2001, the Singapore government passed a bill requiring third parties to register their web sites with the government. It is becoming clear that rather than having a direct impact on political activities or campaigning, the political use of the Internet is increasingly becoming subject to political media legislation applicable on the nation-state level. As such, examining its utilization within different political media environments and contexts is necessary in order to assess its political potential and utilization.

JAPANESE POLITICS AND THE INTERNET

Most analysts of the political use of the Internet point to Bob Dole's announcement of his web site address during the 1996 presidential debate as the earliest incidence of the use of the Internet for political campaign purposes (Davis 1999: 85). However, Japanese political candidates were experimenting with the use of the Internet as early as the 1995 Upper House election campaign period. During that campaign, a small number of candidates established web sites, however, were swiftly informed that their fledgling online efforts could run afoul of the POEL.

The POEL, initially established in 1950, governs all aspects of political campaigning in Japan, such as distribution of political campaign media and contents, not only in terms of format but also with regard to timing. The original intent of the POEL was to minimize campaign advertising expenditures by limiting the distribution of campaign-related materials

during the seven- to twenty-day period immediately prior to an election. For example, Section 142 regulates the distribution of "text and pictures" with specific election-campaign content over a fixed geographic area, and Section 143 also restricts campaign-related materials by medium, giving such examples as posters and signboards.

Since 1995, the government has suggested that these sections of the POEL, originally pertaining to traditional campaign media such as postcards, handbills, and posters, could be applicable to the use of web sites as political campaign media. Prior to the October 1996 Lower House election, the now-defunct New Party Sakigake requested a ruling on the use of web sites as political campaign media, pointing out that the use of the Internet could allow for a return to the original intent of the POEL – that of minimizing campaign expenditures – by providing candidates with a low-cost alternative for distributing campaign-related materials. Through the 1996 Lower House and 1998 Upper House election cycles, a number of parties and candidates complied with the current interpretation of the POEL by shutting down their web sites, disabling the links on their sites, or not updating their sites during the official campaign activities period.

By 2000, along with an increase in Japan's Internet population, opposition political parties and candidates were actively gearing up to use the Internet in the upcoming Lower House election campaign. In February 2000, the DPJ announced that it would actively use the Internet for political campaigning during the upcoming Lower House election that was scheduled to be held later in the year. Among political parties, the DPJ led the way in the use of the Internet during this election cycle by establishing the first election-specific site created by a Japanese political party (*www.minshu2000.com*). Some DPJ candidates as well devised creative ways of circumventing the POEL's ban on "text and images," for example, through the use of audio files on the entry pages of their web sites. While no direct connection can be drawn between the use of the Internet and electoral outcomes, this particular election was important in the sense that it demonstrated innovative approaches to using the Internet for political campaign purposes.

While significant shifts were occurring in Japan's Internet environment during 2000 and 2001, political use of the Internet also underwent substantial changes in the period between the June 2000 Lower House and the July 2001 Upper House elections.

One shift was the increase in the number of Diet politicians online. As shown in Table 1, the online presence of national legislators grew substantially during this one-year period.

Table 1:   Upper and Lower House Councillors Online – 2000–2002

Date	Sites of Members of the House of Representatives (Lower House)	Sites of Members of the House of Councilors (Upper House)
August 2000	205	Not available
November 2000	216	78
January 2001	379	Not available
August 2001	490	Not available
October 2001	Not available	290
December 2001	Not available	289
August 2002	519	305

Source: Internet Archive (http://www.archive.org/) searches for http://
dir.yahoo.co.jp/Government/Legislative_Branch

During the period between the national elections in 2000 and 2001, various politicians experimented with the use of the Internet. For example, faction leader Katō Kōichi attempted to unseat former Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro as party leader in November 2000, based on support he received through his web site. Although the attempt failed, his use of the Internet demonstrated that the Internet could be used for political activities outside election campaign periods. While the difficulties in transferring "online" or "virtual" support to the "offline" arena were apparent, the mass media attention given to Katō Kōichi's failed bid demonstrated that the Internet could be used as a tool by which to gauge popular support and establish a continuous relationship with the electorate.

Perhaps the most well-known use of the Internet for political purposes in Japan also occurred within this period. In the spring of 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi used his web site to garner support within the LDP at the national and prefecture levels to go on to win the party's internal leadership race. One of his early acts as Prime Minister was to start distributing a weekly e-mail newsletter through the official Prime Minister's Office web site. This e-mail newsletter, the first to be distributed by a national leader, quickly proved highly popular, garnering a subscription base of 2 million within two months of its inception.

As discussed earlier in this research, Japanese politicians have also expressed a number of concerns regarding the use of the Internet during election campaign periods. First and foremost among these has been the

debate regarding the POEL and the applicability of the Internet for active campaigning. Although some candidates discovered creative means to circumvent the POEL during the 2000 Lower House election, determining exactly what aspects of the use of the Internet – including the contents of web sites and e-mail newsletters – constituted active campaigning through this medium remained ambiguous. With no clear guidelines set forth, it was impossible to determine what type of content would be limited by the POEL.

Adding to the legal ramifications specifically concerning active campaigning through the Internet, more practical considerations may also have played a role in dampening candidate enthusiasm for this new campaign medium. Despite not being allowed to individually purchase campaign advertising through the press or through commercial television companies, candidates still had access to various forms of campaign media. Although traditional forms of campaigning such as flyers, postcards, posters, public speeches, and party-sponsored public broadcasts and newspaper advertisements were strictly regulated by the POEL, candidates did have a certain amount of experience with their use and their controlled distribution. While certainly not possessing the Internet's unique features such as interactivity and possibilities for direct contact with and information dissemination to the electorate, neither have these campaign means presented great risks for the candidates.

Yet, despite these challenges inherent in a relatively new and untried medium, the use of the Internet in general, and web sites in particular, can offer a number of distinct merits to candidates. Candidates can provide an unlimited amount of detail concerning their issue positions and election platforms through their web sites. Compared to the potential legal restrictions and expense of other election campaign media, including this information on their web sites is a relatively low-cost means of providing campaign information to the public. As a form of electronic "mini-media," web sites can be used by candidates to create and manage their own public image. Compared to centralized and mediated media channels such as the broadcast and print media, sites offer a means for candidates to control how their perspectives and issue positions are presented to the public.

Web sites can also serve as a contact and feedback medium for establishing direct communications with the electorate. E-mail addresses or web based contact forms allow the electorate to quickly and easily communicate with the candidate and/or the campaign organization. Online surveys as well may be used to elicit public feedback. Furthermore, as often pointed out by opposition parties in Japan during the late 1990s, the

Internet certainly offers cost advantages as well when conducting communications with the electorate either during or outside election campaign periods.

WHO'S ONLINE IN 2001

The focus of this research report is the web sites of Japanese candidates for public office running in the 2001 Upper House election campaign. In order to identify the sites and to determine which candidates had web sites, at the outset of this project, I decided that my sample would be composed of the web sites of official candidates running in the 2001 Upper House election held on July 29, 2001. However, first, it was necessary to accumulate a list of URLs (uniform resource locators) or web site addresses for the candidates. This initially posed some difficulties, as there was no publicly available list of candidate web sites available. Therefore, I initially created a list of the candidates, using the official listing provided on the web site of the *Mainichi Shimbun* (http://www.mainichi.co.jp/eye/2001senkyo/sangiin/). Using this list, I then generated a list of candidate URLs using the following Internet-based search techniques:

1. Links to candidate web sites via lists on political party web sites;
2. Links to candidate web sites through third-party political web sites such as www.election.co.jp;
3. Searches for candidates either through a search engine (example: Google Japan or www.google.co.jp) or through search engine directory listings (Yahoo! Japan or www.yahoo.co.jp).

Unlike other political campaign media, web sites and e-mail are not officially recognized through the POEL as an official campaign medium. Adding even more ambiguity to its use as a political medium, to date, there are no restrictions within the POEL that apply to content, format, or distribution of political campaign material through the Internet. Thus, candidates and their organizations are able to individually decide whether or not to establish campaign web sites. For the purposes of this project, for each candidate, I selected only his or her "official web site" (in many cases, on the top page of the web site) or that which was established by his or her campaign organization and clearly identified as such. I did not include web sites that were established or maintained by supporters of the candidate, web sites that were hosted on government servers (usually identified by URLs ending in "go.jp"), or, in many cases, one-page "info sheets" on candidates that were created by each political party as part of its web site either at the national or local levels.

Prior to examining the contents of candidates' web sites in more detail, it is important to determine exactly how many candidates actively utilized the Internet during the July 2001 election campaign period. For this particular election, there were 487 candidates, with a breakdown of 292 candidates running in the prefecture-level system and 195 candidates running in the party-list system. As shown in Table 2, out of a total of 292 candidates for prefecture seats, 161 (55.1 %) had functional web sites as of July 20, 2001 as well as 110 (56.4 %) out of a total of 195 candidates running in the party-list system.

Table 2: July 2001 Upper House election candidates with web sites (by status)

Status	Prefecture level			Party list		
	New candidates	Incumbents[1]	Total	New candidates	Incumbents[1]	Total
Web site	96 (42.7 %)	65 (97.0 %)	161 (55.1 %)	75 (47.8 %)	35 (92.1 %)	110 (56.4 %)
No web site	129 (57.3 %)	2 (3.0 %)	131 (44.9 %)	82 (52.2 %)	3 (7.9 %)	85 (44.6)
Total	225	67	292	157	38	195

[1] Includes two former office holders at the prefecture level and three former office holders in the party-list system.

Comparing candidate presence on the Internet overall in terms of status (incumbent or new candidate), party, and age illustrated some interesting results. As shown in Table 2, in terms of status, less than half of the new candidates at the prefecture and party-list levels (42.7 % and 47.8 %, respectively) had web sites during this election cycle. In contrast, web site utilization among incumbents for both systems was surprisingly high at over 90 %.

For new candidates overall, there may be certain barriers to creating a presence online. These candidates, most likely in the early stages of their political careers, may not have the human, financial, or information resources required to establish and maintain web sites. In addition, these candidates may have chosen to expend their limited campaign resources on other means of attracting attention to their candidacies rather than choosing to invest limited campaign resources in an as-yet unproven medium. On the other hand, incumbent candidates most likely already have established campaign organizations in place as well as more resources to create and maintain web site content.

In addition to the practical reasons for the figures above, the overall perspective that they demonstrate regarding attitudes towards using the Internet by political candidates are quite revealing. The particularly

high figures for web site maintenance among incumbent candidates suggest that the use of the Internet among politicians is gradually becoming legitimized through practice. The gradual increases in the numbers of candidates online in each ensuing election cycle suggest that while its use may not be causing dramatic shifts in election outcomes as yet, the Internet is a campaign medium that is progressively becoming more accepted at least among current politicians.

There were also distinct differences in party affiliation and web site utilization. In earlier elections, candidates for the LDP appeared particularly reluctant to actively utilize the Internet and candidates from opposition parties were more active in establishing web sites. Yet, as shown in Table 3, this trend was reversed during this election campaign period.

Table 3:   July 2001 Upper House election candidates with web sites (by party)

Party	LDP	DPJ	Liberal Party	JCP	SDP	New Komeitō	Jiyu-rengō	Other parties[1]	Inde-pendent[2]	Total
Prefecture level										
Web site	48 96.0%	34 97.1%	10 71.4%	18 37.5%	15 68.2%	5 100%	6 13.6%	3 11.5%	22 45.8%	161 55.1%
No web site	2 4.0%	1 2.9%	4 28.6%	30 62.5%	7 31.8%	0 (0%)	38 86.4%	23 88.5%	26 54.2%	131 44.9%
Total	50	35	14	48	22	5	44	26	48	292
Party list										
Web site	26 (100%)	22 (95.7%)	10 (66.7%)	4 (16.0%)	10 (100%)	10 (58.8%)	17 (36.2%)	11 (34.4%)	0 (N/A)[3]	110 56.4%
No web site	0 (0%)	1 (4.3%)	5 (33.3%)	21 (84.0%)	0 (0%)	7 (41.2%)	30 (63.8%)	21 (65.6%)	0 (N/A)	85 43.6%
Total	26	23	15	25	10	17	47	32	0	195

[1] Includes the Women's Party (*Joseitō)* and the Liberal League (*Jiyurengō*) at the prefecture level; includes the Women's Party (*Joseitō),* the Liberal League *(Jiyurengō),* and the Conservative Party (*Hoshutō*) in the party-list system.

[2] There are no independent candidates in the party-list system.

[3] N/A = Non-applicable.

The breakdown of web site presence by party affiliation shows that LDP candidates were certainly not reluctant to use the Internet during this election campaign period. In fact, candidates from the LDP belied their reputation as being adverse to the use of the Internet, as demonstrated by the high percentage of candidates in both electoral systems who chose to establish web sites during the 2001 campaign. As seen in the previous year's election campaign, high numbers of DPJ, Liberal Party, SDP, and

New Komeitō candidates continued to be active in creating a presence on the Internet.

However, by contrast, independent candidates and candidates from small political parties such as the Women's Party and Jiyurengō did not exhibit a strong presence on the World Wide Web during this election cycle. In fact, in contrast to the major political parties, higher proportions of candidates from these parties did not have personal web sites. Only approximately half of the independent candidates in the prefecture-level system as well had web sites in this campaign. Although lack of resources to create and maintain web sites may be a reason for these discrepancies, it may be indicative of a long-term trend in growing sophistication and consolidation in the political use of the Internet by mainstream political parties and their candidates. Instead of the Internet offering a means for independent and minor party candidates to "level the playing field," the expense of creating and maintaining an attractive web site, both in terms of human and financial resources, may be out of the reach for such candidates.

In order to maximize their presence on the Internet, a number of parties such as the LDP, DPJ, and SDP provided one-page "info sheets" concerning each candidate on the main party web site as well as links to the candidate's individual web site, if available. However, the JCP adopted a different strategy. In addition to the 18 JCP candidates that maintained their own personal web sites during this election campaign period, a number of JCP candidates also campaigned online through the web sites of local JCP chapters. (As noted above, these local-party web sites were not analyzed for the purposes of this research.) Therefore, although the figures shown in Table 3 may indicate that JCP candidates were disadvantaged overall on the web, this was not the case. Yet even so, the very fact that the JCP chose to take this approach to providing information concerning their candidates suggests that the strong centralized internal party structure that characterizes the JCP in general prevails in the party's overall approach to the Internet as well.

Given that Japan's Internet user population is comprised mainly of young people under 40, it was expected that younger candidates, likely to be in the early stages of their political careers, would more actively embrace the use of the Internet as a political campaign medium. However, in reviewing the breakdown of candidates on the Internet by age (Table 4), this was demonstrated not to be the case. The age breakdown of candidates with and without web sites shows that younger candidates in their 30s certainly utilized web sites as part of their campaigns. Yet candidates in the highest age range, older than 60 years of age, were even more active on the Internet.

Table 4:   July 2001 Upper House election candidates with web sites (by age)

Age Range	Prefecture level				
	30–39 years of age	40 to 49 years of age	50 to 59 years of age	60-plus years of age	Total
Has web site	30 (58.8 %)	35 (46.1 %)	55 (55.0 %)	41 (63.1 %)	161 (55.1 %)
No web site	21 (41.2 %)	41 (53.9 %)	45 (45.0 %)	24 (36.9 %)	131 (44.9 %)
Total	51	76	100	65	292
	Party list				
Has web site	9 (33.3 %)	17 (45.9 %)	46 (60.5 %)	38 (69.1 %)	110 (56.4 %)
No web site	18 (66.7 %)	20 (54.1 %)	30 (39.5 %)	17 (30.9 %)	95 (45.6 %)
Total	27	37	76	55	270

Although young candidates in their 30s in the prefecture-level system showed one of the highest rates of using the Internet, in contrast, candidates of the same age group in the party-list system exhibited the lowest figures for web site ownership during this election. Perhaps most surprisingly, among all age groups and in both electoral systems, candidates in the 60-years-plus age range, the oldest age group, seemed to make the most use of the Internet as a campaign medium. Usage of the Internet among candidates in the other two age brackets, those in their 40s and 50s, was somewhat less.

The above analyses suggest certain trends in the use of the Internet for election campaign purposes among candidates. The use of the Internet by incumbents and older candidates suggests that web sites have become standard campaign tools. The high figures for candidates of major political parties may also signify a long-term trend that contradicts earlier conventional wisdom that focused on the potential of the Internet to "level the playing field" for independent and minor-party candidates. While perhaps slow to embrace the use of the Internet in earlier elections, candidates from the LDP in particular demonstrated that they too were willing to set foot on the playing field itself. As we examine the contents of candidate web sites in more detail, we can discern further differences in how candidates are actively using their web sites.

ELECTION CAMPAIGNING ON THE INTERNET

The main reason for candidates to establish and maintain web sites is to promote their candidacies in upcoming elections. This promotion may take a variety of forms such as providing more information to the electorate regarding their positions, for example, by including their stances concerning election issues or prominent display of their campaign slogans. Endorsements as well may serve to enhance the candidates' status as potential legislators. Particularly important in Japan, given the restrictions of the POEL, candidates can also choose to use their web sites as platforms for mobilization activities, such as publicizing their campaign event schedules or diaries or directly appealing for volunteers for their campaigns. Finally, again with reference to Japan's particular political environment, candidates can also clearly state their position concerning updating their web site during the official campaign activities period immediately prior to the election.

In order to assess the level of campaign activity on their web sites, candidate web sites were analyzed in terms of the following features: election issues (three separate issues concerning the candidate's opinions of the Koizumi administration, restructuring, and the economy); the candidate's campaign event schedule; campaign slogans; graphics such as representation of the candidate's campaign poster; endorsements by prominent citizens (which may include party leaders); and calls for volunteer or internship involvement in the candidate's campaign. In addition to these features directly related to the candidate's campaign, this investigation also sought to explore each candidate's position on active campaigning through the Internet by the presence or absence of a statement by the candidate on the top page of the web site concerning his/her position on updating web site contents during the official campaign activities period.

Did Japanese candidates in the 2001 Upper House election actively utilize their web sites for political campaigning? Table 5 shows the breakdown of the overall popularity of these features on candidate web sites.

Table 5: **Election-related features on candidate web sites**

Feature	Occurrences on candidate web sites	
	Prefecture level candidates	**Party list candidates**
Issue #1 – The Koizumi administration	40 (28.4 %)	10 (11.5 %)
Issue #2 – Restructuring	12 (8.5 %)	5 (5.7 %)
Issue #3 – The economy	12 (8.5 %)	2 (2.3 %)
Internet and the election	27 (19.1 %)	18 (20.7 %)
Volunteer or internship involvement in the campaign	38 (27.0 %)	14 (16.1 %)
Campaign event schedule	89 (63.1 %)	61 (70.1 %)
Campaign slogans	89 (63.1 %)	No data available
Campaign poster	5 (3.5 %)	No data available
Endorsements	31 (22.0 %)	No data available

For candidates in the 2001 Upper House election in both systems, the most popular means of campaigning through the Internet was the inclusion of their campaign event schedule. Campaign slogans were also particularly important for prefecture-level candidates. Yet in terms of using their web sites as a means for publicizing their opinions concerning specific election issues, the results show that candidates of either system were not taking advantage of their web sites in this manner. Among the three issues, candidates were far more likely to include their opinions concerning the Koizumi administration than to discuss restructuring the government or ways to deal with the economy, however less so among party-list candidates. Using their web sites as a means for eliciting support in their campaigns through volunteer or internship involvement was also a fairly popular feature among candidates. Almost 30 % of the candidates included some type of statement on the top pages of their web sites regarding updating the site during the official election campaign period.

Candidates also demonstrated differences by party in how they utilized various features of their web sites for active campaigning, as shown in Tables 6 (candidates in the prefecture-level system) and 7 (candidates in the party-list system).

Table 6: **Election-related features on prefecture-level candidate web sites (by party)**

	LDP (N=42)	DPJ (N=29)	Jiyutō (N=10)	JCP (N=17)	SDP (N=12)	New Komeitō (N=5)	Jiyurengō (N=2)	Ind. (N=22)	Other (N=2)	Total (N=141)
Issue #1 – the Koizumi administration	19 (45.2%)	9 (31.0%)	0 (0%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (25.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	40 (28.4%)
Issue #2 – restructuring	4 (9.5%)	3 (10.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (50.0%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	12 (8.5%)
Issue #3 – the economy	4 (9.5%)	4 (13.8%)	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	12 (8.5%)
Internet and the election	8 (19.0%)	5 (17.2%)	1 (10.0%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (8.3%)	3 (60.0%)	0 (0%)	6 (27.3%)	0 (0%)	27 (19.1%)
Volunteer or internship involvement in the campaign	6 (14.3%)	12 (41.4%)	4 (40.0%)	5 (29.4%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (36.4%)	1 (50.0%)	38 (27.0%)
Campaign event schedule	20 (47.6%)	25 (86.2%)	6 (60.0%)	13 (76.5%)	7 (58.3%)	3 (60.0%)	0 (0%)	14 (63.6%)	1 (50.0%)	89 (63.1%)
Campaign slogans	23 (54.8%)	20 (69.0%)	5 (50.0%)	13 (76.5%)	7 (58.3%)	3 (60.0%)	2 (100%)	15 (68.2%)	1 (50.0%)	89 (63.1%)
Campaign poster	2 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (17.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (3.5%)
Endorsements	4 (9.5%)	4 (13.8%)	4 (40.0%)	3 (17.6%)	6 (50.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50.0%)	7 (31.8%)	2 (100%)	31 (22.0%)

Table 7: **Election-related features on party-list candidate web sites (by party)**

	LDP (N=24)	DPJ (N=21)	Jiyutō (N=8)	JCP (N=4)	SDP (N=6)	New Komeitō (N=9)	Jiyurengō (N=3)	Cons. (N=3)	Other (N=4)	Total (N=87)
Issue #1 – Koizumi administration	2 (8.3%)	2 (9.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	4 (100%)	10 (11.5%)
Issue #2 – restructuring	2 (8.3%)	1 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (25%)	5 (5.7%)
Issue #3 – the economy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (25%)	2 (2.3%)
Internet and the election	1 (4.2%)	8 (38.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (33.3%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (25%)	18 (20.7%)
Volunteer or internship involvement in the campaign	1 (4.2%)	6 (28.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (25%)	14 (16.1%)
Campaign event schedule	15 (62.5%)	15 (71.4%)	4 (50%)	3 (75%)	5 (83.3%)	7 (77.8%)	7 (87.5%)	2 (66.7%)	3 (75.0%)	61 (70.1%)

As perhaps expected, LDP candidates were the most proactive in addressing the issue of the Koizumi administration with close to half of the

candidates in the prefecture-level system indicating their opinions concerning this issue. Yet, in contrast, LDP candidates in the party-list system appeared reluctant to discuss any type of election issue on their web sites. While slightly less than half of the LDP candidates on the prefecture level included their campaign event schedule on their web sites, more than 60 % of the candidates in the party-list system had this information on their web sites. Along with candidates from their coalition partner, the New Komeitō Party, and independent candidates, LDP candidates appeared the most likely to have some sort of statement concerning updating their web sites during the official campaign activities period.

In contrast, candidates from opposition parties such as the DPJ, Jiyutō, and the JCP made much more active use of their web sites as a means of election campaigning. In addition to drawing attention to their candidacies by posting their campaign event schedules or including campaign slogans on their web sites, candidates from these parties and independent candidates were also more active in recruiting volunteers or offering internship opportunities with politicians' individual support organizations, albeit more so for those candidates in the prefecture-level system.

While independent candidates exhibited certain patterns in using their web sites that were similar to those of candidates from major political parties, they also demonstrated one specific marked difference in that they were much more likely to post endorsements from prominent citizens on their web sites than candidates from the larger political parties.

An assessment of the popularity of the above features indicates one particularly interesting trend apparent in the web site contents of all candidates in both systems. As shown above, while candidates seemed particularly reluctant to address election issues on their web sites, they did appear to use their web sites as indirect mobilization platforms. Although less than 50 % of all candidates either directly recruited or offered internship possibilities through their web sites, more than 60 % of candidates in both systems included their campaign event schedules on their web sites. This suggests that at least some candidates are using their web sites as means of publicizing their campaigns and seeking the involvement of the electorate.

Party Affiliation on Web sites

To date, most research involving the use of the Internet by political parties and candidates has focused on information amount, mobilization, and communications with the electorate. While this research has been significant in analyzing how the Internet can be used to promote candidate-voter and political party-voter relationships, closer examination of the

contents of candidate web sites can illustrate candidate-party relation-ships as well.

Demonstrating party affiliation through any means is important for candidates, especially those who are officially nominated or recommend-ed. In Japan, this takes on more importance because of voting procedures. In Japan's mixed electoral system for Upper House elections, voters cast two write-in ballots, one each for the prefecture-level candidate and the party-list candidate. Voters can indicate the latter by either writing the candidate's name or political party. "Double candidacies" are also per-mitted, wherein candidates may run in both systems at the time. If candi-dates who are listed as "double candidates" fail to secure a seat in the prefecture-level balloting, depending on their ranking by the party, they may be able to secure a seat in the party-list system. Therefore, for those candidates who are running either as "double candidates" or solely in the party-list system, prominent display of their party affiliation may strengthen their chances of being elected.

There are a number of ways that candidates can signify their party af-filiation on their web sites through a combination of text and graphics. While other campaign media such as posters, postcards, publicly distrib-uted election bulletins, and party-sponsored promotional materials may have certain space and format restrictions, web sites have no such limita-tions. In addition to including the party logo and party name on the top pages, candidates can utilize the unique hypertext capabilities of the In-ternet to create links from either the logo or the name to the main party web site. By doing so, they can allow viewers of the web site to access the party site for further information, if they so wish. Candidates can also include visual means of party affiliation and association with the party leader by prominently displaying photographs of the candidate with the party leader or executives. If the leader of a particular party is also popu-lar with the electorate, then candidates may also consider using this means to enhance their own popularity as well. As shown below, this was a particularly popular feature of demonstrating party affiliation through-out the 2001 campaign.

For the purposes of investigating the popularity of showing party affil-iation among candidates with web sites, the presence of any of the follow-ing five features on the top page of the candidate's web site were selected for comparison: party logo with a link to the main party's web site, party name with a link to the party site, and photographs of the candidate with the party leader or a member of the party executive. These three features were calculated separately and exclusively. Table 8 shows the popularity of these features on the web sites of candidates from both electoral sys-tems.

Table 8:   Party affiliation features on web sites (by candidate type)

Feature	Occurrences on candidate web sites	
	Prefecture level candidates	Party list candidates
Party logo and link to main party web site	33 (23.4 %)	16 (18.4 %)
Party name in text and link to party web site	15 (10.6 %)	7 (8.0 %)
Photograph with party leader or official	21 (14.9 %)	13 (14.9 %)

Overall, fairly low percentages of candidates in either system indicated their party affiliation on their web sites. Upon closer examination, candidates of certain parties also demonstrated differences in which of these features were included on their web sites. Tables 9 and 10 show a breakdown of how many features candidates from each party in each electoral system displayed on the top pages of their web sites.

Table 9:   Party affiliation features on prefecture-level candidate web sites (by party)

	LDP (N=42)	DPJ (N=29)	Jiyutō (N=10)	JCP (N=17)	SDP (N=12)	New Komeitō (N=5)	Jiyurengō (N=2)	Ind.[1] (N=22)	Other (N=2)	Total (N=141)
Party logo and link to party web site	2 (4.8 %)	9 (31.0 %)	3 (30 %)	0 (0 %)	3 (25 %)	0 (0 %)	2 (100 %)	2 (9.1 %)	1 (50 %)	33 (23.4 %)
Party name in text and link to party web site	1 (2.4 %)	1 (3.4 %)	2 (20 %)	7 (41.2 %)	0 (0 %	1 (20 %)	1 (50 %)	2 (9.1 %)	0 (0 %)	15 (10.6 %)
Photograph with party leader or official	15 (35.7 %)	1 (3.4 %)	4 (40 %)	1 (5.9 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	21 (14.9 %)

[1] Indicates independent candidates who ran as "recommended candidates" of certain political parties rather than "official candidates".

Table 10: Party affiliation features on party-list candidate web sites (by party)

	LDP (N=24)	DPJ (N=21)	Jiyutō (N=8)	JCP (N=4)	SDP (N=6)	New Komeitō (N=9)	Jiyurengō (N=3)	Cons. (N=3)	Other (N=4)	Total (N=87)
Party logo and link to party web site	1 (4.2 %)	6 (28.6 %)	1 (12.5 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (16.7 %)	2 (22.2 %)	1 (12.5 %)	2 (66.7 %)	2 (50 %)	16 (18.4 %)
Party name in text and link to party web site	0 (0 %)	4 (19 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	2 (25 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (25 %)	7 (8.0 %)
Photograph with party leader or official	4 (16.7 %)	0 (0 %)	4 (50 %)	1 (25 %)	1 (16.7 %)	1 (11.1 %)	1 (12.5 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (25 %)	13 (14.9 %)

Among LDP candidates on the prefecture-level, the most popular means of demonstrating party affiliation was the prominent display of a photo-

graph of the candidate with the party leader, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō. Most interestingly, this means of showing party affiliation (or rather "leader affiliation") was much more popular than including the party logo or party name in text on the top page of the web site. Jiyutō candidates as well appeared to have a particularly strong affinity with their party leader, Ozawa Ichirō, as shown by the high percentage of candidates from this party as well who prominently featured this type of photograph on their web sites.

However, DPJ candidates appeared to take a different strategy of showing their party affiliation by preferring to display their party logo with a link to the DPJ's main web site. This suggests that these candidates chose to emphasize their association with the party rather than its leaders, Kan Naoto and Hatoyama Yukio. Although the JCP does not have a formal logo, during this election campaign, the JCP prominently displayed a tricolored "JCP" in text on the top page of its party web site. Only one candidate in each system used either this logo or an old JCP logo on their web sites. Alternatively, JCP candidates most often indicated the party name in text with a link to the main party web site.

Overall, candidates from different parties displayed different approaches to showing their party affiliation on their web sites. The use of visual means, such as logos (when available) and, for some parties, photographs of the candidate with the party leader, was more popular among candidates than the party name in text. Few candidates as well, except for those for the JCP, took advantage of hypertext links to create links to their party's web sites.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the advantages of using the Internet were certainly not lost on candidates running for public office during the 2001 Upper House election. Judging by the number of incumbent and older candidates who established web sites during this election cycle, the Internet appeared to be on its way to becoming an accepted means of political campaigning. LDP candidates in particular stepped up to the challenge of using the Internet for campaign purposes, however, along with their counterparts in other political parties and independent candidates, sought for ways to incorporate the use of the Internet with their traditional campaign media mix.

This in-depth investigation concerning how candidates of different political parties who utilized their web sites for political campaign activities through this election period revealed definite differences in approaches to

using the Internet in terms of party affiliation. Overall, candidates of opposition parties and independent candidates appeared to make much more extensive use of the Internet for election-related activities. These candidates often used their sites as platforms for involving the public in volunteering for the campaign and including their campaign events schedules on their sites. Candidates also used their web sites not only to demonstrate their party affiliation, but also as campaign advertising means, at times enhancing their own candidacies by prominently displaying photographs of popular party leaders such as the LDP's Koizumi Junichirō and Jiyutō's Ozawa Ichirō.

One particular theme throughout this research report has been the influence of the POEL on how candidates utilize the Internet. With each election cycle, candidates and political parties are making greater use of the Internet's multimedia capabilities, and this has not been lost on the government. Shortly after the 2001 Upper House election, a special commission, chaired by University of Tokyo Professor Kabashima Ikuo, was established to study the relationship between the Internet and political activities. Recommendations handed down by the commission in 2002 included suggestions for amending the POEL, however, to date, no changes have been made in the POEL with regard to the use of the Internet during election campaign periods. Although the law has not been altered as of yet to deal with this constantly evolving medium, it is clear from the utilization of the Internet in recent elections that we can expect this in the future.

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