E-Democracy in East Asia?

How the Internet Affects Politics and Civil Society in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

Workshop at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)
Tokyo, 5 December 2003
Panel II: The Internet in Japanese and East Asian Politics

Internet Use by Different Political Actors in Japan

Summary of the Results of a Panel at AoIR (Association of Internet Researchers) Conference

Toronto, October 2003

Isa Ducke, Leslie Tkach Kawasaki
Internet use in Japan

- 44% of the Japanese population have access to the Internet (White Paper, Prime Minister’s Office, 2002); estimate 12/2003: 61 million
- Interest in the political Internet growing from 11% in 2000 to close to 20% as of November 2003 (Video Research, 2000, 2003)
- Over 50% of NGOs have their own website
Number of Internet Users
(As of July 31, 2003)

Source: http://www.soumu.go.jp/joho_tsusin/eng/Statistics/number_users030829_2.html

The Internet in Japanese and EA Politics 4
Citizens’ groups in Japan: Internet use and “success”
(Isa Ducke)

- empirical data from about 150 citizens’ groups in Japan
- quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Data grouped in 8 issues
- Independent variables: Use of the Internet
- Dependent variables: Success factors
Citizens’ groups in Japan: Internet use

- almost all use e-mail
- 83% have a HP
- a majority does not answer e-mails
- Spending on HP is usually low, updates are often infrequent
- Interactive features, BBS, Chat, etc are rare
- Mobile phone HPs are rare (although many use e-mail via mobile phone)
Dependent variables: Success factors

- Success of the group
  - feedback, visibility
- Success in the issue
  - getting the issue on the agenda at all, promoting deeper discussion, opinion polls, procedural and substantive policy changes, and other forms of success
Selected Results I
Internet use and success

Total Use of Internet

Success

-1.0 0.0 1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0 5.0

61 Tsukurukai
94 WWF
Japan
112 Sukuukai
147 Consumers Union of Japan
148 The Japan Scientists' Association
Selected Results II
Links, directories, and search engines

42 Save the Children Japan
61 Tsukurukai
94 WWF Japan
147 Consumers Union of Japan
148 The Japan Scientists' Association
Selected Results III
Ease of Interface: Navigation bar

![Box plot showing the success of navigation bars with 'no' and 'yes' options.]

The Internet in Japanese and EA Politics
Selected Results IV
Generation of return visits

- Online registration
- (links lists)
- (calendars)
Selected Results V

Dialogic loop

- (Google hits, others)
- prompt response
- other interactive features
Selected Results VI
Groups dealing with women's issues use the Internet less

Women's issues

Total Use of Internet - scale

-1 0 1 2 3 4 5

N = 119 12

no yes
Summary

- Internet use is limited, mostly one-way communication
- Use and effectiveness of Internet depends on issues
- Digital divide does exist
- Potential of certain Internet features
Can the Internet propel the political and social role of Japanese NGOs?

A case study of anti-dam activism in Japan
(A content analysis of anti-dam activists’ websites in Japan)

Presentation at the panel „Citizens‘ participation in East Asian politics – Revolution via Internet?“
AoIR 4.0 Conference, Toronto - 17.08.2003

Dr. Iris Wieczorek
Institute of Asian Affairs
Changing political, legal and social context

Until 1990s

◆ unfavourable political environment for NGOs
◆ NGOs were informal tools of the Japanese government

Since 1990s

◆ shifts in Japanese government policy

➢ More favourable political and legal context
Evolution of the NGO sector
Number of IC-NGOs in Japan, 1984-2002

Changing political, legal and social context of the non-profit sector in Japan, 1989-2002

0 100 200 300 400 500 600

Public support programs for NGOs

Special Tax Measures Law
Information Disclosure Act
NGO Offices at ministries
Local government support
NPO Law
Consultations ministries & NGOs

Source: JANIC 2003

Dr. Iris Wieczorek
Institute of Asian Affairs

AoIR 4.0 Conference in Toronto, 17.10.2003
“Can the Internet propel the political and social role of Japanese NGOs?”
A content analysis of anti-dam activists’ websites

Theoretical framework

Important conditions for forming an influential social movement:

♦ Framing

♦ Actual mobilizational activities

♦ Network building
## A content analysis of anti-dam activists’ websites

### Coding scheme (example)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGO / citizen group</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score (1 = low, 3 = high)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Citizens for Saving the Kawabe river</em></td>
<td>Framing function</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://kawabe.technologic.co.jp">http://kawabe.technologic.co.jp</a></td>
<td>◆ Self-presentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Views and opinions of organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ External information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Background information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Feedback opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Electronic correspondence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Online debate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Personal contribution by visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mobilizational function</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Support / membership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Action calendar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Online actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Networking function</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ How many links</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◆ Kind of links</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Dr. Iris Wieczorek

Institute of Asian Affairs

AoIR 4.0 Conference in Toronto, 17.10.2003

“Can the Internet propel the political and social role of Japanese NGOs?”
A content analysis of anti-dam activists‘ websites

Research results

Framing function:
- High scores on information function
- High scores on diagnostic framing
- Relatively low scores on interactivity

Mobilizational function:
- Relatively high scores on online support / membership
- Relatively high scores on action calendar
- Low scores on online-actions

Networking function:
- High scores on quantity of links
- Medium scores on „strength“ of links
- High scores on indirect links
Japan’s Evolving Political Internet

Leslie M. Tkach-Kawasaki
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Tsukuba, Japan
Questions

- Who’s online? (party, gender, and age)
- What are they doing online?
  - Communications with the electorate
  - Party identification features
- Summary: Politics as usual?
Online Content

- Cross-party competition on web-sites
- Age (younger candidates vs. older candidates)
- Top-down communications structures
- Party identification through web-sites
# Candidates Online 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Candidates (Total)</th>
<th>Web-sites (Total)</th>
<th>Web-sites (Analyzed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefecture-based representation</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>141 (87.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party List</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>85 (77.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>226 (83.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Candidates Online I (Party)

![Bar chart showing candidates' online presence by party, with 'Yes' and 'No' indications.](chart.png)
Candidates Online II (Gender)
Candidates Online III (Age)

- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 59
- 60 plus

Bar chart showing the distribution of candidates online across different age groups.
Communications with the Electorate

- Online surveys and results
- Real-time interactivity
- E-mail address
- Comments/messages
- Contact information
- E-mail magazine
Communications features

% of Sites

Communications Features (#)
# Communications features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>LDP</th>
<th>DPJ</th>
<th>Jiyu</th>
<th>JCP</th>
<th>SDP</th>
<th>Komeito</th>
<th>Indep.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surveys and results</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
<td>1 (3.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (20%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real-time interactivity</td>
<td>4 (9.5%)</td>
<td>7 (24.1%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (5.9%)</td>
<td>2 (16.7%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail address</td>
<td>38 (90.5%)</td>
<td>24 (82.8%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16 (94.1%)</td>
<td>8 (66.7%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>3 (7.1%)</td>
<td>6 (20.7%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 (17.6%)</td>
<td>1 (8.3%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact info</td>
<td>13 (31%)</td>
<td>11 (37.9%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5 (29.4%)</td>
<td>6 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail newsletter</td>
<td>7 (16.7%)</td>
<td>5 (17.2%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 (23.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Party Identification Features

- Party logo
- Links to party web-site (national or local)
- Links to individual politicians
## Party Identification Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party logo only</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party logo and link to party site</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party name (text only)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party(ies)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual politicians</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Party Identification Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>LDP</th>
<th>DPJ</th>
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<th>JCP</th>
<th>SDP</th>
<th>Kom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party logo only</td>
<td>9 (21.4%)</td>
<td>13 (44.8%)</td>
<td>4 (40.0%)</td>
<td>1 (5.9%)</td>
<td>5 (41.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party logo and link to party site</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
<td>9 (31.0%)</td>
<td>3 (30.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (25.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party name (text only)</td>
<td>10 (23.8%)</td>
<td>2 (6.9%)</td>
<td>2 (20.0%)</td>
<td>11 (64.7%)</td>
<td>2 (16.7%)</td>
<td>2 (40.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to political party</td>
<td>23 (54.8%)</td>
<td>22 (75.9%)</td>
<td>4 (40.0%)</td>
<td>13 (76.5%)</td>
<td>5 (41.7%)</td>
<td>3 (60.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to individual politicians</td>
<td>9 (21.4%)</td>
<td>16 (55.2%)</td>
<td>3 (30.0%)</td>
<td>7 (41.2%)</td>
<td>2 (16.7%)</td>
<td>1 (20.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion: Politics as Usual?

- Trend towards candidates of larger parties having web-sites, but smaller parties making more interactive use of their sites.
- Communications features tend to be top-down rather than bottom up; few interactive possibilities on the sites.
- Party identification features most frequently seen among smaller parties.
Summary

• Most (but not all) groups / NGOs / parties have their own HP
• Dialogic features are rare
• Considerable numbers of their users / audience don’t access the Internet, or only via mobile phone
• Access to political sites is low