



# **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**

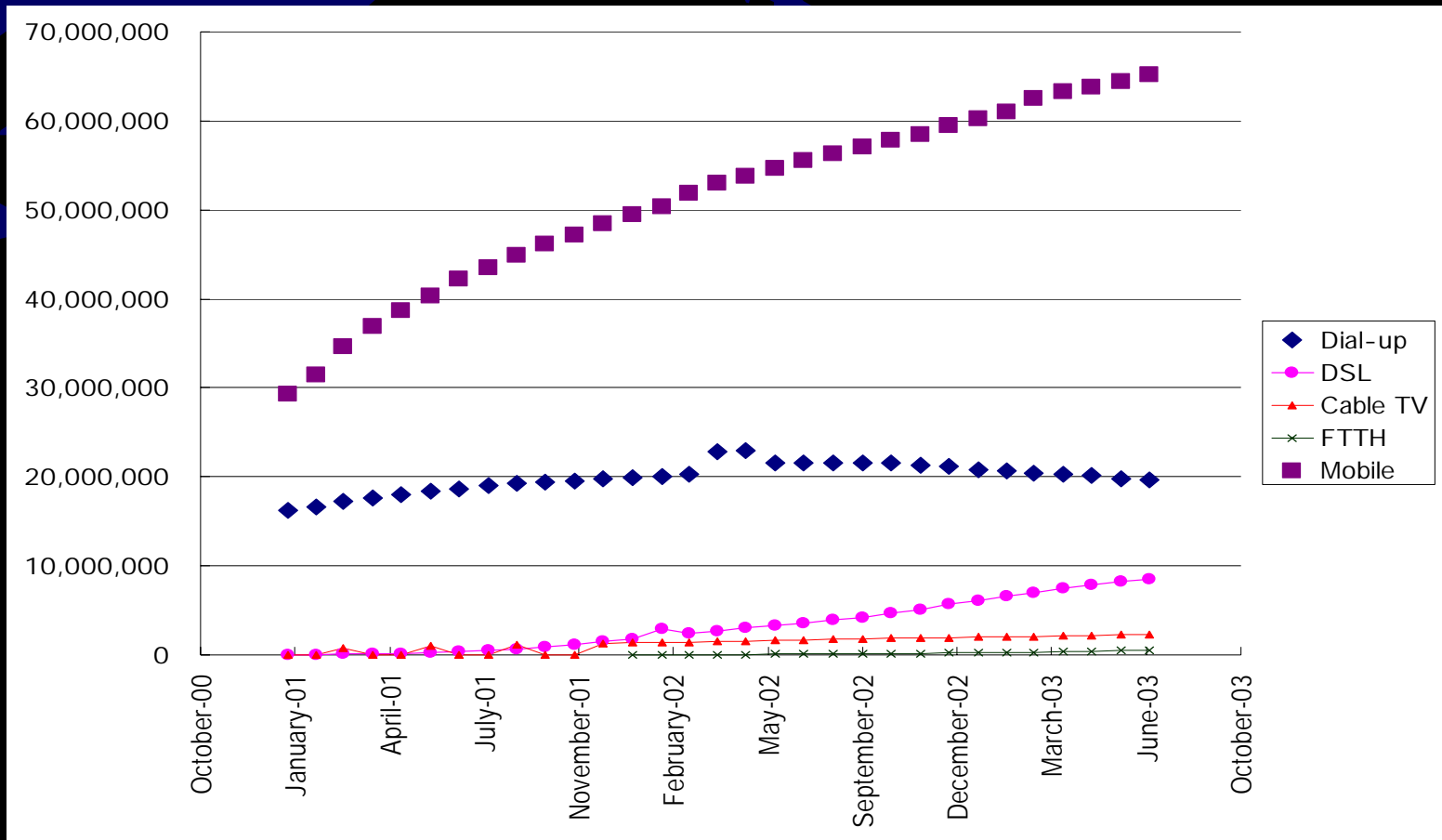
# Internet use in Japan

- 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](http://www.soumu.go.jp/joho_tsusin/eng/Statistics/number_users030829_2.html)

# Citizens' groups in Japan: Internet use and “success”

(Isa Duche)

- 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)



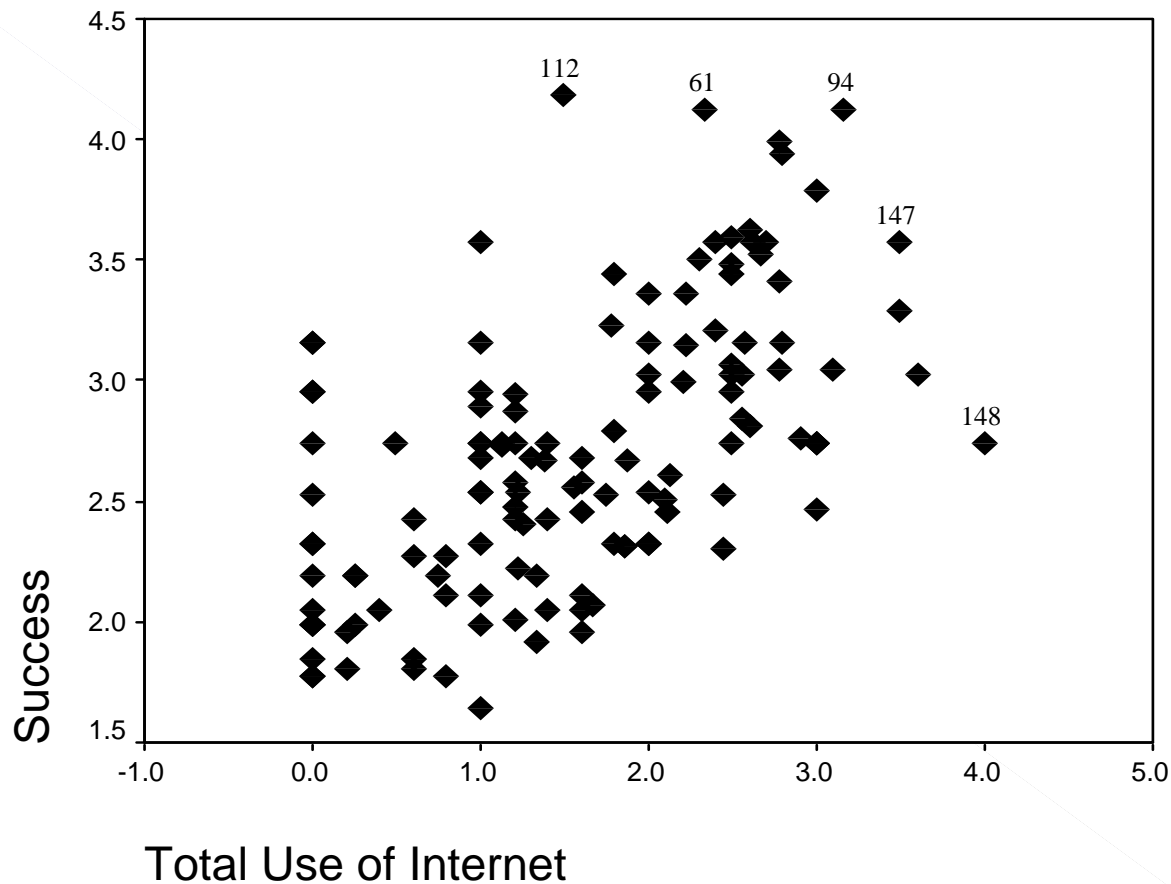
# Dependent variables: Success factors

- **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

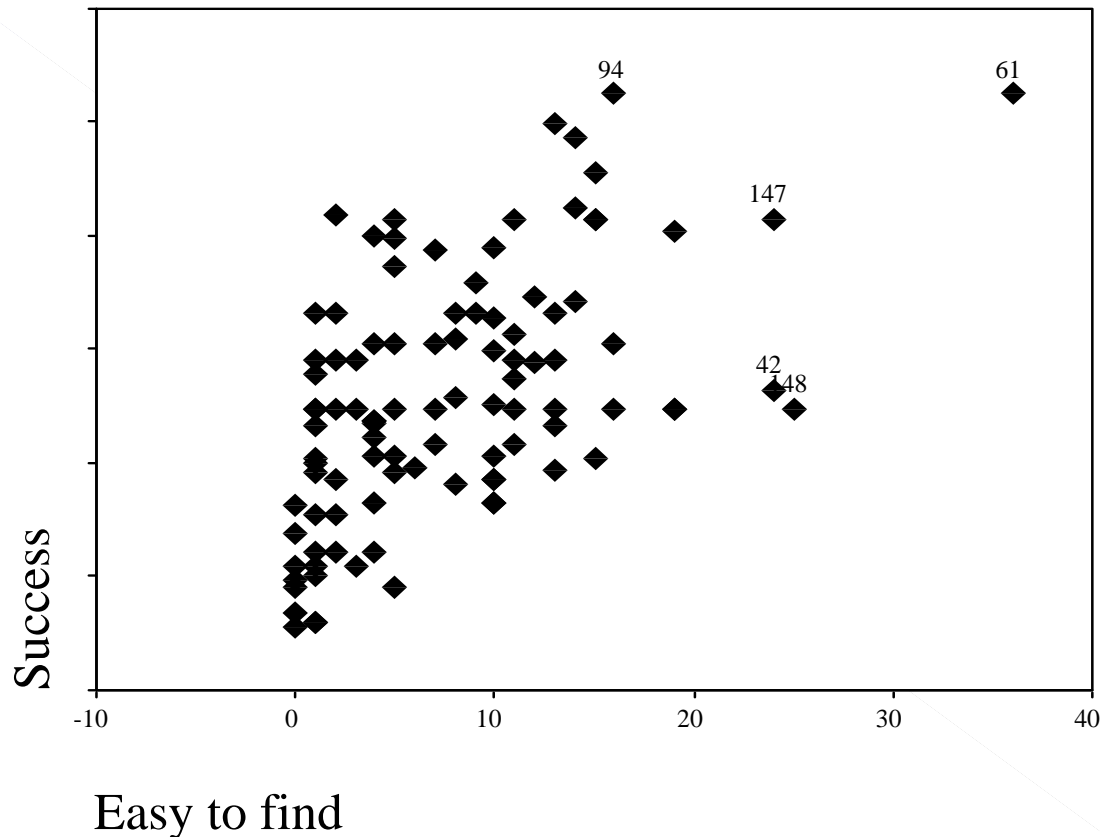


61 Tsukurukai  
94 WWF  
Japan  
112 Sukuukai  
147  
Consumers  
Union of  
Japan  
148 The  
Japan  
Scientists'  
Association



# Selected Results II

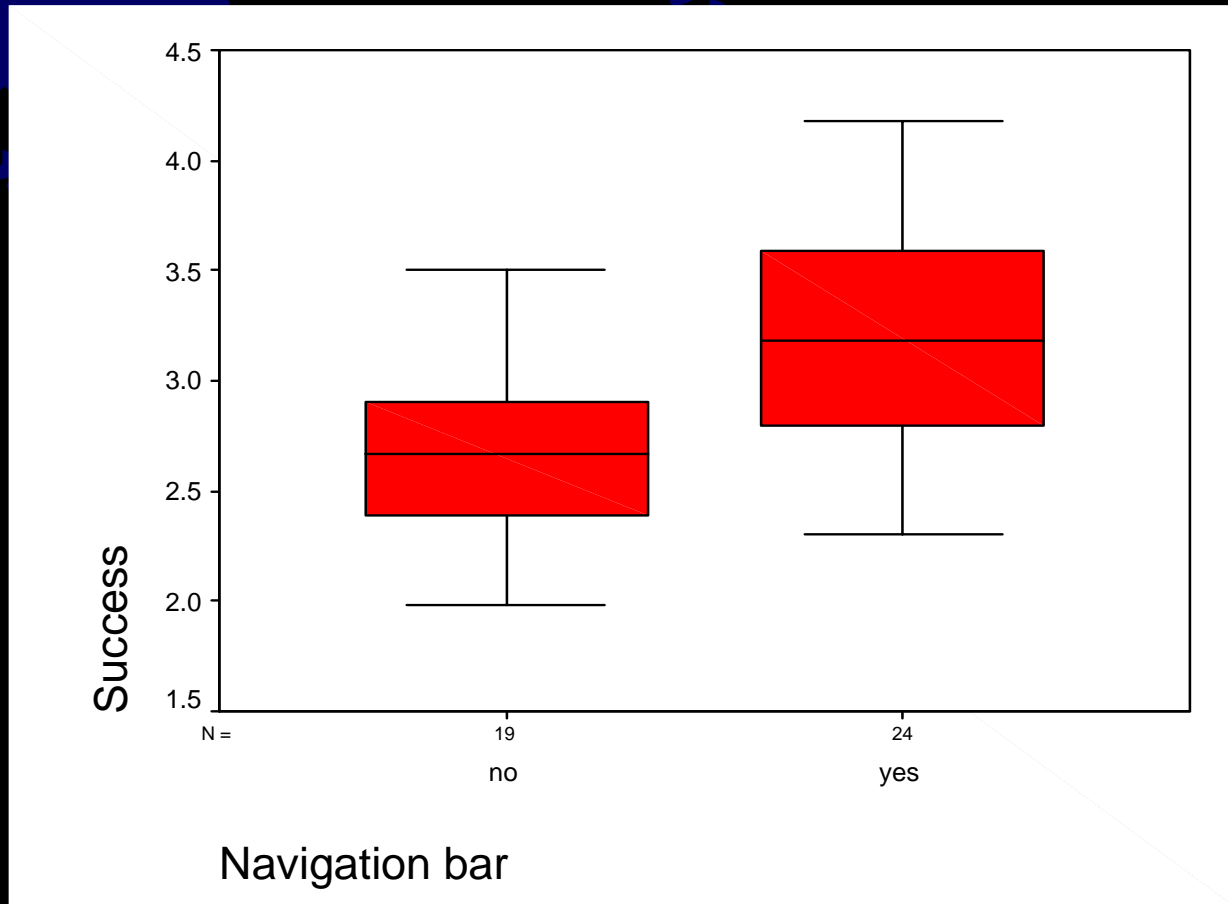
## Links, directories, and search engines



42 Save the  
Children  
Japan  
61 Tsukurukai  
94 WWF Japan  
147 Consumers  
Union of  
Japan  
148 The Japan  
Scientists'  
Association

# Selected Results III

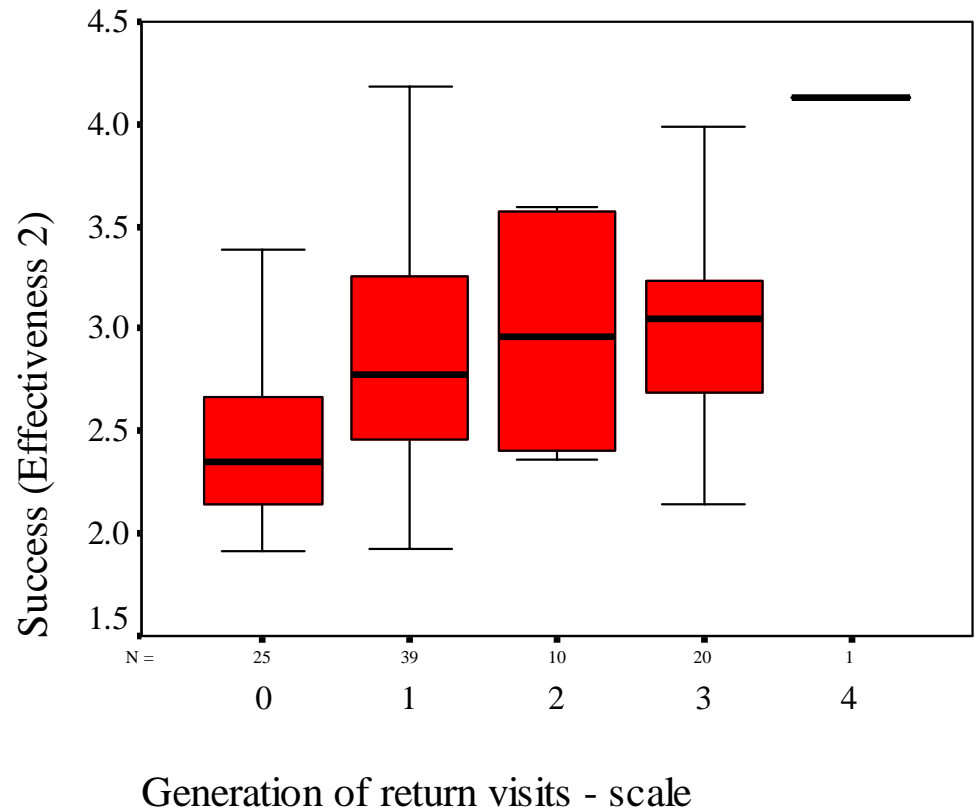
## Ease of Interface: Navigation bar



# Selected Results IV

## Generation of return visits

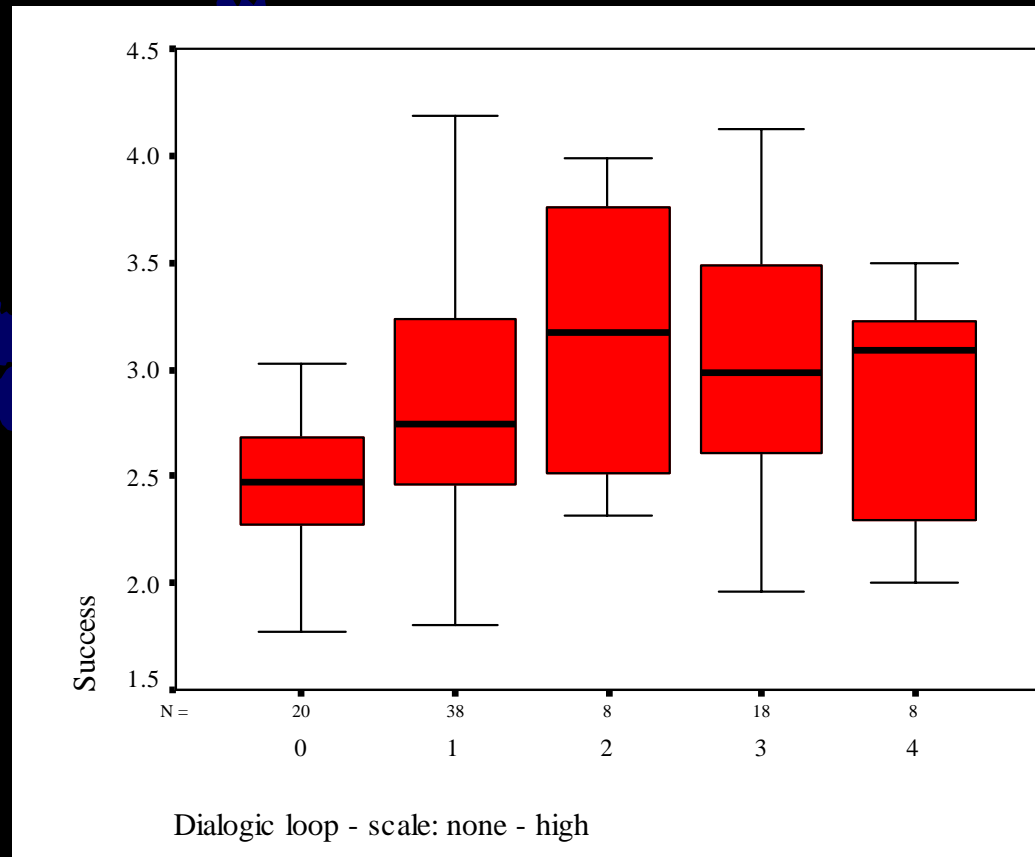
- Online registration
- (links lists)
- (calendars)



# Selected Results V

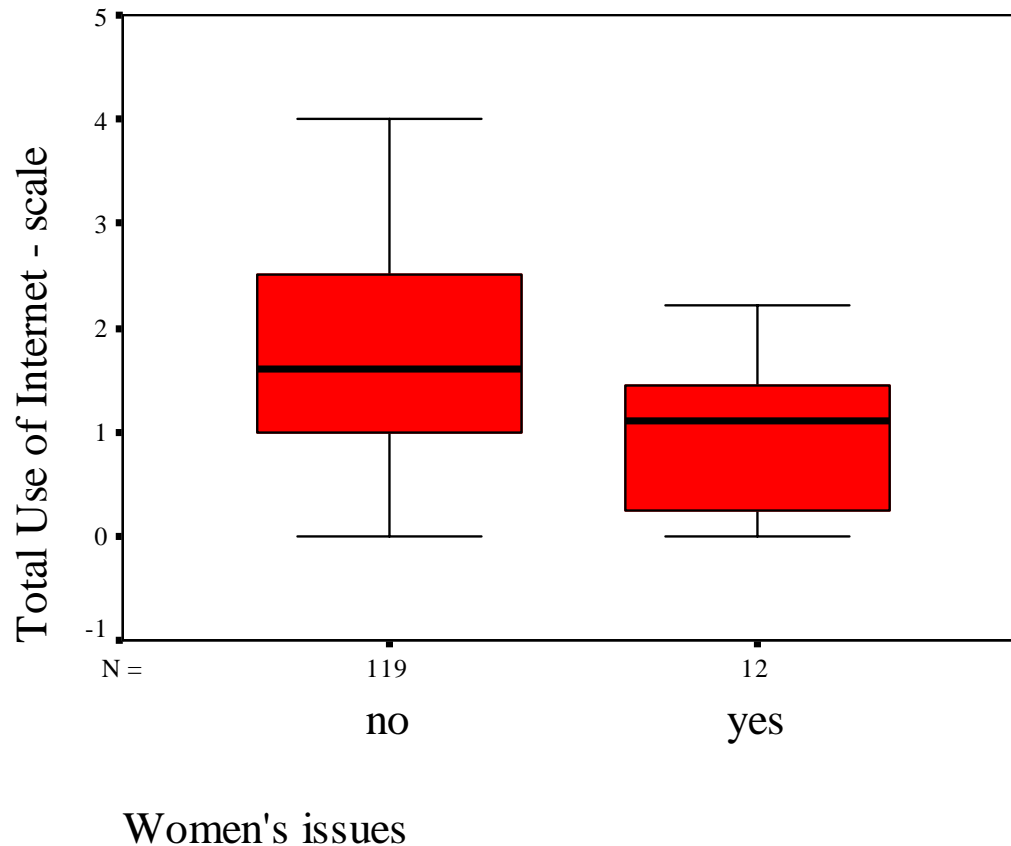
## Dialogic loop

- (Google hits, others)
- prompt response
- other interactive features



# Selected Results VI

## Groups dealing with women's issues use the Internet less



# 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

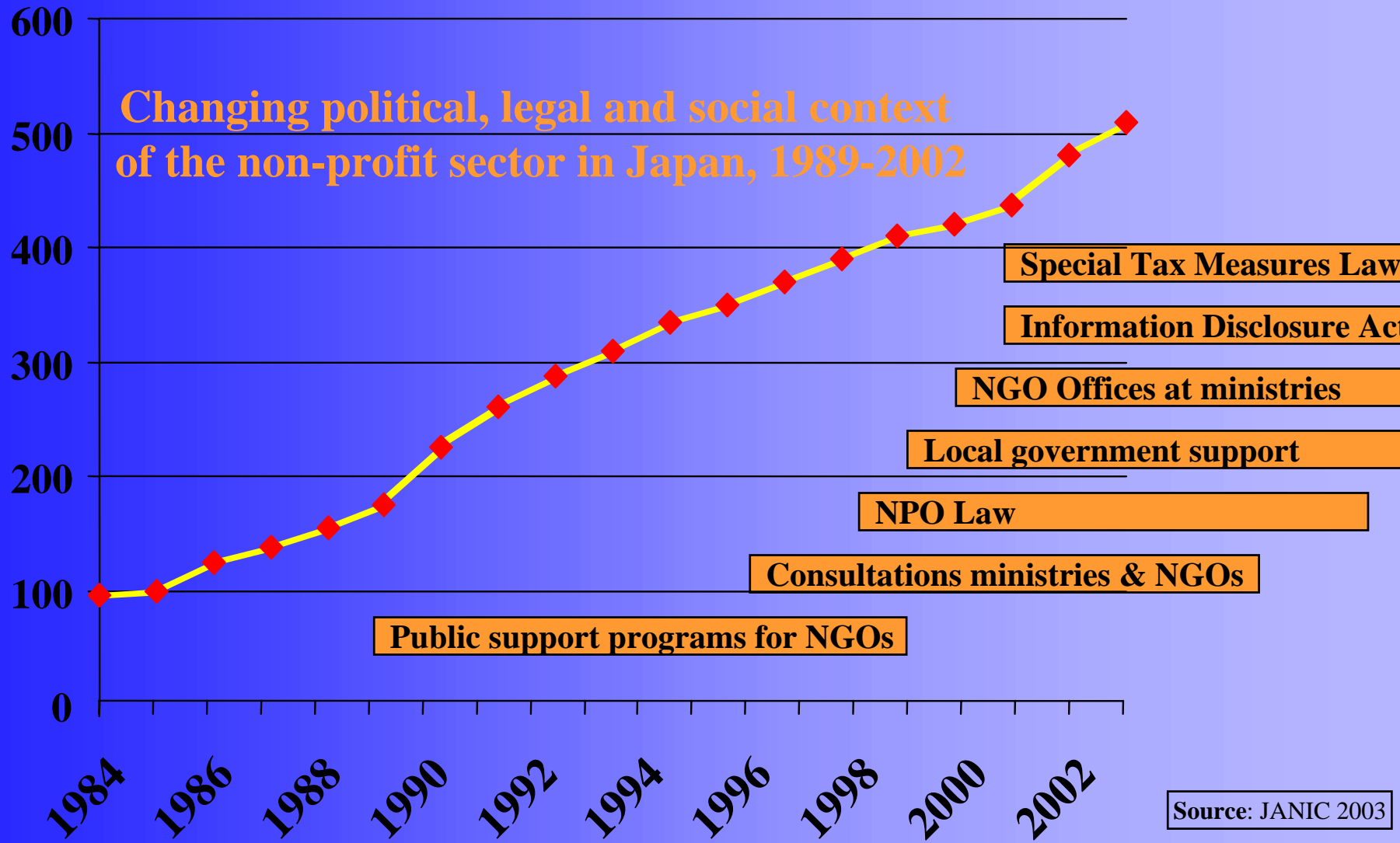
## Since 1990s

- ◆ shifts in Japanese government policy
- More favourable political and legal context



# Evolution of the NGO sector

## Number of IC-NGOs in Japan, 1984-2002



Source: JANIC 2003

# **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)

NGO / citizen group	Criteria	Score (1 = low, 3 = high)
<i>Citizens for Saving the Kawabe river</i> <a href="http://kawabe.technologic.co.jp">http://kawabe.technologic.co.jp</a>	<b>Framing function</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Self-presentation</li><li>◆ Views and opinions of organization</li><li>◆ external information</li><li>◆ background information</li><li>◆ feedback opportunities</li><li>◆ electronic correspondence</li><li>◆ online debate</li><li>◆ personal contribution by visitors</li></ul>	
	<b>Mobilizational function</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Support / membership</li><li>◆ Action calendar</li><li>◆ Online actions</li><li>◆ Training</li></ul>	
	<b>Networking function</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ How many links</li><li>◆ Kind of links</li></ul>	

# 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



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# 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

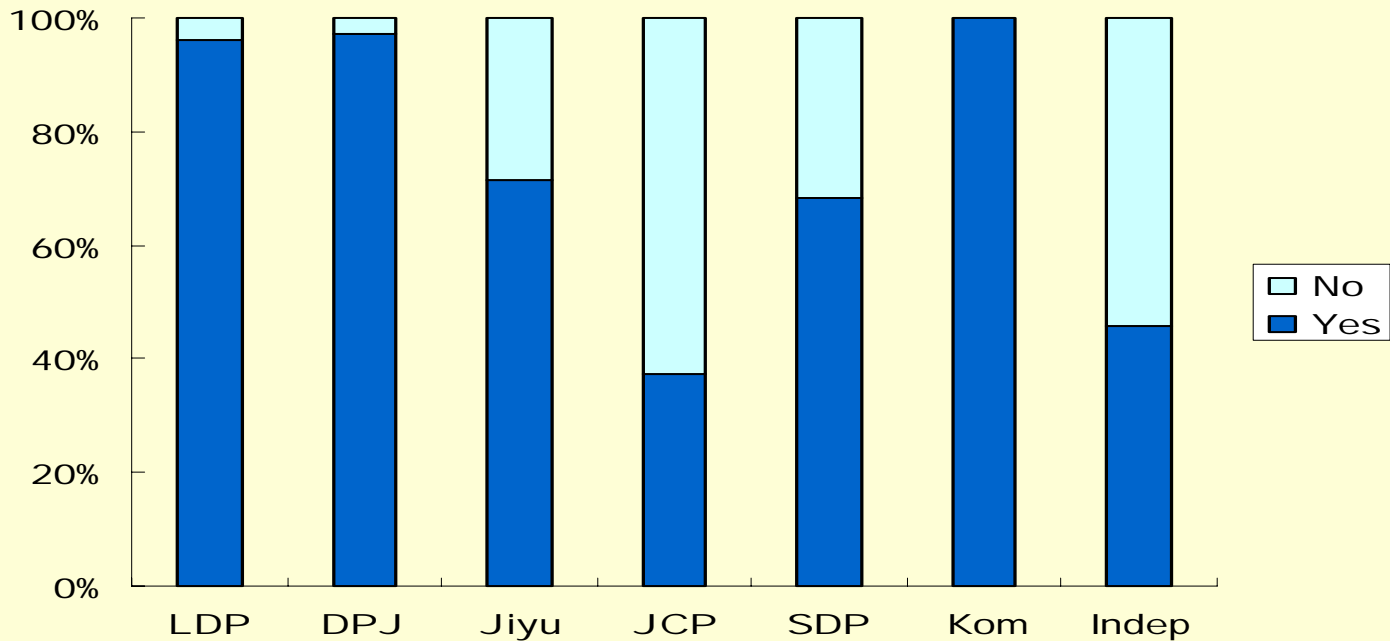
- Cross-party competition on web-sites
- Age (younger candidates vs. older candidates)
- Top-down communications structures
- Party identification through web-sites

# Candidates Online 2001

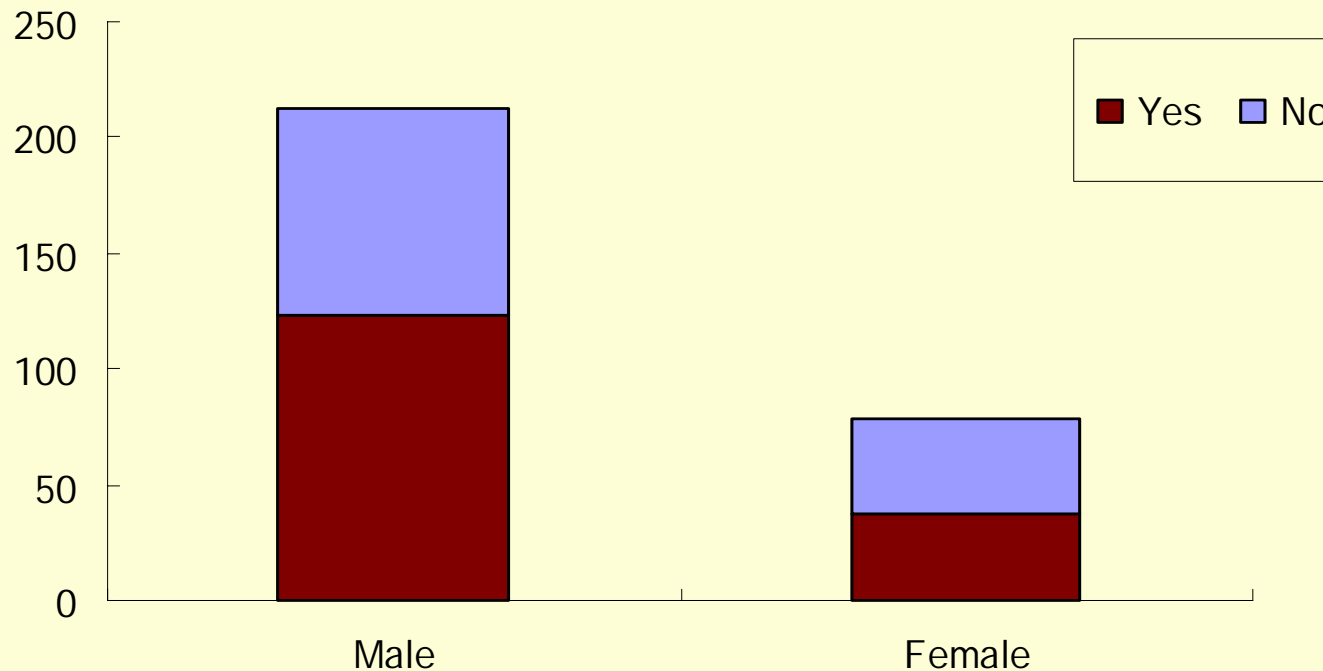
	Candidates (Total)	Web-sites (Total)	Web-sites (Analyzed)
<b>Prefecture- based representation</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>141 (87.6%)</b>
<b>Party List</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>85 (77.3%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>226 (83.4%)</b>



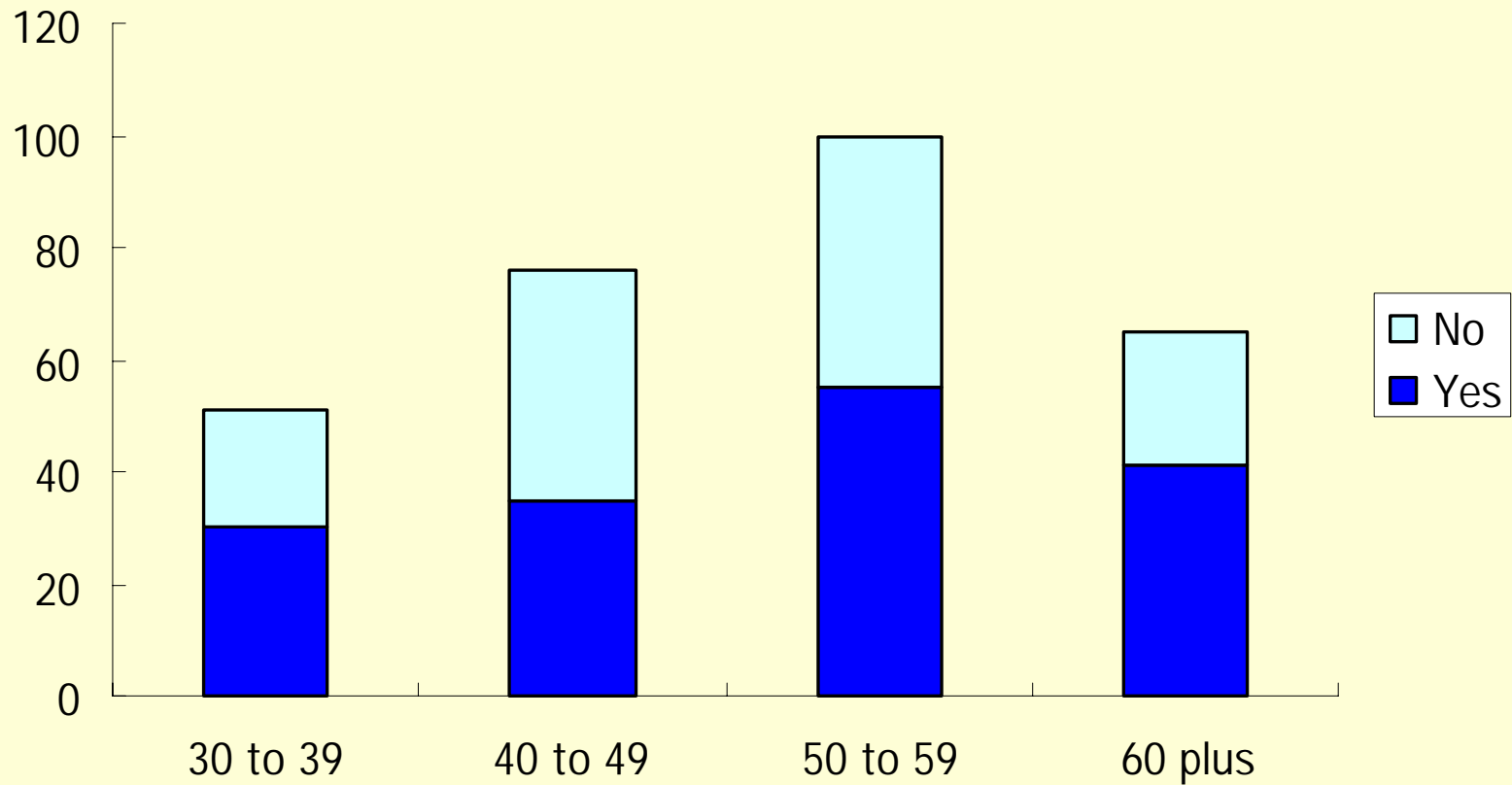
# Candidates Online I (Party)



# Candidates Online II (Gender)



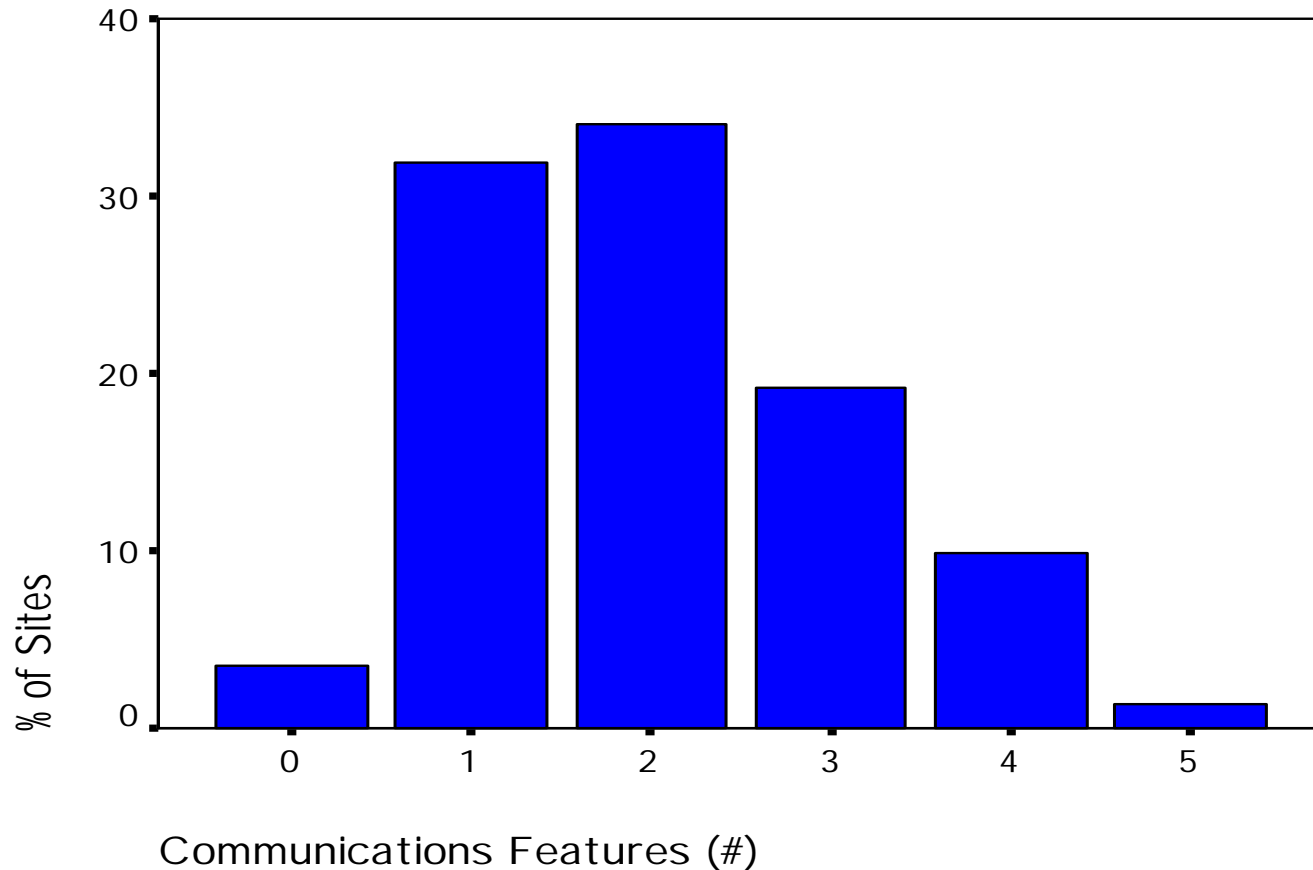
# Candidates Online III (Age)



# Communications with the Electorate

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

# Communications features



# Communications features

Party	LDP	DPJ	Jiyu	JCP	SDP	Komeito	Indep.
Surveys and results	2 (4.8%)	1 (3.4%)	0	0	0	3 (20%)	0
Real-time interactivity	4 (9.5%)	7 (24.1%)	3 (30%)	1 (5.9%)	2 (16.7%)	1 (20%)	6 (27.3%)
E-mail address	38 (90.5%)	24 (82.8%)	9 (90%)	16 (94.1%)	8 (66.7%)	3 (60%)	22 (100%)
Comments	3 (7.1%)	6 (20.7%)	4 (40%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (8.3%)	2 (20%)	7 (31.8%)
Contact info	13 (31%)	11 (37.9%)	6 (60%)	5 (29.4%)	6 (50%)	2 (40%)	13 (59.1%)
E-mail newsletter	7 (16.7%)	5 (17.2%)	1 (10%)	4 (23.5%)	0	0	3 (13.6%)

# Party Identification Features

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

# Party Identification Features

Feature	Frequency	Percentage
Party logo only	33	23.4
Party logo and link to party site	22	15.6
Party name (text only)	30	21.3
Political party(ies)	75	53.2
Individual politicians	42	29.8



# Party Identification Features

Party	LDP	DPJ	Jiyu	JCP	SDP	Kom
Party logo only	9 (21.4%)	13 (44.8%)	4 (40.0%)	1 (5.9%)	5 (41.7%)	0
Party logo and link to party site	2 (4.8%)	9 (31.0%)	3 (30.0%)	0	3 (25.0%)	0
Party name (text only)	10 (23.8%)	2 (6.9%)	2 (20.0%)	11 (64.7%)	2 (16.7)	2 (40.0%)
Links to political party	23 (54.8%)	22 (75.9%)	4 (40.0%)	13 (76.5%)	5 (41.7%)	3 (60.0%)
Links to individual politicians	9 (21.4%)	16 (55.2%)	3 (30.0)	7 (41.2%)	2 (16.7%)	1 (20.0%)

# 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**

