Regional Web campaigning in the 2002 German Federal Election

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Abstract

This paper examines locally based web campaigning by parties and candidates in the 2002 German federal election. The main goal is to provide a more systematic insight into why parties and candidates engage in the practice and how they differ in the content they produce. To do this we first review the literature on web campaigning and identify a range of spatial, structural and party-level factors that have been linked to an increased propensity to engage in Internet campaigning. We then test these explanatory variables with data from local party and candidate websites during the 2002 German federal election. Finally we undertake content analysis of the sites and investigate the extent to which differentiation in parties and candidates' approach to using the medium can be related to party size and its overall goals. Our results show that electoral and political factors are more relevant to explaining the major parties use of the web, while socio-structural features of the constituency explain the minor parties' activity better. Surprisingly little variance is observed in site content, but party size and outlook does appear to be linked to overall presence online than specific features of sites.

The literature on parties use of the Internet is now quite extensive with election and 'peace-time' studies having been run in a variety of established and new democracies such as the UK (Gibson and Ward 1998), the US (Margolis and Resnick, 1997; Margolis et al., 1999; Gibson et al 2003), Germany (Gibson, Römmele and Ward 2003), the Netherlands (Tops, Voerman and Boogers, 2000; Voerman 1999), Italy (Newell 2001), Japan (Tkach-Kawasaki 2003); Australia (Gibson and Ward, 2002), Denmark (Löfgren 2000), and Russia and the Ukraine (Semetko and Krasnoboka 2003), as well in large 'n' comparative studies (Norris, 2001, 2003). While Internet related technologies can cover a wide range of applications, much of this work has focused on content analysis of national websites with the results pointing toward a number of conclusions. First, party use of the Web tends to follow general election cycles whereby parties, particularly the larger one's pour resources into their sites in the lead-up to polling day, leaving sites to languish afterward. Second, and relatedly, as web use has spread among the population and parties have woken up to its usefulness as a campaign tool, a divide between the major and minor parties use of it has begun to emerge. Recent studies of the British and German national parties websites in the 2001 and 2002 parliamentary elections in particularly revealed a clear divide to have opened up in quality and visibility of those run by the major parties (Gibson, Römmele and Ward, 2003; Gibson et al. 2003). Such developments do not appear to have dampened the enthusiasm of the smaller parties for the medium, however, since while it may not offer them entirely equal exposure, it is certainly 'more equal' than other mediums. Finally, despite the websites being developed in different national contexts, sites follow a similar pattern in that they tend to offer a significant amount information, but fail to exploit the interactive properties of the Web, and its possibilities for individualized targeting of messages. While this seems to hold across party systems, within systems there does seem to be evidence of ideological

outlook, and more specifically party goals playing some role in determining the emphasis placed on the various aspects of website content (Gibson, Römmele and Ward, 2003).

These studies have been very useful in building a broader picture of the developments in parties use of new ICTs, however, they are more limited in answering questions of an explanatory nature such as why political actors use the web and what difference it makes to election outcomes or parties' internal power distribution. At the national level, almost all parties in democratic and also non-democratic nations now have a website so there is little, any variance in adoption to explain. The small 'n' also means that it is more difficult to identify differences in content across sites that might be related to wider factors such as parties' size or their overall ideology and ethos. To answer these questions, however, we can turn to another source of data, that has thus far received only limited attention – party web campaigning at the local and regional level. In particular, we examine the local party and candidate sites run during the 2002 German Federal election by the five parliamentary parties: the SPD, the CDU/CSU, the FDP, the PDS, and the Greens.

Local campaigning and the development of party and candidate websites

While the lower level of interest in local level web campaigning is due, in part, to the newness of the medium and doubts about its effects on the electorate's behaviour, it is no doubt also related to the lack of scholarly attention to local campaigning more generally. Although interest in political campaigns has increased tremendously over the last ten years (Swanson/Mancini 1996; Norris et al 1999; Farrell & Schmitt-Beck 2002; Römmele 2002, Gibson & Römmele 2001; Plasser 2002), the focus of almost all studies has been on the national level. Early empirical work on local campaigning tended to be mainly descriptive, focusing on how the campaign was conducted by the party

organization (for Germany see Gemmecke 1967; von Beyme 1974) and the different

campaign methods used, i.e. posters, town hall meetings, distributing literature,

canvassing, movies, direct mailings etc. (Faltlhauser 1972, Andel et al 1974). More

recently, however, a number of studies of local campaigning have attempted to link

constituency campaigning in the UK and US to the modernization of national campaigns

(Denver & Hands 2002; Strachan 2002). Under certain conditions, it seems, the new

'postmodern' style of campaigning using sophisticated tactics and professional

assistance can also be seen as taking place at the local level. As well as the factors

prompting change in the style of local campaigns, another line of research has examined

the impact of local campaigning on levels of voter mobilization. This work has shown that

active campaigns are more effective at getting the vote out than are moribund

campaigns (Whiteley et al., 2001). Related work by Pattie et al. (1995) on the UK and

Jacobson (1976) in the US has pointed to the importance of campaign effort (measured

by constituency spending) in securing victory. Examining constituency campaign

spending across three British general elections, the authors show that parties target their

money-raising and campaign spending activities on winning marginal seats and

defending those they already hold. These strategies are then seen to be positively linked

to vote increases, leaving the authors to conclude that the more that a party spends, the

more likely it is in to win seats, and thus to capture power.

While research on regional and local web campaigning is clearly of greatest interest

to scholars examining the impact of new ICTs on parties and elections, therefore, it is

also a fruitful avenue for scholars of local campaigning more generally. Although it may

be early days to look for effects on overall election outcomes, web campaigning may

prove a useful indicator of overall constituency activity by parties. In addition, it may also

provide important evidence about the diffusion of the new style of postmodern

campaigning since new ICTs are a key component of this more hi-tech approach to

campaigning. The main goal of this paper in examining locally based web campaigning, however, is to provide more systematic insight into why parties and candidates are engaging in the practice, and how they differ in the content they produce. To do this we first review the literature on web campaigning and identify a range of spatial, structural and party-level factors that have been linked to an increased propensity to engage in Internet campaigning. We then test these explanatory variables with data from local party and candidate websites during the 2002 German federal election. Finally we undertake content analysis of the sites and investigate the extent to which differentiation in parties and candidates' approach to using the medium can be related to party size and its overall goals.

The distribution of regional and local websites

Most of the research in this field has concentrated on the US, either in statewide elections for Senators and Governors, or district elections for House seats. Klotz (1997) was probably one of the first to provide facts and figures on distribution of websites. Studying the home pages of US Senate candidates in 1996 he reported that of the 34 races in scope, 50 of the 68 candidates from the major parties had sites. Of the 20 races where the Libertarian party ran candidates, only 9 had homepages, and these were notably "…the least sophisticated, least comprehensive, and most eclectic…"(483). Thus, in line with conclusions drawn from the national and international level studies, even in these early days of web campaigning there was clearly a skew toward the major parties in terms of overall web presence. Klotz concludes rather emphatically "claims of levelling the playing field for third-party candidates are unsupported…" (483). Examining more closely the pattern of distribution between the major parties, however, he does also note that challengers in Senate races were more likely than incumbents to have websites (82% versus 63%). Widening the focus to more contextual factors, he notes

that educational attainment at the state level does not appear to be linked to the likelihood of candidates taking to the web.

More systematic study of the distribution of candidates sites in the 1998 and 2000 US Congressional and gubernatorial races conducted by Kamarck (1999, 2003) showed that despite an overall growth in number, the gap between minor and major parties remained. While virtually every major party candidate was found to have a site for the 2000 election, the same was not true for third party and independent candidates. In addition, elections to statewide office saw more web activity overall than the more localised House races. While this was due largely to the higher proportion of unopposed incumbents in House races, there was also clearly a complacency factor at work here, since those challengers that did emerge in House races were actually more than twice as likely to use the Web than incumbents. Such sharp disparity was not observed in Senate and gubernatorial elections, however, with incumbents and challengers proving equally likely to have websites. As this might suggest, therefore, closeness of the race was also found to be a spur to internet campaigning, with a tighter margin of victory proving associated with an increased likelihood of websites being launched. Such an interpretation fits with the findings from other research showing that House and Senate congressional incumbents were more likely to rely on their official government sites instead of putting up their own campaign sites (D'Alessio 2000; Klotz 1998), but that incumbents in jeopardy, were more likely to establish an independent website (Karmarck 1998). For example, in the 1998 gubernatorial races, 86 per cent of incumbent governors established sites, as did 92 per cent of major party challengers, and only one of 28 candidates in the most competitive gubernatorial races failed to establish a Web presence (Karmarck 1999). In 2000, a survey by Netelection.org, 78 per cent of incumbent congressional candidates were found to have established websites in competitive districts compared with 50 per cent in more secure districts (Lynch 2001).

Greer and LaPointe (2003), also comparing US campaign sites between 1998 and 2000, but at the statewide level only, add some interesting findings to the emerging picture. While the findings confirm the pattern of dominance by the major parties in terms of numbers of candidates with websites, the data on female candidates' websites offers something of a challenge to this 'politics as usual' thesis. Despite the lower incidence of women as nominees - in 2000, only 11 were put forward for Senate or governor by the major parties – they showed great keenness to use the medium, with 10 of those 11 running websites.

Outside of the US, evidence from the British 2001 general elections on the question of distribution of sites has also pointed toward the importance of competition, reporting that 40 per cent of the 91 most competitive English constituencies (margin of victory less than one per cent) saw both incumbent and the major challenger online and 50 per cent had at least one candidate online. In less close contests (margin of victory between one to ten percent), only around 20 per cent had both challenger and incumbent sites present (Ward and Gibson 2003). Along with margin of victory, however, party ideology or outlook was arguably also at work, with Liberal Democrat local parties and candidates make a far stronger showing on the Web than their Labour and Conservative counterparts.

The content of regional and local website

Analysis and comparison of website content at the local and regional level has been more limited than studies of overall frequency and distribution of sites. This is no doubt due to the labour intensive nature of the data collection involved, as sites proliferate. The analysis that has been done, however, has yielded a number of interesting findings. Klotz (1997) again, provides some of the earliest systematic work in this area, quantifying the 50 major party candidate' sites in the 1996 Senate elections in

terms of their issue emphasis, level of personalisation and updating, and propensity

toward negative campaigning. Overall he finds that most candidates did not offer a

highly indepth discussion of the issues and those that were discussed tended to be

`safe` topics rather than socially divisive one's such as abortion or affirmative action.

Sites were also tended to be highly personal, with a notable de-emphasis of party

affiliation on websites. Indulgence in negative campaigning and particular personal

attacking of opponents was relatively rare, perhaps out of deference acceptance to the

more cooperative spirit of the net as a communication medium compared with other

formats, at least in its early days. Site updating was not undertaken by almost half of the

candidates in the final 40 days of the campaign.

A more systematic assessment of site content was undertaken by Greer and

LaPointe (2003) in their analysis of candidate sites for the US Senate and gubernatorial

elections in 1998 and 2000. Using regression analysis they assessed the effects of a

party status, and a range of election specific features as well as gender on four aspects

of web communication – information dissemination, graphical/visual features,

participation/interactivity, and levels of negative campaigning. While a general

conclusion is that major party candidates in general had more of everything than those

from minor parties, mirroring the results from national level analysis, office sought was

also found to be a significant predictor. Senate candidates tended to use more graphics

and focus less on issues than gubernatorial candidates. Open races were more likely to

see positive messages than those where incumbents were running, although

challengers never having held any political office before were more likely to go on the

attack that those with some kind of political experience. Finally, gender was not found to

be significant in explaining differences in site content, underscoring the point made

earlier that the fewer number of female candidates with websites was due largely to the

smaller number of women securing nomination, rather than any inherent resistance to using the medium.

Updating these findings to 2002, Foot and Schneider's analysis of 1167 candidate sites in House, Senate and gubernatorial elections confirmed the greater content on offer by the major parties, particularly in terms of information. Mobilizing features such as allowing users to download campaign promotional materials or send a link to the site around their email circle, although far less evident overall were more prevalent on Democrat and Republican sites than those of third parties.[1]

Party outlook, primary goals and website content

In addition to the importance of party and candidate resources, and various features of the race itself, such as its level of competition, more party-specific and ideological factors have also been investigated for their effects on site content. During the 1998 election cycle it was reported that Republican sites had the edge in content over the Democrats, with each site providing information on making financial contributions, getting on mailing lists and on the candidate's stand on some policies (Tedesco, Miller and Spiker 1999). Further differences were observed in the 2000 U.S. Senate races, with 61 per cent of Democrat's sites offering a mission statement, compared to 47 per cent of Republican candidate sites. Democrats were more likely to discuss education than Republicans, but Republicans were more "Web savvy," because they were more likely to include volunteer options, voter registration information, a market place, audio, video, motion graphics, links, pop-up features, and several other features (Puopolo 2001). Complementing this verdict, albeit from a more anecdotal angle, a comparison of the two parties National Committee sites in late 1999 concluded that that the Democrats,

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[1] 'Candidate Web Sites in the 2002 US election' Kirsten A. Foot and Steven M. Schneider. Available at <http:??politicalweb.info/reports/web-sphere-analyis.pps> Accessed on July 29, 2003.

while worthy was somewhat dull, whereas the Republicans were more in favour of glitz and fund raising.[2]

In the UK, Ward and Gibson (2003) as well as examining the distribution of local party and candidate websites for the three main parties across the 398 English constituencies during the 2001 UK general election, also examined their content. While the results overall were fairly non-inspiring, Liberal Democrat sites tended to stand-out from those of the two other parties, providing in general more content and interactivity in general, than the two bigger parties. The authors argued that this was due in part to the party's stronger commitment to grass roots participation as well as their more educated and middle class support base. In addition, Liberal Democrats (and also some Labour sites) in marginal constituencies were also notable for their explicit appeals for tactical voting to defeat Tory candidates. Studies of the Australian parties at the state level have also suggested that party ethos is reflected in website content. Again, Gibson and Ward found that while the more traditional hierarchical 'mass party' - the Australian Labor Party (ALP) – had its state parties follow a style template in site design, the more federated Liberals did not appear to impose any such dictum. Further the Green parties, despite their comparative fringe status and lack of capacity, managed to mount credible sites in every state, and incorporate a more participatory component.

Finally, while not at the sub-national level, a systematic study of German parties websites during the federal election of 2002 investigated the extent to which any relationship could be discerned between a parties' primary goal, and its overall ICT strategy (Gibson, Römmele and Ward, 2003). According to the literature on primary goals, parties pursue one of four main goals: vote-maximizing, office-maximizing, enhancing intraparty democracy and policy advocacy (Budge & Keman 1990; Harmel &

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[2] 'Which Party is Webbier?' by Eve Gerber. *Slate* November 16, 1999. Available at <http://www.slate.com/netelection/entries/99-11-16_55991.asp> Accessed 24 December, 1999.

Janda 1994; Laver & Schofield 1990; Ström 1990). Extrapolating from this logic to parties new ICTs strategy, and website design in particular, it was argued that a party with a primary goal of <u>vote maximization</u> would be highly geared toward using the new ICTs for electioneering purposes in order to attract voters from all societal groups, particularly the undecided. Their approach to the web, therefore, would be to see it as broadcasting and campaign medium, rather than a public or private space for interactivity with voters or members. <u>Office maximizers</u> would also share the same focus on using the new media to campaign and the top-down distribution of information. However, since office-maximizing parties tend to be smaller and less visible than their vote-seeking counterparts they may be even more aggressive in exploiting the new media and be keen to use it for party-building or intra-organisational purposes, such as campaign coordination and internal networking than the larger parties. In addition, because of their 'niche' status and the fact that in general they have a smaller electorate than vote-seeking parties, one might expect that office-seekers would exploit the targeting and narrowcasting possibilities of the new media. Parties with <u>intra-party democracy</u> as their primary goal would be expected to stress the participatory aspect of the new communication technology. Parties, whose primary goal is that of active representation of members' wishes, see themselves accountable to their members and not to the electorate at large. The overall focus of implementing new ICTs, therefore, would be on promoting the membership organization, with bottom-up communication being main focus. Finally, although parties with <u>policy advocacy</u> as their primary goal have received less attention in this literature, one can argue that they would see the new ICTs as primarily a medium for communicating their position on issues rather than a medium for electioneering and promoting political candidate(s), or engaging in dialogue with supporters. After ascribing primary goals to the five main parliamentary parties and four minor parties in the German system, based on the extant literature, content analysis

of the national party sites was then carried out, along with telephone and mail surveys of party officials to assess the extent to which these expectations were met. The results indicated some support for the idea that primary goals influence parties use of the Web, although the results were not highly conclusive.

Research Questions

This review of sub-national empirical studies of web campaigning, along with particular reference to models explaining website content, points toward a number of areas for further study. First, it is clear that more than random forces are at work here in determining whether political actors go online, and what they offer when they get there. There are a variety of politically and electorally relevant factors that appear to be driving parties and candidates to use the Web and also shaping what they offer. These include, most typically, closeness of the race, partisan affiliation, type or level of office sought, and outsider status. However, there do appear to be a number of gaps in these studies, most notable of which are: (1) aggregate constituency-level factors such as overall computer usage or levels of education among the electorate are notably absent from the explanations of propensity to engage in web campaigning[3]; and (2) while party aims have been shown to influence website content, alongside organisational size and resources, this has been identified largely through anecdotal or small 'n' studies. The aim of this research paper is address these gaps by answering two central questions: (1) what are the factors most important in stimulating parties and candidates to launch a cyber-campaign, beyond the politically relevant variables investigated thus far?; and (2) can we detect any systematic influence of party goals on web campaign style?

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[3] This is true, with the brief exception of Klotz (1997) who made passign reference to the lack of relationship between Senate websites in 1996 and and state educational levels.

To investigate these questions we examine campaigning by parties and candidates in the 2002 German federal elections. The German system provides a useful basis for analysis for a number of reasons. First, as a federal system with 16 Lander and 299 constituencies, it provides sufficient cases to enable systematic study of the impact of role of region on web campaigning but not so many as to make content analysis unmanageable. Second, its mixed electoral system, whereby candidate-centred and party-centred elections operate alongside one another in the same constituency allows for comparison of organisational and individual incentives to establish a website, a topic as yet, unexplored in this literature.[4] Are candidates are keener to use the medium than parties, and are they motivated by the same factors? Do both sets of actors use the web in the same way, or do candidates opt for a more interactive and direct communication style? Finally, in examining questions about the influence of party goals the German system is highly relevant since its multi-party system neatly captures the four primary goals outlined above. While the SPD and CDU are widely seen as vote maximizing parties, the FDP conforms to the classic office seeking model. The Greens since their inception are one of the few parties across the world to have pursued intra-party democracy with any great vigour. Finally, for policy advocacy, one can point the PDS (a reformed version of the SED, the state party of the former GDR). The legacy of a strong ideologically driven programme and ambivalent orientation to democratic elections moves them away from an explicit focus on voter mobilisation and more toward issue-based appeals. Further their lack of any strong tradition of open and participatory

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[4] Germany employs a two-ballot system for federal parliamentary elections. Each voter has two votes: a candidate vote for a district candidate, and a list vote for party lists. Candidate votes are aggregated on the district level by plurality rule. List vote shares are aggregated on the national level and determine the proportion of the total number of seats to which a party is entitled. As in all PR systems, parties have to overcome an institutional threshold in order to win seats. Parliamentary seats in Germany are awarded only to parties that have gained at least 5% of the party list vote.

internal structures means that intra-party democracy is not likely to dominate their outlook.

Data and Methods

The data to investigate these questions were gathered from May 2002 to September 2002 by a total of four research assistants, working at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES). All the assistants worked independently, but collected data across parties, rather than anyone individual being responsible for a particular party or parties. The sites included were all local party and candidate sites for the five parliamentary parties in 299 constituencies. The analysis is conducted in three basic stages:

1) In a first step we profile the distribution of sites across the 299 constituencies. We begin by reporting the frequency of sites for parties and candidates overall and then compare overall party and candidate totals across the five parties. We then move onto to examining the geographic distribution of sites by looking at the frequency of candidate and party sites across the 16 Lander and also identify the most active constituencies in terms of web campaigning.

2) We then move on to explaining overall and party and candidate levels of activity within each constituency, as well as levels of individual party activity within constituencies (i.e. in terms of the local party and its candidate). The dependent variables used for the analyses of overall levels of party and candidate activity were additive scales from zero to 5, indicating how many of the five parties had a website in the constituency. For the analysis of individual party activity, the dependent variable was a binary variable with 1 indicating a particular party or candidate had a website and 0 indicating no website. The

explanatory models used combine political and election-related independent variables that have been identified in the extant literature as important, i.e. closeness of race, voter turnout, and incumbency (for the party-specific analyses of the SPD and CDU), with structural data on the composition of the electorate that have been linked to Internet use. These include levels of education, urbanisation, rurality, and unemployment, employment, age, and gender. In addition, it was considered that numbers of eligible voters and German speakers in the constituency might also be relevant for parties in determining whether to invest in a website, so numbers of German citizens was included. A dummy variable to account for any lingering differences between East and West Lander. Finally, for the candidate-specific analysis we included a measure of party web activity, since it was reasoned that party sites were more likely to be established outside of an election and could influence the likelihood of a candidate considering a website to be important (see Appendix A for full details of variables). The structure of the dataset and separate votes for party and candidate meant that we tested four models of web campaigning in total using two types of analysis. For all the models, the constituency formed the unit of analysis. The first two models used OLS regression to examine overall levels of party and candidate activity within constituencies. The third and fourth models used logistic regressions to examine the patterns of activity for each of the five parties and its candidates.

3) In a third step, we compare the content party and candidates site content over four key functions using a coding scheme specially designed for the purpose (see appendix B for coding sheets and scoring scheme). The four functions are information dissemination, participation/interactivity, internal networking and electioneering. We measure the emphasis on each of the functions with a range of four indices, ranging from zero to a maximum of seven. For information dissemination we specify a range of items such as

press releases, and policy documents that are each scored one, the items are then added together to produce an overall score (maximum score = six). Similarly for participation we add up how many items such as email contact, donation facilities, chat rooms, that sites contain (maximum score = seven). For networking a score of zero to three was assigned based on whether a site linked to the Land party, the federal party and the local party or candidate running alongside it in the constituency. To measure electioneering an ordinal index was used that ranged from zero to five, based on the extent of campaigning a site contained with the mid-range score of three indicating some election pages and five, indicating a separate election site. While there are clearly a wide range of functions that could be ascribed party websites these are among the most frequently cited, covering the basic upward, downward, lateral and election specific aspects of communication flow in party websites (Gibson and Ward, 2000).

As well as being empirically investigated in numerous other studies (Gibson and Römmele, 2003; Gibson and Ward, 1997, 1998; Newell, 2001; Cunha et al, 2003) these four functions can also be mapped quite easily onto the primary goals expectations outlined above, providing an effective test of their influence. Essentially, we would expect vote and office maximizing parties to emphasise electioneering and information dissemination (SPD, CDU/CSU and FDP), while parties favouring intra-party democracy (the Greens) would offer more interactivity, and finally policy advocacy parties (PDS) would be most interested information dissemination with a decided lack of interest in electioneering, particularly on a more personalised level through candidates. With regard to internal networking, while bigger vote-maximizing parties would be expected to score due to their greater number of local branches, other party types, despite being more unevenly distributed might also have a strong incentive to engage in this, given the cost-effective means it offers for infrastructure building, albeit of the virtual kind. Thus, all parties might be expected to score well on this measure. Finally, we might expect that

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office-seeking parties to offer some of the most functional sites and be the best 'all-round' performers. Their goal of ensuring they have enough support to be a viable coalition partner but generally lower profile in the traditional media than the traditional governing parties would provide them with very strong incentives to exploit the technology as a new way to reach voters.

Findings

1) Website distribution by party, region and constituency

We profile the distribution of web campaigning across constituencies in a number of ways, based on the data we have collected. If we first compare overall levels of party activity, according to table 1 we can see that the two major parties, the SPD and CDU/CSU were the best represented across Germany, both running over 400 websites in the 299 constituencies, for either local parties or candidates. The CDU/CSU was actually the most wired party, with a total of 433 sites across the country. If we consider that the total number possible for any party was 598 sites, (i.e. assuming they ran a party and candidate site for each constituency) this means that the CDU/CSU delivered 72% of potential sites, and the SPD, 69%. The FDP managed 337 sites overall, delivering a respectable 56% of possible sites. The Greens also fared quite well for a small party, offering a total of 238 sites, or 40% of the total possible. The PDS were notably the least enthusiastic users of the web at the local level, with an overall total of 107 local sites or 18% of the total possible. This marked absence was mainly due to the fact that the PDS only ran local party sites, with all candidates sites being run off the main national party home page.

If we explore the data from the party versus candidate perspective, we see that in general, local parties were more frequent users of the web than candidates. Overall there were 897 independent party websites for the election and 633 candidate sites. If

we consider that from the 299 constituencies there were 1495 possible sites (299 * 5 parties) this means that overall, the five parliamentary parties ran 60 percent of the total number of local party websites, whereas the individual candidates from these parties managed 42% of the total. There is a difference, however, across parties in terms of this distribution. While the FDP, Greens and PDS were all far more likely to have local party sites than candidate sites, the two major parties were more evenly balanced, with the SPD actually having a higher incidence of candidate websites than party websites (236 versus 179).

If we move on to look at the distribution of sites across Lander, to see if there were any geographic trends at work we can see from the rows across Table 2 the total number of party and candidate websites for each Land. Not surprisingly the largest number of sites were found in biggest states, i.e. Nordrhein Wesfahlen, Niedersachsen, Baden Wurttemburg, Bayern and Hessen. To adjust these figures to accommodate for the varying number of constitutencies within the Lander, we computed the theoretical maximum number of sites that could have been operational during the election. This was calculated by taking the maximum number of sites possible for each party in each constituency, which is two (party and candidate), and multiplying this by five (the total number of parties in the analysis). This resulting figure of ten, was then multiplied by the total number of constituencies in each Land. For example, Schleswig-Holstein, with 11 constituencies, if each party had run 2 sites, this yielded potentially 110 sites (11*(2*5). As it was there were 70 sites. The proportion of possible election website activity achieved, therefore, was 64%. This standardised activity score was the highest of any Land, with the other notable regions of activity being Hessen and Brandenburg. Well below average were the Eastern lands of Saarland and Sachsen-Anhalt, which achieved saw only one third of the potential website activity in their constituencies. Sachsen and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern was also notably low at 41%.

Breaking this overall activity down into the distribution of party sites versus candidate sites reveals a slightly different picture of activity (see tables 3 and 4). Whereas for the local parties, the most crowded Lander were Hessen, Brandenburg, and Tuhringen, for the candidates, Schleswig Holstein, Rheinland-Pfalz and Baden-Württemburg proved to be more keenly fought. Such results suggest that regional incentives differed for parties and individuals to go online. The case of Rheinland-Pfalz in particular makes this point since while it saw the highest level of candidate activity on the web, it saw some of the lowest party activity.

Finally, these tables also make clear that there were also significant differences between the parties in where they concentrated their resources. While the SPD, CDU/CSU and FPD local parties tended followed a similar pattern to one another, making their greatest efforts in Hessen and Schleswig-Holstein, the PDS and Greens local parties followed a rather different distribution. The PDS, not surprisingly, made its strongest showing in the Eastern states of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Brandenburg, whereas the Greens were most visible in Bayern, Niedersachsen and Bremen. Across the five parties, candidate sites failed to exactly mirror the patterns of distribution of the local parties, as noted in the aggregate figures reported above, with Rheinland-Pfalz moving very much to the fore, for the two major parties and the FDP. Most, notably, however, we did not find any evidence of PDS candidates operating any independent websites. Instead, the national party offered a one page descriptor off its home page for each of the candidates that was identical in format. One final point of comparison between the parties to note from the general geographic data is that, as well as being the most dominant web party, in terms of numbers of sites, the CDU/CSU also were more even in the distribution of their sites across the Lander. The SPD, despite having a high number of sites, appeared to follow a more targeted pattern, with some Lander seeing a rather high concentration of party sites and others very little activity.

In addition to examining results at the Land level, we can also break results down to the constituency level to see if this provides any any clues to the more localised factors that might be causing parties and candidates to engage in web campaigning. If we take those constituencies with the highest levels of party and candidate activity (where only two of the possible ten websites were missing) one obvious comment to make is that not many local areas saw a very intense web campaign being fought. Only 17 constituencies or just under six percent saw really high levels of activity. However, among those that did, fourteen were cities and half of these were university towns. In addition, two thirds of the constituencies had fairly close races, with five (Rhein-Sieg-Kreis II, Münster, Frankfurt am Main I, Groß-Gerau, Bamberg) being particularly hard fought. Upon first glance at these trends, it would seem that both structural and political-electoral factors are playing a role in stimulating web campaigning, in particular, a more urbanized and educated population along with higher levels of electoral competition seem important. However, before drawing any firm conclusions it is necessary to test such an explanation more systematically.

2) Regression Analysis

In table 5 we present the results of the regression analysis of overall levels of candidate activity and party activity across the 299 constituencies (each scored on a zero to five activity index). The analyses were run separately for individual candidates and party organisations given that different dynamics would be expected in the dual voting system. While voters may vote 'party-line' in both elections, this is clearly not always in evidence, with varying levels of competitiveness between the two votes. The findings show that overall levels of local party web activity have very little to do with any structural features of the constituency, higher education levels being the only variable to approach significance at the .05 level. The political and electorally relevant factors also do not appear to be linked to increased levels of web campaigning. The margin of victory in the

party vote in the previous election is the most significant explanatory variable listed, however, its sign runs counter to expectations indicating that lower rather than higher levels of competition in 1998 stimulated parties to use the web in 2002. For levels of candidate activity, however, structural variables appear to be of much greater importance, with greater numbers of sites appearing in urbanised areas with low levels of unemployment and high levels of education. Neither of the election-related or more politically relevant variables prove significant.

When we run the second set of logistic regression analyses for each individual party –the dependent variable being a binary score indicating the presence or absence of a particular party or candidate website within a given constituency - we find that while some of the same variables are important in explaining overall constituency activity, there are also important differences between parties and their candidates in what stimulates them to go online. These party-specific models are reported in table 6. One general finding to emerge across these analyses is that the political variables are typically more important for the three governing parties, and particularly the two major parties than for the more minor parties. The political dynamics triggering their movement online are different for each party, however. SPD party organisations move to establish a web presence is clearly linked to incumbency, with those constituencies where the party was already in power being most likely to see a website. CDU local parties, however, rather than playing to any existing strength respond to the competitiveness of the race, with a lower margin of victory in 2002 proving the strongest political stimulus to engage in web campaigning (just missing significance at the .05 level). For the FDP, however, it is simply overall turnout that seems to engage them, with higher levels of voting in general making them more likely to operate sites. One could argue that this relates to a perception of higher levels of political awareness among the electorate and a more receptive audience for their campaigning efforts.

Structural variables also feature in explaining the distribution of the major parties' local sites, although again in a varying way. Having a larger group of younger age voters in a constituency and being in a Western Lander moderately increase the likelihood of SPD local party sites. For the CDU, while region also plays a weak role in stimulating more activity, website establishment is most strongly linked to those constituencies with higher levels of education, but located in more rural areas. The FDP local parties, however, are do not appear to follow any particular structural incentives in establishing their websites. This runs entirely contrary to the pattern of site distribution among non-governing minor parties with the PDS emerging as highly structurally determined with more urbanised and non-rural constituencies proving to be strongholds of cybercampaigning. The Greens, however, at least at the local party level follow an opposite path, with higher levels of urbanisation being negatively associated with a website being established.

Turning to the results for the candidates, we see that political factors in the shape of voter turnout and incumbency lose their significance, and structural factors move to the fore. This alternate structure of incentives is reinforced by the finding that local party sites are not found to be significant predictors of candidate sites. The CDU does buck these trends to a certain degree in that their candidates do remain responsive to electoral competition in setting up their websites. However, it is not the closeness of the current race as was true for the parties, but the margin of a candidate's victory in the previous election. FDP candidates, however, eschew any political imperatives, running sites in more urbanised constituencies with fewer middle aged voters. SPD candidates, appear not to follow much of an obvious 'logic' in either a political or structural direction, other than they have a greater number of sites in those constituencies with higher numbers of German citizens. While this may be related to the greater probability of German language speakers being in the constituency and thus able to read the sites, the

fact that no other structural variables are revealed as important makes this a rather questionable inference. Finally, for Green candidates, as with the FDP, but unlike their local parties, higher levels of urbanisation appear to be most associated with the establishment of websites.

Admittedly, these models are under-specified in that they although they include a range of important aggregate data about the constituency, they do not capture the individual level factors that have been shown by other research as important in predicting whether candidates, in particular, go online. However, this initial empirical analysis suggests that in general, the local branches of the governing parties are more responsive to political factors such as voter behaviour and being an incumbent than the more minor parliamentary parties. For the latter, structural features of the constituency appear more deterministic. Between the candidates and local parties, different dynamics do appear to operate in prompting them to go online. For the SPD and FDP, while political factors were important for parties in rolling out their websites, for candidates, the demographic and urban make-up of the environment play the deciding role. For the Greens, while local parties and candidates' web efforts are attuned largely to levels of urbanisation, the parties are focused in less urbanised areas, while the candidates emerge in more highly urban environments. While somewhat puzzling this difference may reflect the organisational 'logic' of local parties as compared with the more individualised and election–related rationale of candidates. Local parties would be more likely to establish sites in between elections and in areas of underlying strength. Candidates, however, may be more likely to utilise the web in an election-specific context, seeking out new environments in order promote themselves.

3) Website function and primary goals

Finally, the results of the content analysis of sites assessing the functional emphasis of parties and candidates are reported in table 7. At first glance they reveal a high level homogeneity across parties that challenges our expectations about the impact of primary goals on their website content. Overall, it seems that internal networking is virtually ubiquitous across party and candidate sites, with information and electioneering also being considered important. Encouraging participation is deemed of least importance, however. Parties and candidates were also generally quite similar in terms of the information versus participation offered on their sites, indicating that expectations of a more directly interactive style of communication among candidates were not borne out. One clear point of difference, however, was the greater emphasis that candidates placed on electioneering on their websites compared to the local parties.

A closer look at the results does reveal some differences that could be regarded as supportive of some of our original propositions about the influence on party goals. In particular, the FDP, as an office-seeking party are notably aggressive in their web campaigning, particularly at the local party level, with over two hundred sites active for the 2002 election. The strength of the local parties compared with candidates in website production can be understood by the emphasis the FDP places on the second (party) vote (Zweitstimmenkampagne), given that it generally loses out to the bigger parties in the 'winner take all' candidate vote. In addition, FDP sites scored above average on most of the functionality indices (with the exception of information dissemination). Possibly the biggest vindication of our original expectations is the fact that the PDS did not actually run any independent candidate sites, and their local party sites score among the highest for information dissemination. The de-emphasis on explicit voter mobilisation is contradicted, however, by PDS parties' relatively high scores for electioneering. Indeed, all the local branches of the minor parties, the Greens included, outdo the vote-maximizing parties on this dimension of their websites. The candidates for the SPD and

CDU/CSU, however, are notably more active on electioneering than the candidates from the other parties. Most surprisingly perhaps, is the finding that the FDP parties and candidates rank top for participation opportunities, a result certainly not anticipated for office-maximisers. By contrast, Green parties, and particularly their candidates trailed well behind in the interactivity stakes. Finally, while one could argue that the consistently high scores for networking across the parties accords with our initial predictions about its universal importance for all parties, we also accept that this may in part be a methodological artifact, stemming from the conversion of a zero to three point scale to one of zero to ten, which would inflate scores at the higher end of the range.

Discussion and Conclusions

Overall, when we look at the question of distribution of sites, and how to explain this, our first glance across Germany during the 2002 Federal election indicated that region was playing a role in determining where parties and candidates established them. With several Lander seeing considerably higher or lower levels of cyberelectioneering. Party was clearly also linked to the overall numbers of sites that were observe, with the major parties and the FDP covering most races with some kind of web presence, either by a local party or candidate. More systematic analysis of this variance underscored this finding, with pooled party activity within constituencies proving difficult to explain. More explanatory power emerged when the patterns of local website establishment were examinined for individual parties. In particular, these results demonstrated the overall sensitivity of the governing parties to the wider political and electoral environment, whereas the less elections focused, Greens and the PDS were clearly more responsive to the socio-structural features of the constituency and playing to areas where they would have strong support.

In terms of content, the main message, underscoring the findings from other research, is that parties are really not presenting radically different material on the web.

Overall the local parties and candidates follow a similar balance on the sites in providing quite a lot of information and election-related features, limited interactivity and some internal hypertext links. Candidates, however, did use their sites more explicitly for electioneering purposes than the parties. With regard to the theoretical expectations about party goals, therefore, while there some elements of correspondence to site content, overall there was no strong evidence that they shaped the material presented. One interesting point to note here, however, was the extent to which party goals might be helpful in understanding the previous questions about distribution of sites. The CDU/CSU, SPD and FDP are all parties for which the primary goal is winning votes, and so their responsiveness to the broader political context is not surprising. The other parties, the PDS and Greens which were identified as pursuing a broader democratic agenda, or more policy-oriented goals, however, appeared less likely to care about the electoral dynamics involved and follow their underlying patterns of strength.

Thus, this analysis does yield the basis for identifying some general factors across parties that are important for explaining why they engage in web campaigning. In addition to the election-related and structural features of the constituency that emerged as important from our models, party outlook and size are obviously also key factors in explaining their overall presence online, with the bigger, election-oriented parties proving the most ambitious and aggressive in using the medium at the local level. A future version of this paper, therefore, will need to incorporate these variables into its explanatory focus. Once the parties go online, however, while they may have different 'looks' or styles, they do not show great differences in terms of the content they offer, either in terms of the overall amount or the balance between different types. In following such a uniform path, it is clear that the German parties are corresponding to the wider trends in web campaigning, of movement toward a more standardized format. Whether this will be continued is clearly something for future web election studies to address.

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Table 1: Frequency of constituency websites by party and candidate for 2002 Federal Election

	Website status		
	Valid Website	Under Construction	Missing
Party			
SPD	179 (60)	33 (11)	87 (29)
CDU/CSU	229 (77)	10 (3)	60 (20)
FDP	212 (71)	18 (6)	69 (23)
PDS	107 (36)	10 (3)	182 (61)
Grüne	170 (57)	32 (11)	97 (32)
Total	897 (60)	103 (7)	495 (33)
Candidates			
SPD	236 (79)	0 (0)	95 (21)
CDU/CSU	204 (68)	0 (0)	95 (32)
FDP	125 (42)	12 (4)	162 (54)
PDS	No independent websites		
Grüne	68 (23)	10 (3)	221 (74)
Total	633 (52)	22 (2)	573 (47)
Combined total	1530	125	1068

Note: Raw figures are followed by % (based on row totals) in parentheses

Table 2: Number of candidate & party constituency websites and standardised web campaign activity scores by Lander

Lander	SPD	CDU/ CSU	FDP	PDS	Grüne	Total no. sites	Total possible no. sites	Standardised activity score
Schleswig-Holstein	22	17	20	5	6	70	110	.64
Sachsen	23	15	20	4	8	70	170	.41
Hessen	34	31	34	8	20	127	210	.60
Tühringen	13	16	14	7	5	55	100	.55
Rheinland-Pfalz	23	25	17	6	9	80	150	.53
Bayern	54	59	32	13	40	198	440	.45
Baden-Württeburg	52	51	44	6	37	190	370	.51
Saarland	5	5	2	0	0	12	40	.30
Mecklenburg-Vor.	9	5	5	7	3	29	70	.41
Hamburg	11	7	7	1	2	28	60	.47
Niedersachsen	35	37	30	10	27	139	290	.48
Bremen	4	2	1	0	3	10	20	.50
Brandenburg	16	17	8	5	7	57	100	.57
Sachsen-Anhalt	8	10	9	3	3	33	100	.33
Berlin	20	20	12	0	14	66	120	.55
Nordrhein-West.	86	107	82	32	54	361	640	.56
Total valid websites	415	433	337	107	238	1530	2990	.51

Table 3 Numbers of party constituency websites and standardised activity scores by Lander

Lander	Total no. constit.	SPD	CDU/ CSU	FDP	PDS	Grüne	Total no. sites	Standardised activity score	Average no. party sites
Schleswig-Holstein	11	11 (100)	8 (73)	10 (91)	5 (46)	2 (18)	36	.33	7.2
Sachsen	17	7 (41)	9 (53)	16 (94)	4 (24)	8 (47)	44	.26	8.8
Hessen	21	18 (86)	19 (91)	20 (95)	8 (38)	12 (57)	77	.37	15.4
Tühringen	10	6 (60)	8 (80)	8 (80)	7 (70)	4 (40)	33	.33	6.6
Rheinland-Pfalz	15	10 (67)	12 (80)	6 (40)	6 (47)	5 (33)	39	.26	7.8
Bayern	44	24 (55)	26 (59)	23 (52)	13 (30)	31 (71)	117	.27	23.4
Baden-Württeburg	37	24 (65)	27 (73)	25 68)	6 (16)	20 (54)	102	.28	20.4
Saarland	4	3 (75)	3 (75)	1 (25)	0	0	7	.18	1.4
Mecklenburg-Vor.	7	5 (71)	4 (57)	5 (71)	7 (100)	2 (29)	23	.33	4.6
Hamburg	6	6 (100)	5 (83)	5 (83)	1 (17)	0	17	.28	3.4
Niedersachsen	29	10 (35)	24 (83)	23 (79)	10 (35)	24 (83)	91	.31	18.2
Bremen	2	2 (100)	2 (100)	1 (50)	0	2 (100)	7	.35	1.4
Brandenburg	10	8 (80)	9 (90)	5 (50)	5 (50)	7 (70)	34	.34	6.8
Sachsen-Anhalt	10	0	4 (40)	4 (40)	3 (30)	1 (10)	12	.12	2.4
Berlin	12	10 (83)	11 (92)	7 (58)	0	11 (92)	39	.32	7.8
Nordrhein-West.	64	35 (55)	59 (92)	53 (83)	32 (50)	41 (64)	195	.30	39
Total valid websites	299	179 (60)	229 (77)	212 (71)	107 (36)	170 (57)	897	.30	179.4

Note: Raw figures are numbers of constituency sites for the party within the Land; % that follow in parentheses refer to the proportion of constituencies within the Land that the party has a website

Table 4: Numbers of candidate constituency websites and standardised activity scores by Lander

Lander	Total no. constit.	SPD	CDU/ CSU	FDP	PDS	Grüne	Total no. sites	Standardised activity score	Average no. of cand. sites
Schleswig-Holstein	11	11 (100)	8 (82)	10 (91)	N	4 (36)	33	.30	6.6
Sachsen	17	16 (94)	6 (35)	4 (24)	O	0	24	.14	4.8
Hessen	21	16 (76)	12 (57)	14 (67)		8 (38)	50	.24	10
Tühringen	10	7 (70)	8 (80)	6 (60)	I N	1 (10)	22	.22	4.4
Rheinland-Pfalz	15	13 (87)	13 (87)	11 (73)	D	4 (27)	41	.27	8.2
Bayern	44	30 (68)	33 (75)	9 (21)	E P	9 (21)	81	.18	16.2
Baden-Württeburg	37	28 (76)	34 (92)	19 (51)		17 (46)	98	.26	19.6
Saarland	4	2 (50)	2 (50)	1 (25)	C	0	5	.13	1
Mecklenburg-Vor.	7	4 (57)	1 (14)	0	A N	1 (14)	6	.09	1.2
Hamburg	6	5 (83)	2 (33)	2 (33)	D	2 (33)	11	.05	2.2
Niedersachsen	29	25 (86)	13 (45)	7 (24)		3 (10)	48	.17	9.6
Bremen	2	2 (100)	0	0		1 (50)	3	.15	0.6
Brandenburg	10	8 (80)	8 (80)	3 (30)	S	0	19	.19	3.8
Sachsen-Anhalt	10	8 (80)	6 (60)	5 (50)	I T	2 (20)	19	.19	3.8
Berlin	12	10 (83)	9 (79)	5 (42)	E	3 (25)	27	.23	5.4
Nordrhein-West.	64	51 (80)	48 (75)	29 (45)	S	13 (20)	141	.22	28.2
Total valid websites	299	236 (79)	204 (68)	125 (42)		68 (23)	633	.21	126.6

Note: Raw figures are numbers of constituency sites for the party within the Land; % that follow in parentheses refer to the proportion of constituencies within the Land that the party has a website

Table 5: Results of OLS Regression analysis of overall party and candidate web activity across constituencies

	Overall party activity		Overall candidate activity	
	Partial	Standardized	Partial	Standardized
Political				
Voter Turnout	.07	.09	.03	.05
Margin '98	.05*	.23	-.005	-.03
Margin '02	-.02	-.11	-.007	-.04
Party web activity	-	-	-.03	-.69
Socioeconomic status				
Male	.01	.10	.003	.03
Age 18-25	.31	.10	-.01	-.01
Age 25-35	.12	.08	.09	.08
Age 35-60	-.02	-.02	.008	.01
Age 60 +	.01	.004	-.02	-.02
German citizens	-.01	-.07	.006	.08
Urban (No. of townships)	-.004	-.11	.006**	.18
Rural (No. of farms)	-.04	-.12	-.04	-.14
12 +years Education	.06*	.16	.06**	.20
Unemp 01	-.03	-.07	-.12**	-.31
Employment	-.005	-.08	.001	.04
Region				
West	.56	.09	.05	.08
Constant	-4.8		-1.4	
Adj R-squared	.163		.123	
(N)	299		299	

* indicates significant at the .10 level
** indicates significant at the .05 level

Table 6: Results of logistic regression analysis of individual parties and party candidates' use of

Voter Turnout	-.004 (.06)	.02 (.08)	.09 (.07)	.01 (.07)	.17 (.07)**	.01 (.07)	.01(.06)	-.06 (.06)	.14 (.10)
	SPD		CDU/CSU		FDP		PDS	Grune	
	Pty	Can	Pty	Can	Pty	Can	Pty	Pty	Can
Political									
Margin '98	-.01 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.06 (.04)	-.07 (.03)**	-.02 (.03)	-.20 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.04)
Margin '02	.01 (.03)	-.05 (.03)	-.06 (.03)*	.05 (.03)	.04 .03)	-.10 (.03)	-.12 (.03)	-.18 (.03)	.01 (.03)
Incumbent	.69 (.34)**	.36 (.43)	-.52 (.41)	-.25 (.41)	-	-	-	-	-
Party web	-	-.05 (.31)	.	.38 (.33)	-	-.28 (.29)	-	-	.62 (.34)*
Socioeconomic status									
Male	.01 (.01)	-.13 (.01)	.01 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.02)
Age 18-25	.81 (.42)*	.08 (.43)	.74 (.56)	.26 (.42)	-.15 (.40)	-.60 (.40)	.31 (.37)	-.24 (.37)	.16 (.45)
Age 25-35	-.08 (.16)	-.05 (.17)	-.14 (.22)	-.17 (.17)	.01 (.18)	.14 (.16)	.12 (.15)	-.20 (.17)	.29 (.18)
Age 35-60	.22 (.17)	.26 (.21)	.31 (.24)	.13 (.18)	-.16 (.18)	-.45 (.18)**	-.30 (.18)*	-.03 (.17)	.07 (.21)
Age 60 +	.04 (.13)	.11 (.14)	.07 (.16)	-.04 (.13)	-.001 (.14)	-.13 (.13)	.03 (.13)	-.18 (.13)	-.07 (.15)
German citizens	-.01(.01	.02 (.01)***	.004 (.01)	-.001 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.003 (.01)	-.001 (.01)	-.01 (.02)	-.001 (.011)
Urban	.00 (.003)	-.003 (.003)	-.0 (.003)	.004 (.003)	-.004 (.003)	.01 (.003)***	.01 (.003)**	-.01 (.004)***	.02 (.004)***
Rural	.03 (.04)	.08 (.05)	.11 (.05)*	-.05 (.05)	-.02 (.04)	-.11 (.05)**	-.18 (.05)***	.20 (.04)	-.08 (.06)
12+yrs educ.	.03 (.03)	.05 (.04)	.13 (.04)*	.03 (.04)	.06 (.04)*	.05 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.003 (.04)
Unemp 01	-.05 (.06)	-.04 (.07)	.03 (.07)	-.10 (.06)	.04 ((.06)	-.10 (.06)	-.08 (.06)	.02 (.03)	-.10 (.07)
Employment	-.002 (.004)	.003 (.006)	.004 (.006)	.002 (.005)	.001 (.005)	-.001 (.005)	-.004 (.005)	-.01 (.01)*	.002 (.01)
Region									
West	1.65 (.93)*	.002 (.93)	2.39 (1.32)	1.17 (.96)	-.94 (.86)	-1.23	-.43 (.83)	-.62 (.84)	.41 (1.12)
Constant	-14.91 (13.65)	-16.39 (16.24)	-29.97 (18.38)	-2.99 (14.27)	-7.26 (14.77)	19.99 (13.86)	7.4 (13.78)	7.46 (13.51)	-21.97 (17.12)
Pseduo R-squared	.07	.07	.15	.10	.10	.14	.12	.14	.15
(N)		299		299		299	299		299

web campaigning across constituencies (estimate and standard error in parentheses)

* indicates significant at the .10 level; ** indicates significant at the .05 level; *** indicates significant at the .01 level

Table 7: Functionality scores for party and candidate websites*

	Information provision	Participation	Networking	Electioneering	Total n	Average score
Party						
SPD	7.3	2.6	8.5	5.1	179	5.9
CDU/CSU	6.0	3.5	8.2	4.9	229	5.7
FDP	5.7	3.9	8.7	5.8	212	6.0
PDS	6.6	3.0	7.9	5.5	107	5.8
Grüne	6.1	3.6	8.1	5.6	170	5.9
Party mean	*6.3*	*3.3*	*8.3*	*5.4*	897	
Candidates						
SPD	7.9	3.5	8.6	7.1	236	6.8
CDU/CSU	7.8	3.5	9.2	7.5	204	7.0
FDP	5.5	3.9	6.0	5.5	125	5.3
PDS						
Grüne	5.0	3.3	7.3	5.6	68	5.3
Cand. mean	*6.6*	*3.6*	*7.8*	*6.4*	633	

* Scores re-scaled on each measurement index to 0-10.

APPENDIX A: Variable List

Unit of analysis=constituency, variable names in bold

Figures are taken from 2002 unless otherwise indicated and are issued by the Federal

Bundeswahlleiter see:

http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/bundestagswahl2002/deutsch/strukt2002/btw2002/index_btw2002.htm

Urbanisation **(gemeinde)**: Zahl der Gemeinden/number of district councils

Rural **(landwbet)**: Landwirtschaftliche Betriebe/number of farms per 1000 inhab

Age **(alt1825**): % population age 18-25

    (alt2535): % population age 25-35

    (alt3560): % population age 35-60

    (alt60):% population aged 60 and older

Male **(bevolkm)**: male population total numbers

German **(deutsche)**: german citizens total numbers

Education **(abitur)** : % overall population with 12-13 years of school

Unemployment: **(alquot01)**: % unemployed

Employment: **(beschft)**: employed per 1000 inhabitants

West: **(west)** dummy for former west German Lander 0 = East; 1 = West

Voter turnout **(turnout)**: % of total population voted in 1998

Margin98 **(margin1)**: % difference between 1st and 2nd placed *party* in 2nd vote

    (margin2): % difference between 1st and 2nd placed *candidate* in 1st vote

Margin02 **(margin3)**: % difference between 1st and 2nd placed *party* in 2nd vote

    (margin4): % difference between 1st and 2nd placed *candidate* in 1st vote

Party web activity **(ptyact)**: overall number of party websites in constituency (0 – 5 range)

Party website (**SPDpty web**): SPD local party website 0 = absent 1 = present

    (**CDUpty web**): CDU/CSU local party website 0 = absent 1 = present

    (**FDPpty web**): FDP local party website 0 = absent 1 = present

    (**GRUpty web**): Greens local party website 0 = absent 1 = present

Incumbent **(SPDpip/CDUpip)** SPD in power = 1 else = 0; or CDU in power = 1 else = 0

    (based on 1st vote)

APPENDIX B: CODING SCHEME FOR WEBSITE FUNCTIONS

ELECTIONEERING
(Ordinal index 0-5)

5 **a separate election site:** this is distinguished by being (a) self-contained such that all election information were available in this area of the site (i.e.) it is a site within a site and resembles a main party web site. (b) multiple sources of information (i.e. the features listed below in B. are contained within it). (c) the site is prioritised during the campaign and is updated frequently. (d) there is a prominent link to the site from the home page.

3 **pages for the elections:** pages were more limited in scope than a site. (a) some but not all election information is contained in pages (i.e. press releases kept in separate section). (b) limited amount of information on elections available – generally candidate lists and manifesto. (c) the pages remain static.

1 **minimal coverage**: very limited information (a) 1 page with 1 feature (list of candidates for e.g.) (b) page remains static (c) not linked to from the home page.

0 **no coverage**

Note: For each of the items scored it is also useful on the coding sheet to note what level down from the home page it is (i.e. how many clicks before you got there). This type of information can be used later to assess the complexity of the site, and also the prominence given to the feature.

INFORMATION PROVISION
(Additive index 0 - 6, 1 point assigned for each item present)

Policies (A) National. More specific discussion of committments and priorities of the party in areas such as employment, health, education, defence etc. Note this is NOT the manifesto which is coded below.

Policies (B) Regional/Local

Media releases. Can include speeches, statements, interview transcripts.

People/Who's Who Page or pages providing an overview or biography of key personnel within the party.

Event Calendar Carrying information on dates of upcoming or recent events the party has organised for the public or members such as rallies and demos, or fundraising or awareness raising events.

Article Archive or Library Special section carrying research papers or articles, written by the party itself, its supporters and/or from taken from government and media sources designed to provide indepth coverage of issues of importance to the party.

PARTICIPATION
(Additive index 0-7, 1 point assigned for each item present)

Information Gathering (A) Does the site offer search engines, cookies, games/gimmicks, audio & video etc. whereby the user can gather more information about the organisation.

Information Gathering (B) More active engagement required, with users signing up for direct email updates and newsletters.

Political dialogue Does the site offer a facility offer some kind of bulletin board or chat room for interested visitors to exchange views with one another and/or Q&A sessions with leaders?

Contacting Does the site offer email contacts for itself and/or other individuals/organisations that encourage people to express opinions and provide feedback.

Petitioning/Opinion Poll Does the site offer some kind of online petition or opinion poll to sign?

Donating Can you donate financially to the organisation directly on the site?

Joining (full) Can you join the organisation directly on the site?

NETWORKING INTERNAL
(Additive index 0 – 3, 1 point for each item present)

Link to national party
Link to regional party
Link to local party / candidate