



# Keys to Civic Engagement

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# Reaching Constituents – Inside and Out

- **Fun facts from website research**
- **50 States - 50 Networks**
- **Old technology: Television!**

# Fun Facts from Website Research

- Research conducted in early 2010 to test effectiveness of *ncta.com* website
- Quantitative and qualitative
- Respondents: journalists; Congressional & FCC staff; think tank execs; public policy wonks

# Fun Facts from Website Research

- **Key findings among respondents**
  - **Virtually all acknowledged the role of the web in delivering timely and important information**
  - ***But*, most are overwhelmed by deluge of information**
  - **More than half complained of the difficulty of examining websites with *too much information***

# Fun Facts from Website Research

- **Key findings among respondents**
  - **60 percent said they welcome timely email alerts providing significant new information**
  - **Half said they follow these email leads to click through to more information**
  - **Half said it is difficult to stay current on proposed legislation and reports from Congressional committees and federal agencies**

# Fun Facts from Website Research

- **Key findings among respondents**
  - **Many complained it is difficult to sift through poorly designed websites that make it difficult to find relevant information**
  - **What they *are* seeking:**
    - **Access to industry data**
    - **Timely news developments**
    - **Regulatory filings and policy statements**
    - **Press statements**
    - **News about relevant events**

# Fun Facts from Website Research

- **Key findings among respondents**
  - **Time pressures are paramount**
    - **Reporters said their visits to *all* websites are “as brief as possible” and they have little time to explore new sites**
    - **Majority said they don’t browse through multiple links on site – “they get the information and data they need, and then leave the site”**

# Fun Facts from Website Research

- **Recommendations & conclusions**
  - **Keep sites clean, simple, uncluttered**
  - **Push information to those who care to opt in**
  - **Less text; more video**



# 50 States – 50 Networks

- **State Public Affairs Networks (“State-SPANS”)**

**“...Using programming, funding, and organizational models tailored to each individual state...networks provide C-SPAN style, gavel-to-gavel, non-partisan, unfiltered coverage of the daily activities of state government, including state legislative, court and agency proceedings, as well as public policy events, supplemented with a variety of produced public affairs programming.”**

# 50 States – 50 Networks

- **State Public Affairs Networks (“State-SPANS”)**
  - Often emulate C-SPAN
  - Management, funding, and operating models vary widely
  - Most also present in cyberspace
  - Enjoy the advocacy of an association, National Association of Public Affairs Networks, which has launched the “50 States – 50 Networks” initiative

# State-SPANs in 25 States

- New York
- Connecticut
- Rhode Island
- Pennsylvania
- New Jersey
- Delaware
- South Carolina
- Florida
- Ohio
- Kentucky
- Michigan
- Wisconsin
- Illinois
- Minnesota
- Arkansas
- Louisiana
- Nebraska
- Texas
- Montana
- Washington
- Oregon
- Nevada
- California
- Alaska
- Hawaii

# 50 States – 50 Networks

- **Value of the State-SPANs**
  - **Picking up the slack in coverage of state government**
  - **Pipeline via mass media to households**
  - **Long-form coverage of issues, providing substantial time for many points of view**

# 50 States – 50 Networks

- **Value of the State-SPANs**

**“...Networks provide the public with unfiltered access to state government and the actions of their elected representatives as well as an unbiased view of other civic activities...Long-form ‘process’ coverage supports government transparency and accountability at a time when traditional media organizations are reducing coverage of state government and issues.”**

# Old Technology – Television!

- **In some areas, traditional avenues to constituents continue to exist through cable and other television media**
  - **“PEG” Access**
  - **Local Access**
  - **Leased Access**



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