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On-Line Interaction and Why Candidates Avoid It

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Abstract

The Internet has properties that make possible increased interaction between citizens and political leaders. Interviews of campaign staff and analysis of U.S. candidate websites in 1996 and 1998, however, indicate that most political campaigns are resistant to using human-interactive features. I conceptualize interaction, offering that there are two kinds: human interaction and media interaction. More democratizing components of the medium, human interaction, are avoided in favor of media interaction because of the potential for a loss of control and ambiguity of campaign communication.

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