



**Internet politics: A
comparative analysis of
U.S. and South Korea
presidential campaigns
by Noriko Hara and
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Abstract

To investigate the role of information and computer technologies (ICTs) in political campaigns, this paper discusses three areas of influence in particular (fundraising, civic participation, and e-mobilization), identifying similarities and differences between the U.S. and South Korea. The result of our analysis shows that the impact of the Internet on the two presidential elections differed in all three areas. The Internet provides ordinary citizens with political resources and opportunities to expand their political participation in a democratic environment. Moreover, Internet-based collective action can lead to political changes, both positive and negative, depending on the interaction pattern between the state and society. While the political implications of ICTs come to the fore, the predominant factor in the recent presidential elections remained traditional representative mechanisms. These results will shed light on social and organizational practices with respect to the potential political utilization of ICTs in two different countries.

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Introduction

The U.S. presidential election in 2000 marked the beginning of Internet use in political campaigns (Bimber and Davis, 2003; Davis, 2005). Four years later in 2004, political parties, candidates, and other organizations used the Internet to mobilize voters and to promote candidates' visions (Jacobs, 2005). Until the 2004 national U.S. election, Internet use in online campaigning was primarily limited to one-way interactions, *i.e.*, Web sites or informational e-mail messages (Davis, 2005). Such one-way interaction is similar to the functions identified by studies of e-government Web sites (*e.g.*, Robbin, *et al.*, 2004), and this kind of one-way communication for sites did not accomplish much in the way of adding to existing media outlets. However, in 2004, some political candidates, most notably Howard Dean, shifted from this one-way interactivity model, thus changing the way politicians could capitalize on Internet use as a campaign method.

In South Korea, Roh Moo-hyun, a non-mainstream politician, won the 2002 presidential campaign. Foreign and domestic media described the 2002 presidential election in South Korea as an Internet election (*e.g.*, French, 2003; Watts, 2003). They claimed that the election could be called a generational revolution, as 20 and 30 year olds were able to unite through the

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Internet, unlike their older generational counterparts. In addition, news media reported that Roh Moo-hyun won the race primarily because he had dominated his counterpart Lee Hoi-chang in online campaigning. Roh's team was very successful in mobilizing his supporters, especially young voters, in cyberspace. Thus, a conflict of generations and generational voting patterns based on the Internet campaign characterized the 2002 presidential election, while other traditional political factors such as regionalism did not have much influence in reshaping the political environment during the election period (JoongAng Ilbo, 2002).

The current study uses the theoretical framework Social Shaping of Technology (SST) (Bijker, *et al.*, 1987; Williams and Edge, 1996) to examine the South Korean 2002 presidential election in comparison to the U.S. 2004 presidential election. SST is a framework that examines not only the impact of technology, but also the processes that technology influences in relation to the context of its use. SST was chosen for this study because it is an analytical approach that accounts for cultural and other differences in the social contexts, as well as shifts in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) use over time. Inevitably, various socio-political factors influence Internet use for political purposes.



Discourses about the political impact of the Internet

While reviewing literature to examine the political impact of the Internet, one can identify two opposing technological discourses: one utopian, the other dystopian (Kling, 1994).

Technological utopianism refers to a perspective that focuses on new technologies as driving forces of social change and assumes that they will be effectively used within social systems.

Early literature on e-democracy or cyber-democracy focused on the possibilities for direct democracy and closer connections between individuals and governments and policymakers. In studies on democratization movements, the Internet has the potential to foster the growth of civil society, and as a result leads to liberalization and democratization of authoritarian countries (Hill and Sen, 2000; Putnam, 1993). Furthermore, scholars of 'participatory democracy' often argue that modern ICT provides ordinary citizens with political resources and opportunities to expand their political participation in a democratic environment (Prins, 2001). Interactive and reciprocal in nature, ICT does not have the inherent disadvantage evident in the old format of one-way communication between politicians and citizens.

These early works on ICT and democracy support an 'equalization' thesis whose argument is that online campaigning will make political competition between majority and minority political actors more equal. Unlike the cases of offline campaigning and traditional mass media, the Internet will reduce election expenses. This characteristic of the Internet will likely benefit minority political actors and groups. The utopian vision of a new technology is in line with this thesis. According to the utopian perspective (Kling, 1994), the Internet improves democracy, offering both internal and external ways for citizens to participate in political decision-making processes. Internally, the Internet raises civil awareness of political decision-making processes, while externally providing a channel for citizens to make their voices heard. The Internet's interactive nature is the medium's feature most expected to expand the role of citizens from passive message consumers to active message creators. In sum, the logic of the equalization thesis is similar to the perspective of *technological determinism* (Webster, 2002) in addition to the utopian vision of utilizing the Internet for political purposes.

On the other hand, according to the 'normalization' thesis, the Internet and online political campaigns have certain limits in reshaping new political engagement. Online politics is a mere reflection of offline political environment and will fail to overcome the established political structure (Norris, 2000; Stromer-Galley, 2000). While traditional media are accessible to ordinary people, the influence of the Internet depends on the accessibility and the willingness to find information on Web sites (Norris, 2001; van Dijk and Hacker, 2003).

This thesis is thought to be in line with the perspectives of the Social Shaping of Technology (SST). The SST approach serves as a needed corrective and an antidote to naive technological determinism. Although not denying that technologies have social effects, the focus, rather, is on the social forces which give rise to particular technologies (Kling, 2000; Williams and Edge, 1996). This perspective has strong implications for Internet politics. The *amplification model* (Agre, 2002) shows a similar approach to political use of the Internet. The Internet alone cannot change the existing forces, but merely amplify them. It is possible that something in real politics is modified by those amplified forces. Thus, the single factor of the Internet can hardly create a new political order. The consideration of social processes surrounding the new medium of the Internet should include much more than one-sided generalizations.

Some scholars are more pessimistic about Internet use for politics. Scholars such as Lawrence Lessig (1999) argue that governments can most certainly regulate the Internet, both by

controlling its underlying code and by shaping the legal environment in which it operates. It is believed that politically decentralizing capacities of ICTs can be dominated by traditional organizational interests as traditional media firms succeed in colonizing new ICTs (Davis, 1999).

It is apparent that we need a different kind of conceptualization when considering the political use of the Internet. Chadwick (2005) proposed a new theoretical framework called "organizational hybrids" which posited that the previous distinctions among political parties, interest groups, and new social movements became increasingly blurred as political parties and interest groups started to use the Internet to mobilize their constituencies. His new conceptualization of organizational hybrids paid close attention to the mobilization enabled by the Internet (*i.e.*, e-mobilization).

In this study, the central question investigated is: what effects did the Internet have on the recent presidential elections in two countries? We use a qualitative case study approach to compare and contrast Internet use for recent presidential campaigns in the U.S. and South Korea. To investigate the role of ICTs in political campaigns, we will particularly focus on three areas of influence (fundraising, civic participation, and e-mobilization) and identify similarities and differences between the U.S. and South Korea.



The political use of the Internet in the U.S. and South Korea

United States

According to the UCLA Digital Future Project (2004, 2005), 65.1 percent of Americans had Internet access from home in 2003, compared to 66.2 percent in 2005. When online, this demographic engaged in 18 different activities (Fallows, 2004), including getting directions (87 percent), communicating with friends and families (79 percent), paying bills (44 percent), and playing games (46 percent). Among the 18 activities listed in this report, no political activities are included. As of February 2004, 77 percent of ages 18–24, 78 percent of ages 25–34, 76 percent of ages 35–44, 67 percent of ages 45–54, 53 percent of ages 55–64, and 23 percent of ages above 65 were online (Horrigan, 2004).

In the 2004 U.S. presidential election, Internet campaigning became more interactive than previous years, especially through the use of blogs (Lessig, 2003). Although television is still the major news source for the American public to obtain information about candidates (Rainie, *et al.*, 2005), political blogs have started making a difference in elections (Cornfield, *et al.*, 2005; Drezner and Farrell, 2004). One possible reason that people turn to the Internet for political information is because traditional news media in the U.S. tends to report about polls and candidates' personalities, rather than reporting on candidates' particular stances on issues (Esser and D'Angelo, 2003; Xenos and Foot, 2005).

The number of citizens who obtain political information online is increasing. In June 2004, 42 percent of Americans who use the Internet received news about the 2004 political campaigns online or via e-mail. Although the majority of the population (78 percent) relies on television to get political information, 15 percent used the Internet and e-mail including listservs as their primary source for campaign news — a striking shift when we consider the meager seven percent who used the Internet as their main source in January 2000 (Horrigan, *et al.*, 2004). This represents more than a 100 percent increase between presidential elections. Newspapers (38 percent) and radio (16 percent) are ranked between television and the Internet as primary sources for political news (Horrigan, *et al.*, 2004).

According to Cornfield (2005), the number of Americans who have visited presidential campaign Web sites has increased between the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. For example, nine million visited the Bush campaign website in 2000 compared to 16 million who visited the same site in 2004. Similarly, the seven million who visited Gore's campaign Web site in 2000 nearly tripled to 20 million during the Kerry campaign of 2004. Clearly, it would seem, citizens are turning to online sources to gain a better understanding about political candidates' opinions.

South Korea

The South Korean government realized remarkable achievements in establishing knowledge-based information networks throughout the nation, interconnecting government, business, and media. The Kim Dae-jung administration (1998–2002), above all, built an infrastructure of information super highways on a nationwide scale, a massive project which still continues today.

According to a survey by Korea Network Information Center (KNIC) (2003), as of December

2002 about 59.4 percent of the population age six years and over uses the Internet once a month or more. Among those people, the rate of Internet users who access the Web once a week or more reached 97.5 percent, while 71.8 percent access the Internet daily. [Table 1](#) indicates the breakdowns of Internet access based on age groups. Similar to the U.S., the majority of people in their 20s and 30s in South Korea have access to the Internet.

	December 2000	December 2001	December 2002
20s	74.6	84.9	89.8
30s	43.6	61.6	69.4
40s	22.7	35.6	39.3
50s and older	5.7	8.7	9.3

Despite the rapid increase of the Internet use, the political influence of the Internet on Korean society is not as strong. The same survey by KNIC indicates that political use of the Internet is not one of the main purposes of Internet usage. Mail usage (76.5 percent), data information search (71.3 percent), and games (44.0 percent) are the three top purposes of Internet usage. The category of "community activity usage," which is potentially related to political online activities, was chosen by only 11.1 percent of the respondents. In the "data information search" category, "politically related tasks" are not included in the top major tasks. Most of the respondents used the Internet for searching study related tasks (34.5 percent), business-related tasks (25.3 percent), leisure (22.3 percent), and living information (13.9 percent). These findings failed to provide evidence that the Internet played as important of a role as other traditional media or campaign strategies in the mobilization of voters and the spread of campaign information during the 2002 presidential election.

Observations of candidates' Web sites indicate that the issues provided on their sites generally covered the various policies such as North Korean nuclear crisis, economic reform on major business groups, social welfare, political funding, taxation, and aggressive labor union groups. Roh Moo-hyun's campaign team accelerated the use of the Internet. The Roh campaign team had more liberal and progressive stances on all of the issues than the Lee campaign. In South Korea, the North Korean issue is the primary topic differentiating liberal and conservative political groups. While Roh Moo-hyun supported the engagement policy, Lee Hoi-chang was the proponent of the hard line policy.

Mobilization in the U.S. and South Korea presidential elections

Fundraising

Chadwick (2005) has called the Internet a "fundraising weapon." [1] In the United States, the Howard Dean campaign was a famous example of campaigners who used blogs (and the Internet in general) quite successfully (Shapiro, 2003; Trippi, 2004). For instance, this relatively unknown candidate raised approximately US\$20 million online during the primaries while the Bush campaign raised approximately US\$14 million online (Justice, 2004). [Table 2](#) also presents the difference among the Bush, Kerry, and Dean campaign fundraising results. The total contribution to each candidate was retrieved from a Web site called [opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org) (<http://www.opensecrets.org>). Howard Dean raised 37.81 percent of total receipts online and John Kerry raised 25.14 percent whereas George Bush raised only 3.81 percent of total receipts online. According to Cornfield (2005), Kerry raised US\$5.6 million online on 29 July 2004 when he gave the nomination acceptance speech. Furthermore, in terms of online advertisement spending, Kerry spent US\$1.3 million whereas Bush spent a mere US\$419,000 (Cornfield, 2004). This prominent difference in investment suggests that the Bush campaign did not perceive the importance of online campaign. Overall, less than one percent of the cost of television advertisement in the top 100 markets was spent on online advertisement for primary candidates' campaigns.

	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Dean
Total	US\$367,228,801	US\$326,236,288	US\$4,566,037	\$52,968,040
Online (Rainie, <i>et al.</i> , 2005)	US\$14 million	US\$82 million	N.A.	over US\$20 million
Percentage of online donation	3.81%	25.14%	N.A.	37.81%

One of the remarkable traits during the 2004 U.S. presidential campaigns was that the Internet enabled campaigns to encourage small amounts of donations from ordinary citizens. Unlike traditional fundraising activities which result in large amounts of contributions from fewer individuals, the Dean campaign raised "\$500,000 from 9,700 people," [2] on an occasion, translating into US\$51.55 contribution per person on average. According to the data from the U.S. Federal Election Commission, the average amounts of individual contributions during the 2003–2004 cycle were US\$151.35 for Dean, US\$805.59 for Bush, and US\$1017.52 for Kerry. The data for the average contribution to Dean's campaign represent, in fact, a reasonable amount for ordinary citizens (as opposed to the very wealthy) to contribute. The Dean campaign showcased the power of accumulating large amounts of small donations.

Some authors (Hindman, 2005; Lessig, 2003) emphasized that the Dean campaign's fundraising success is partially due to the strategy of freeing control. Trippi (2004), Howard Dean's campaign manager, reported that the Dean campaign was the first to release goals of fundraising operations and let constituents know that they had the power to make the campaign successful. In other words, the Dean campaign decided to sit back and let it happen.

In South Korea, Roh's fundraising efforts also diverged from traditional methods of fundraising. In the previous presidential elections, political and business elite groups had intimate connections. Candidates sought to buy political support with the funds from *chaebol* (South Korea's big family-owned business conglomerates), while public support for political funds was blocked at all costs. South Korean economic development is closely tied to money invested in politicians. The *chaebol* has provided politicians (*i.e.*, mainly the ruling party leaders) with political funds to run elections and other political activities in return for cheap capital from state-owned banks. The control of the ruling party and government over capital often threatens business elite groups. Thus, such a political environment gave the *chaebol* and other business leaders no incentive to provide funds for the opposition parties (Kang, 2002).

However, in the 2002 election, Roh's team raised over US\$600,000 from more than 200,000 individuals through the Internet. This can be calculated as an average of three U.S. dollars per person, which represents an even smaller amount from individual contributors than the Dean campaign (see [Table 3](#)).

	Average number of Web site visitors	Number of members in online fan club	Online fundraising
Roh, Moo-hyun	300,000	82,300	US\$603,000

Young voter turnout

There is a concern that the younger generation is disengaged from politics in the U.S. (Goldstein and Morin, 2002). In the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, youth voter turnout (ages between 18 and 24) was still the lowest among all age groups — 36 percent and 47 percent in 2000 and 2004, respectively (see [Table 4](#)). Despite this popular account of disengagement, the youth voter turnout increased 11 percent for the 2004 U.S. presidential election compared to 2000 — a remarkable increase. It is difficult to empirically determine whether the Internet had any kind of effect on this increase in youth voter turnout. One indication of the Internet's impact is that there were more Web sites targeted to youth in the 2004 presidential election than in the 2002 mid-term election (Bennett and Xeon, 2005). Bennett and Xeon found not only an increase in the number of youth-targeted political engagement sites but also greater sophistication of features and more information on political

issues identified in these Web sites. The features included interactivity and multimedia components, which may have increased the attraction of youth voters to these sites, resulting in more interest in politics.

Table 4: Voter turnout in 2000 and 2004 U.S. presidential elections.
Adopted from
http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS_Youth_Voting_72-04.pdf.
*Difference from the average turnout (%).

	2000	2004	Percentage difference between 2000 and 2004
18–24	36% (-24)*	47% (-17)	+11%
25–34	51% (-9)	56% (-8)	+5%
35–44	60% (0)	64% (0)	+4%
45–54	66% (+6)	69% (+5)	+3%
55–64	70% (+10)	73% (+9)	+3%
65–74	72% (+12)	73% (+9)	+1%
75+	67% (+7)	69% (+5)	+2%
Average turnout	60%	64%	+4%

By examining the exit poll by age results for the 2004 presidential election (Table 5), it is evident that Kerry won the support of youth voters (ages between 18 and 29). Whereas Kerry earned 54 percent of the youth voters, Bush collected 45 percent of the same population, resulting in a difference of nine percent. Interestingly, when we looked at the oldest (ages 60 and above) voters, the results showed almost opposite: they favored Bush over Kerry by eight percent.

Table 5: Exit poll voting results by age.
Source:
<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>.

	Bush		Kerry
	2004	2000	2004
18–29 (17%)	45%	N.A.	54%
30–44 (29%)	53%	+4	46%
45–59 (30%)	51%	+2	48%
60 and older (24%)	54%	+7	46%

In South Korea, it is difficult to prove empirically that Roh's Internet campaign increased young citizens' political engagement and voting. According to the white paper on the 2002 presidential election by the National Election Commission (see Table 6), the turnout rate of voters over age forty was much higher than the rate of voters in their twenties and thirties. While 56.5 percent of voters in their twenties and 67.4 percent in their thirties partook in the voting, over 75 percent of voters in their forties and fifties participated in the election. Domestic media suggested a number of causes for this lower turnout of voters in their thirties and twenties, including a decrease in the average voter turnout, a lack of interest in the election, and an impression that voting will not bring any change in real politics (JoongAng Ilbo, 2002). Among those factors, it is worth noting a sharp decrease in the average voter turnout in the 2002 election (70.8 percent) compared to previous years (89.9 percent in 1987; 81.9 percent in 1992; and 80.7 percent in 1997) (National Election Commission, South Korea).

At least, the turnout result in the 2002 election suggest that a high level of online political participation does not always give rise to the same level of real political engagement in voting. Thus, this finding does not support the argument of the utopian approach or technological

determinism.

Table 6: Turnout of voters by generation in the 1997 and 2002 Presidential elections (%).

Source: National Election Commission, South Korea (<http://www.nec.go.kr>).
*Difference from the average turnout (%).

	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s and over	Average turnout
2002 election	56.5 (-14.3)*	67.4 (-3.4)	76.3 (5.5)	83.7 (12.9)	78.7 (7.9)	70.8
1997 election	68.2 (-12.5)	82.6 (1.9)	87.5 (6.8)	89.9 (9.2)		80.7

Some argue that Roh succeeded in receiving a majority of voters in their twenties and thirties due to the successful online campaign strategy and political use of the Internet (Castells, *et al.*, 2007; JoongAng Ilbo, 2002). They suggest that the very characteristic of the 2002 presidential election is a generational voting pattern and that the Internet campaign played a pivotal role in increasing the youth support for Roh over Lee. While Roh gained 62.1 percent of votes in their twenties, Lee only received 31.7 percent of votes. Roh received 59.3 percent of votes from voters in their thirties; this, combined with the support from younger voters, enabled him to defeat Lee by 25.4 percent.

However, this point is rejected by regional voting patterns in the 2002 presidential election. The difficult and divisive nature of regionalism in South Korea originates from a historical and political tension between these two large provinces of Gyeongsang and Cholla. The tension between two provinces has always been reflected in the voting patterns of national elections since the 1987 democratization in South Korea. While liberal or leftist political parties typically receive a majority in Cholla area, conservative or right-wing politicians usually win over liberals in Gyeongsang province. The 2002 election result confirmed the typical regional voting pattern in South Korea (see [Table 7](#)). Even though Roh achieved the 56.5 percent of votes in their twenties nationwide, the support of twenties for Roh fell to 30.7 percent in conservative North Gyeongsang province. It is interesting to see that approximately 50 percent of twenty-year-olds in South Gyeongsang province, the conservative's political power base, voted for liberal Roh Moo-hyun. However, this is more likely due to Roh's origin in this province, rather than generational voting influence by online political engagement.

Table 7: The support rate for Roh Moo-hyun by regional votes.
Source: *The Korea Herald* (20 December 2002).

Region	Age			
	20s	30s	40s	50 and over
Seoul	70.6	60.7	40.9	38.8
Inchon/Gyunggi Province	61.0	65.1	40.6	27.4
Taegu/North Gyeongsang Province	30.7	37.0	15.5	8.7
Pusan/South Gyeongsang Province	49.2	47.5	30.9	11.6
Gwangju/Cholla Province	97.5	86.7	93.7	92.7

It is also a matter of interest that Roh gained the astonishing 92.7 percent of support in over fifties from liberal Cholla Province. All of the findings strongly reject the argument that generational voting pattern characterizes the 2002 election result. It is true that many of young citizens visited Roh's Web sites and communicated with other people supporting Roh during the election period. This fact is not enough to prove that Roh was successful in mobilizing new political engagements of youth groups, although he succeeded in calling young people's attention to liberal and reformist political issues through his Web site. The political influence of online campaign failed to go beyond regionalism in the 2002 election.

Table 8: Electoral choice by age group.
Source: MBC–TV exit poll published in *The Korea Herald* (20 December 2002).

Age group	Roh Moo–hyun	Lee Hoi–chang
20s (20–29)	62.1	31.7
30s (30–39)	59.3	33.9
40s (40–49)	47.4	48.7
50 and over	39.8	58.3

e–Mobilization

Although it is challenging to demonstrate the effects of the Internet on politics, it is evident that political organizations used the Internet to mobilize citizens during recent national elections in the U.S. and South Korea. Cornfield (2005) contends that the Kerry campaign put more emphasis on fundraising whereas the Bush campaign directed its efforts toward grassroots mobilization. The Bush campaign created incentives on GeorgeWBush.com for people to recruit their friends to sign up for its e–mail list, volunteer, and register other voters by giving them signed photos and mugs (Baker, 2004; Kern, 2004). Similarly, the Dean campaign effectively used a Web site called MeetUp.com that allowed the Dean supporters to meet locally and discuss the candidate. According to Hindman (2005), right after the Dean campaign ceased, more than 180,000 people were listed to receive e–mail about local meetings, compared to 80,000 people listed for Kerry two months after the end of the Dean campaign (Trippi, 2004). Citizens are highly mobilized via the Internet.

Independent of political parties, MoveOn.org (<http://moveon.org/>), a virtual social activist organization, initiated the No Voter Left Behind campaign for the 2004 presidential election in support of the Democratic party presidential nominee John Kerry. Prior to making the decision to support this candidate, MoveOn elicited “votes” from its members. Once consensus was built among its members to support Kerry, MoveOn hired approximately 500 paid staff to run the No Voter Left Behind campaign, mainly focusing on political swing states (Hara, in preparation). Although the candidate MoveOn supported did not accumulate enough votes, it was a very close election, quite possibly due, in part, to the campaign that MoveOn organized. Similar organizations, such as Truemajority (<http://www.truemajority.org>), also organized campaigns to encourage eligible voters to register and vote during the 2004 presidential campaign.

In South Korea, Roh’s campaign team dispersed video clips containing Roh’s message to young voters through the official campaign site. During the campaign period, an average of over 300,000 citizens visited Roh’s Web site per day. On 19 December, Election Day, Roh’s campaign site received 860,855 visitors (Chosun Ilbo, 2002) (see also [Appendix](#)).

More importantly, Roh’s Web–based fan club *Rhosamo* (which means ‘people who love Roh’) was organized after Roh lost in the 2000 National Assembly Election. Though he failed to overcome the obstacle of regionalism, he succeeded in creating a fresh image as a reformist and a new politician. Members of *Rhosamo* reached about 70,000 before the election. Most of them were gathered spontaneously online, whereas Lee’s fan club *Changsarang* (which means ‘people who love Lee Hoi–chang’) was formed under the leadership of the Grand National Party (JoongAng Ilbo, 2002). Roh’s landslide victory over other candidates in the primaries was attributed to the great success in mobilizing members of *Rhosamo* both in cyberspace and offline (Chosun Ilbo, 2002).

Discussion and conclusions

Some noteworthy traits are observed based on the two recent presidential elections in the U.S. and South Korea. First, the Internet has played a major role in raising money. It is clear that the campaigns which took advantage of fundraising via the Internet resulted in great success, exemplified in the U.S. by both the Kerry and Dean campaigns and in South Korea by Roh’s greater campaign contributions. In both cases, the Internet facilitated the fundraising contribution to the ordinary citizens. Consequently, one of the effects of the Internet was to re–establish the power of individual constituents.

Second, and perhaps more interestingly, despite the success of fundraising and mobilization in the primaries, the candidate Roh did not help increase youth voter turnout compared to the

previous election year. He only succeeded in pulling the voters in their twenties and thirties to his campaign Web site, not to real voting booths. He even lost the majority support of young voters in conservative North and South Gyeongsang provinces. The political effects of the Internet in the 2002 presidential election in South Korea seem to have been weakened under the influence of the political and social environment such as regionalism. In the U.S., young voter turnout (ages 18–24) considerably increased in the 2004 presidential election. While it was uncertain how much the Internet had influenced, 77 percent of ages between 18 and 24 were online, and the number of Web sites targeted youth voters had increased.

Third, there is a strong correlation between minority political actors and high political use of the Internet as seen by the success of the Roh Moo-hyun and Howard Dean campaigns. In looking at the fundraising results, it would seem that online campaigns considerably benefited “resource poor” (Bennett, 2003) candidates, such as Roh and Dean. When Bennett discusses the advantage that the Internet offers to the resource poor, he primarily focuses on media use — traditional media were not easily available to the resource poor because the threshold was too high due to expensive air time, whereas virtually anyone can publish their news via the Internet with low cost. In fact, the Dean campaign utilized blogs to mobilize supporters, effectively turning the Internet into a fundraising machine. Still, this successful fundraising did not lead to success in the U.S. election.

Some argue that being active online increases an illusion that they are making a difference in the real world (Shirky, 2004). Neither the Dean nor Roh campaigns was able to bring the level of enthusiasm and activities of the Internet to real world outcomes. In Dean’s case, it was the voting in primaries and in Roh’s, it was the voting of youth voters. By examining Internet use for two different presidential campaigns, Internet politics did not fit neatly into categories of either equalization or normalization theory.

The Internet has been touted as a promoter of democracy and political participation, but as yet there is little rigorous empirical research that offers significant insight on whether Internet usage is an effective way to promote grassroots mobilization of voters. Some early works on e-democracy by Arterton (1987) and Toffler and Toffler (1995) extolled the seemingly limitless possibilities of the Internet for bringing about a different kind of representative democracy. However, this comparative case study demonstrates that this was not necessarily the case. Finally, we also need more international comparison of Internet use for political purposes. Although the cases cited above shed light on our grasp of social and organizational practices of ICTs for political activities in two different countries, a better understanding of political use of the Internet remains unresolved. 

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Notes

[1.](#) Chadwick, 2005, p. 10.

[2.](#) Cornfield, 2005; Trippi, 2004, p. 148.

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Appendix

Table 9: Access number to Roh's campaign site.	
Source: Millennium Democratic Party, 2003. <i>A white paper on the 16th Presidential election.</i>	
Note: * Presidential election date.	
21 November	133,862
22 November	145,787
23 November	149,269
24 November	160,800
25 November	260,494
26 November	159,514
27 November	179,442
28 November	212,222
29 November	175,502
30 November	213,192
1 December	195,268
2 December	186,015
3 December	201,459
4 December	239,882
5 December	263,881
6 December	322,607

7 December	344,336
8 December	344,336
9 December	403,259
10 December	348,550
11 December	372,608
12 December	371,354
13 December	377,881
14 December	331,424
15 December	370,203
16 December	831,909
17 December	488,619
18 December	668,612
19 December*	860,855
20 December	578,980
21 December	532,892
22 December	313,377
23 December	314,728
24 December	276,725
25 December	239,307
26 December	251,815
27 December	228,133
28 December	198,224

Table 10: Number of files and access to Roh's bulletin board.

Source: Millennium Democratic Party, 2003. *A white paper on the 16th Presidential election.*

Note: * Presidential election date.

Date	Number of files	Access numbers	Number of access per file
8 December	6,435	1,485,762	230.45
9 December	6,725	1,474,283	219.85
10 December	7,334	1,457,824	206.46
11 December	8,214	1,650,852	200.57
12 December	7,548	1,496,475	197.63
13 December	7,283	1,436,829	198.88
14 December	6,885	1,751,834	254.31
15 December	6,729	2,076,078	304.59
16 December	10,459	2,351,842	231.57
17 December	11,287	2,871,834	245.94
18 December	15,462	2,899,731	191.57
19 December	32,482	5,611,869	171.64

20 December	15,762	2,165,734	143.58
21 December	9,724	1,263,842	137.52

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