

Representation in State Legislatures

German Online Research Conference

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Suggested Citation:

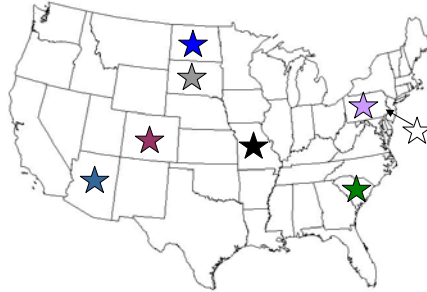
Richardson, L. E. (2004). Representation in State Legislatures. Retrieved [Month Day, Year], from University of Missouri – Columbia, Institute of Public Policy Web site: <http://www.truman.missouri.edu/ipp/publications/presentations.html>

Purpose of Survey

- To determine how legislators feel about the use of technology
 - Does email have a positive effect on communication?
 - What is the impact of the internet on the legislature?

Survey Sample

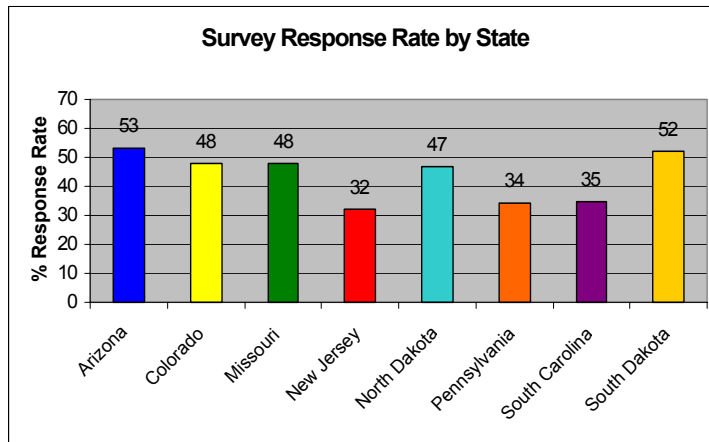
- Eight states
 - Arizona
 - New Jersey
 - North Dakota
 - South Dakota
 - Colorado
 - Missouri
 - Pennsylvania
 - South Carolina



Survey Design

- Conducted Summer 2003
- Dillman's Tailored Design Method
 - 3 waves
- Sixteen legislative chambers
 - 1,176 legislators
 - 42% response rate

Response Rate



Characteristics of Respondents

- Average age: 54 years old
- First time legislators: 36%
- Female legislators: 19%
- Legislators describe their views as
 - 16% liberal (extremely liberal, liberal or slightly liberal)
 - 23% moderate
 - 54% conservative (extremely conservative, conservative, or slightly conservative)

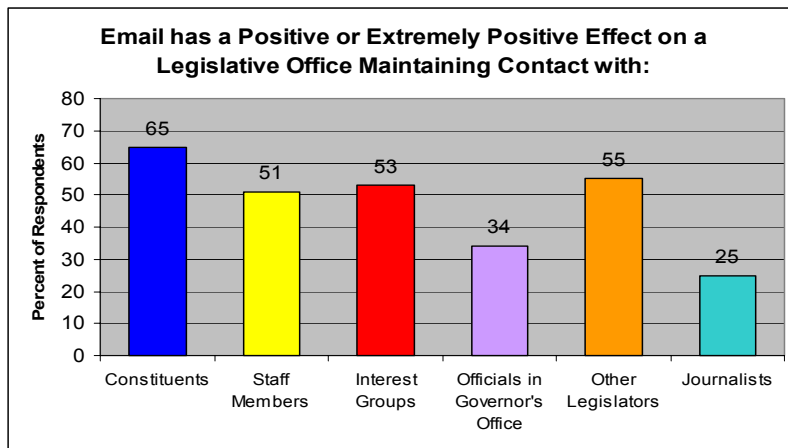


Research Questions

- E-gov touted by many, but how do American state legislators feel about it?
 - Does email have a positive effect?
 - Who do they contact?
 - Are there differences in which legislators use it?
 - Do legislators have fears about using email?
 - Does the Internet have positive effects on the legislature and how it works?



Email Usage



Email – Extremely Positive Effects

| | Male | Female | First Time | Veteran |
|-------------------|------|--------|------------|---------|
| Constituents | 36% | 59% | 53% | 34% |
| Staff | 38% | 54% | 49% | 36% |
| Interest Groups | 23% | 32% | 31% | 21% |
| Governor's Office | 16% | 24% | 16% | 19% |
| Legislators | 25% | 44% | 33% | 27% |
| Journalists | 9% | 16% | 8% | 12% |



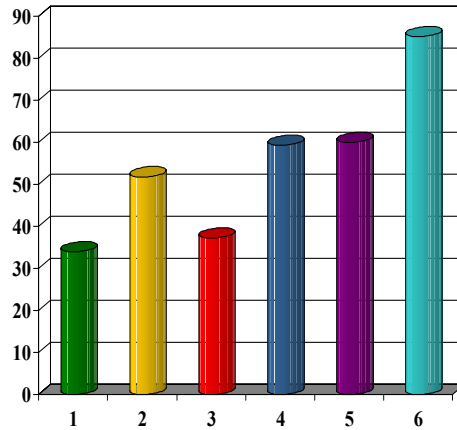
Significant Factors for Email Usage with Constituents

- Ordinal Logistic Analysis
- Negative Effects
 - Age of legislator
 - Minority legislator
 - Professional legislature
- Positive Effects
 - Multimember district
 - Female legislator
 - First time legislator
 - Legislator attitude that service builds trust
 - More time staying in touch with district



Attitude Toward Email - percent who agree or strongly agree

- 1 - Volume places an undue burden on staff
- 2 - Biased representation
- 3 - Unrealistic expectations for immediate response
- 4 - Not certain if email sender is constituent
- 5 - Not certain if it is confidential
- 6 - Easier for single issue campaigns



Email Concerns – Percent Agree

| | Male | Female | First Time | Veteran |
|-----------------|------|--------|------------|---------|
| Burden on staff | 33% | 38% | 31% | 35% |
| Immediate | 51% | 56% | 52% | 53% |
| Bias | 37% | 37% | 41% | 36% |
| Sender | 57% | 67% | 57% | 61% |
| Confidential | 58% | 67% | 63% | 58% |
| Single Issue | 85% | 88% | 92% | 81% |

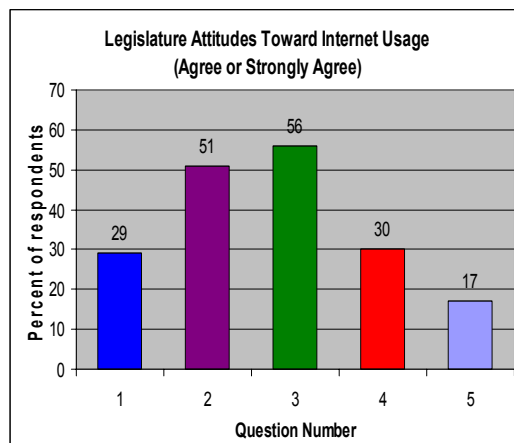
Significant Factors for Concern that Email is not Confidential

- Ordinal Logistic Analysis
- Negative Effects
 - Multimember district
- Positive Effects (more concerned)
 - Conservatives
 - Older legislators
 - Females
 - First time legislators



Attitudes about Internet Impact

- 1 – Decreased demands on legislative staff to get current information
- 2 – Increased the pace of the legislative process
- 3 – Improved your ability to consider policy actions in other states
- 4 – Increased deliberation about legislative issues
- 5 – Caused staff to worry more about information being leaked prematurely or taken out of context



Internet Effects – Percent Agree

| | Male | Female | First Time | Veteran |
|--------------|------|--------|------------|---------|
| Info | 32% | 38% | 32% | 34% |
| Pace | 52% | 72% | 62% | 53% |
| Other States | 59% | 69% | 62% | 62% |
| Deliberation | 31% | 43% | 41% | 28% |
| Leaks | 15% | 21% | 16% | 16% |



Significant Factors for Internet Effect on Increased Deliberation

- Ordinal Logistic Analysis

- Negative Effects
 - Senate
 - Professional legislature

- Positive Effects
 - First time legislator
 - Distance from home district
 - Females

