



We are very pleased to share this evaluation of the Markle Foundation's online election project, *Web White & Blue 2000*, with you, and hope it will be a useful resource as the world of interactive media and politics continues to evolve.

*Web White & Blue 2000* was designed to explore the ways in which interactive media can enhance the political experience, and we think this research illustrates that this new media holds much promise for doing so. Working in collaboration with 17 of the largest Internet sites, news organizations, and portals, *Web White & Blue 2000* created an impressive network that reached more than 85% of the American Internet audience. Thousands of sites from the non-profit community participated as well, and this network came together to provide voters with a comprehensive view of the best online political information and discourse.

One of the most exciting features of *Web White & Blue 2000* was the Rolling Cyber Debate, which consisted of daily exchanges on topics between the presidential campaigns and citizens. This online forum gave voters a chance to not only delve deeper into topics raised during the televised debates, but also to question the candidates directly and uncover information about the issues that mattered most to them.

In addition to the Rolling Cyber Debate, *Web White & Blue 2000* offered citizens a daily compilation of the leading political information online, as well as an interactive events calendar, which provided up-to-date listings of some of the best online political activity. It also drew attention to the numerous non-partisan, political resources available on the Internet by highlighting many non-profit organizations' web sites as Featured Sites. The State-by-State Directory, another resource of the site, offered information to our audience that became particularly useful during the Florida recount, as it provided easy access to the Florida Secretary of State's site, as well as links to other relevant sites and information.

In an attempt to learn as much as possible from users' experiences with this important interactive resource, the Markle Foundation commissioned the research on which this report is based. Through voluntary user surveys, interviews with charter sites, Internet polls and controlled lab experiments, Dr. Arthur Lupia, Professor of Political Science at University of California at San Diego, has taken an exhaustive look at how *Web White & Blue 2000* and other Internet sites affected the way people responded to the candidates, and subsequently experienced the 2000 elections. This research represents some of the

most well conceived and in-depth information about the Internet available to the public at this time, and includes the following findings:

- Approximately 50% of *Web White & Blue 2000* users in the lab experiments reported a change in how they viewed at least one of the presidential candidates.
- Compared to the 1998 user survey, in 2000, the percentage of respondents reporting that the Internet was their primary source of information increased by almost 14%.
- A single, five minute viewing of *Web White & Blue 2000* resulted in 69% of viewers expressing greater confidence in the quality of political information on the Internet.

This report supports our belief that the Internet is playing, and will continue to play, a critical role in enhancing individuals' relationships to the political process. While we are still very much in the early stages of understanding what successful and meaningful applications to the political process might look like, it is important to experiment and to use the power of innovative collaborations like this one that have scale, if we are to eventually realize its potential to have an impact. As an organization committed to realizing the potential of emerging information and communication technologies to improve people's lives, the Markle Foundation is pleased to have contributed to both the experience and the knowledge of what the possibilities might be. We look forward to continuing our work to create models and expectations for the new media that serve the public interest, in both the political realm, as well as the other areas in which we are involved (for more information, please visit our website: [www.markle.org](http://www.markle.org)). In the meantime, we hope you will find this information of interest.

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