



## Five MPs lack functioning sites, group's analysis shows

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Two decades into the Internet era, five members of Parliament - including House of Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer - don't have functioning websites, according to an analysis done by Samara, an organization that works to improve political participation in Canada.

That's despite the fact MPs can charge the cost of their websites to their publicly funded office budgets as long as they meet guidelines in the Members Allowances and Services Manual.

Scheer's office said Friday the Saskatchewan MP's website was down and would be fixed over the weekend. But his website wasn't operational in August and September either, when Samara researchers analyzed 300 MP websites - excluding only the four party leaders and four ridings that were vacant because the MP had resigned. Other MPs without functioning websites are Jacques Gourde, parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, B.C. Conservative Dick Harris, and two Quebec MPs who were elected as New Democrats but later defected to other parties - Liberal Lise St. Denis and Claude Patry of the Bloc Québécois.

Harris's entry on the Parliament of Canada website lists [www.dickharris.ca](http://www.dickharris.ca) as his website address. Ironically, that address brings up the website of Backbone Technology, a Vancouver-based digital web agency that specializes in developing "dynamic and interactive" websites.

Both Gourde and Sheer's entries on the Parliament of Canada website also include web addresses. But neither was working when Samara did its analysis and they were still non-functional as of Friday.

In its analysis, Samara rated MPs websites against a checklist of 14 elements, ranging from basic contact information to whether they had mechanisms for constituent feedback.

Independent MPs scored the highest. Bloc MPs were lowest and Conservatives, Liberals and New Democrats fell in the middle.

Gold stars go to...

Fredericton Conservative Keith Ashfield, for his holographic greeting...Vancouver East MP Libby Davies for eschewing NDP orange in favour of hot pink...Independent Alberta MP Brent Rathgeber, for Brent's

<http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/archives/story.html?id=35eac352-d5c1-45f4-b355-4c21c90a4022>



Blog and Rath's Reads, both rich in political fibre...New Democrat Bruce Hyer, for hosting more than 30 petitions...B.C. New Democrat Nathan Cullen, for inviting youth in his riding to create their Canada through him. Toronto-area Liberal Jim Karygiannis, for posting his biography in Chinese, Urdu and Hindi...Quebec New Democrat Dany Morin, for sharing what he likes on Pinterest.

#### The numbers

- 98 Percentage that include an office address
- 97 Include an email address and MP biography
- 15 Include their office's hours of operation
- 9 Have space for discussion or comments
- 23 Host petitions
- 43 Link to their national party's site
- 47 Have a newsletter sign-up
- 4 Include information on how to volunteer with the MP's office
- 31 List community events the MP has attended or will attend
- 63 Describe services the MP's office offers constituents
- 73 Describe the MP's work in Parliament
- 61 Share the MP's social media presence
- 51 Link to Facebook
- 60 Link to Twitter
- 0 Link to Instagram