



# New Democrats dominate list of best MP websites

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If great MP websites won elections, the New Democrats would have a solid majority government and the Liberals would be in the political wilderness.

New Democrats have nine of the top dozen MP websites, according to a new evaluation by Samara, a charity that works to improve political participation in Canada. Conservative MPs have three and Liberal MPs have precisely none.

Samara rated 299 MP websites in May and June on a 16-item checklist, ranging from basic contact information to whether they offered space for online discussion or comments. (The ranking excluded party leader websites and five seats that were vacant at the time.)

Each of the top websites scored at least 13 out of 16, though only four checked off 14 items and none checked off all 16. The average checklist score for all MP websites was 9 out of 16. Samara's analysis focused solely on content and did not take into account the website's appearance or ease of navigation.

The showing by New Democrat MPs was even more dominant in Samara's first website evaluation in 2013, which was based on a smaller 14-item checklist. Of the 17 top-rated websites in that study, New Democrats had 15. Conservative and Liberal MPs had one each.

Samara added two new data points to its checklist this year: MPs' expenses and information about constituents' online privacy.

The study found that more than three-quarters of MPs provide detailed information about how they spend their office budget, but fewer than one-quarter post policies on how they collect and store an individual's personal information, such as email addresses.

Samara said its analysis showed that MPs are good at using their websites to broadcast information about themselves: 98 per cent include biographies and 86 per cent describe the MP's work in Parliament.

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But they are bad listeners, Samara said. Only one in five offers a place for constituents to comment, though the number has doubled in the past year.

Samara said its evaluation shows many members of Parliament still fail to use digital outlets to help citizens engage with politics or share their views.

The study found improvements in 11 of the 14 items assessed in 2013. For example, 39 more MPs provide information about their work in Parliament, 30 more include a space for discussion and 21 more list their hours of operation.

But 15 fewer MPs offer a newsletter sign-up compared with 2013, nine fewer are posting information about their constituency work, and nine fewer link to their party's page.

Worst of all, three MPs — Liberal Lise St. Denis, Claude Patry of the BQ and independent MP Maria Mourani — have no websites at all.

St. Denis and Patry didn't have website in 2013, either. But three other MPs who lacked websites last year — House of Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer and Conservatives Jacques Gourde and Dick Harris — have since acquired them.

Samara gave a special shout-out to five MPs who have maintained top-rated websites two years in a row: New Democrats Don Davies, Dan Harris, Peggy Nash and Murray Rankin, and Tory John Weston.

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## The delightful dozen

Here at the 12 best MP websites, as rated by Samara

- [Malcom Allen](#), Welland
- [Don Davies](#), Vancouver Kingsway (2013 and 2014)
- [Fin Donnelly](#), New Westminster—Coquitlam
- [Dan Harris](#), Scarborough Southwest (2013 and 2014)

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- [Laurie Hawn](#), Edmonton Centre
- [Peter Julian](#), Burnaby—New Westminster
- [Larry Maguire](#), Brandon—Souris
- [Christine Moore](#), Abitibi—Témiscamingue
- [Peggy Nash](#), Parkdale—High Park (2013 and 2014)
- [Murray Rankin](#), Victoria (2013 and 2014)
- [Kennedy Stewart](#), Burnaby—Douglas
- [John Weston](#), West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country (2013 and 2014)