



Windsor MP tops list of Internet-savvy politicians

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Windsor West MP [Brian Masse](#) is one of a handful of federal politicians being lauded for using the Internet and social media to connect with constituents.

The data comes from non-partisan think tank [Samara Canada](#), which released [a study](#) of our elected officials' online presence Monday. The group looked at 300 MP websites and scored each out of 14.

“A lot of politicians have the analog world down pat, but the Internet is where people are moving to express their opinions and politics need to be there if it wants to maintain its relevance,” said Samara’s co-founder, Alison Loat.

Although 17 MPs — including Masse — scored 11 or higher, most MPs could barely muster a passing grade. While nearly all MPs listed a biography and contact information on their websites, Loat said less than a third offered constituents more ways to engage, such as online town halls or petitions.

“It shows that government is slower at seizing the opportunities that new technologies provide,” she said.

Five MPs were found not to have websites at all, including Conservatives Jacques Gourde, Richard Harris and Andrew Scheer, Bloc MP Andrew Scheer and Liberal Lise St. Denis.

Loat said Scheer — who is the Speaker of the House of Commons — got his site up over the weekend, after being contacted by Samara.

Masse admitted he “didn’t jump on social media right away,” but credited his staff with encouraging him to get online more often. Now, he considers his website on par with his constituency office.

<http://metronews.ca/news/windsor/873343/windsor-mp-tops-list-of-internet-saavy-politicians/>



“It’s fun, and it gives constituents another way to hold their elected officials to account,” the NDP MP said.

Unlike some MPs, whose websites and social media accounts are run by staffers or simply re-broadcast party messaging, Masse said he does “100 per cent” of his own tweeting and Facebooking.

That’s likely one of the reasons he scored so well in Samara’s report. While Ottawa moves further towards strict party discipline, Loat said citizens are looking for politicians willing to speak their minds.

“So much is scripted in politics, and the public is craving a more genuine voice and a more genuine point of view,” she said.

Included in Samara’s report is [a 14-point checklist](#) MPs can use to better their web presence. Loat says many of the changes can be implemented with ease, and are applicable to politicians at all levels of government.

“If everyone used digital tools to be more genuine, that’s the kind of hard daily work that will start to chip away at the cynicism people have about politics,” she said.