

# Your Liberal Web site

Getting started guide



**Simply put, a politician who knows how to use the web wins. But have no fear: we're here to guide you through the process of leveraging your online presence and by reading this guide you've already taken an important first step.**

The second step is to take a bit of a leap of faith – to get on the web politics bandwagon. There's a very good reason for this: The voters in your riding expect you to be available 24/7 and a great web site can be there for you when you need to get some rest.

Today, more and more Canadians are going online to read news, connect with family and friends, research the issues affecting them, and shop. They're also going online to connect with their representative in Ottawa, and learn more about candidates during elections. Did you know that 85 percent of Canadians who go online are on Facebook? Canadians are online 24 hours a day and your web site is how you can be ready to meet their needs at any moment.



Some of your supporters are looking for ways to get involved, to volunteer, or just to be your friend on Facebook. Others may be looking for your next event so they can learn more about you and your position on the issues. A journalist may be trying to contact you and is interested in finding a photo of you to include in an editorial. All these people are most likely to come to your web site first.

You want to be there for these people, ready to meet their needs, at all times. This guide will show you how.

**IMPORTANT: In order to create your web site, please read this guide and email us at [assistance@liberal.ca](mailto:assistance@liberal.ca) with the following information:**

- Candidate biography
- Candidate photograph
- Link to your online flickr photo album (you can sign up and upload photos at [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com))
- Campaign / Constituency office address
- Links to other social media you are using (facebook, twitter, youtube)
- Any other information you'd like to be included on the site before you take it over. Remember, you can modify or add information at any time.

## **Mastering the web in 3 easy steps**

In writing this guide we tried to take into account the pressures of your job. We know you're busy and that's why we've boiled this introduction down to three essential steps, that if done right, will generate enormous dividends on Election Day and throughout the year.

### **1. Find a volunteer or staffer on your team who is comfortable with online communications and make them responsible for your web site.**

Being the candidate or an MP is a full time job. But so is managing a web site. Current content is critical to effectively communicating with your constituents and building a loyal community of visitors to your site. Find someone who has the experience, time and motivation to maintain your web site and keep it buzzing with life.

This person will also be in charge of your social networking presence, including your Facebook profile, Twitter account, Flickr (photo) account, and other "social media." This person is your new "web editor."

## Make clear to the web editor that their goals are:

- *To establish your presence where your voters and constituents are already online, such as on Facebook and Twitter, so that you are reaching out to them whenever you can.*
- *To get voters and constituents the information they need in order to actively support you.*
- *To make sure your web site is working for you, converting visitors into donors, volunteers, event-goers and informed voters.*

Fortunately for you and your web editor, the web site we are providing you with doesn't require a technical background or any programming knowledge to maintain – it's actually more important that the person you choose to help manage your web site is a **strong writer** with **good judgment** who understands the web and social networking.

In writing the copy for your web site keep in mind that visitors will stay longer if the content is engaging and well written – a web site is the anti-press release. The copy should deliver the information someone is looking for but it should also be accessible and relatively informal. What's more, the text on your web site should short and to the point. Most visitors are coming to your web site to carry out a specific task, the faster you get them the information they're looking for, the happier they'll be.

Give your web editor the full length web site guide and they will be able to figure out how to get your web site up and running.

## **2. Once your web site is set up, spend some time analyzing the content from the perspective of a potential voter, a key stakeholder, a local or national journalist, a potential volunteer, a donor and an event-goer.**

The time that you give to your web site may be the only time you have to allocate to it personally for weeks but it is critical to the success of your campaign.

This initial period is called a “usability test.” And the reason you are conducting this test - and not someone else - is that you, as the candidate, bring a unique perspective – you feel accountable to your riding’s voters in a way that no one else on your campaign understands.

The same way that you want a visitor in your riding office to have their question answered, to be treated with respect, and to leave your office feeling like you are the right person to represent them in Ottawa, you need every single person who visits your web site to leave happy and satisfied that they found what they were looking for.

Visit your web site with other people in mind and perform tasks you imagine them doing and take notes about your experience: what worked well, what didn’t, what left you smiling, or unfortunately, tearing your hair out. What didn’t you understand and what needed clearer instructions?

Murphy’s law says that if you couldn’t easily complete the task you imagined voter or constituent X trying to complete, then

voter or constituent X won't be able to do it either – these issues need to be addressed right away.

At the end of the usability test, sit down with your web editor and go through your notes with them, and make adjustments to the web site's text based on your feedback. If the problems are more related to the web site's design, get in touch with us, so we can fix it for you.

### **3. Tell everyone you meet to go to your web site or find you on Facebook.**

While you will only be spending a short amount of time looking at your web site, just think of the tens of thousands of hours voters or your constituents are collectively spending on your site as they move closer to the decision of becoming a supporter.

Your web site or Facebook profile may not be the place where a person who eventually votes for you is likely to make their decision. But it is likely to be the place where they first decide to look at your candidature seriously.

The more people you tell about your web site and Facebook profile, the more people will visit, and the more they visit, and the more likely they are to become an active supporter or vote for you on election day.

So let people know your web site's address and encourage them to visit. It's a key part of getting their support, and it doesn't cost you anything.

We're here to help answer questions, provide guidance, and help you troubleshoot your new web site. However, we would not be doing our job well if we didn't also respect the rules of the Web 2.0 world, so please connect with us if you have suggestions or comments.

We can't stress enough the value of a well maintained, engaging and inviting web site. We are sure you'll see positive results from your efforts and wish all the best of luck!

## Site map :



## Featured message

*This is located in the top right corner of the home page. You can use this space to display a short message welcoming visitors or a notice for a community event or election day information. Make sure to keep the message under 50 words.*

### Option 1

Welcome to my web site. Here, you can learn more about my campaign, find out how to volunteer, or make a donation. If you'd like to speak with our team, please don't hesitate to contact us. Your support means a lot. Thanks for visiting.

### Option 2

My name is [John Doe] and I'm running as your Liberal candidate for [Riding name]. Over the next few weeks, I hope I'll have the chance to meet you and your family – and talk about what we can do together to strengthen our community. Please use this website to stay in touch with me and my team.

## Biography

*Your candidate web site should include a concise, well-written biography of the candidate, ideally no longer than 700 words. It should also include a recent photograph although it is up to you whether to post a formal or informal picture.*

## News

*This section can be used to post news, notices, or also as a blog. Blogs are a useful tool for candidates, allowing them to reflect, share opinions, and discuss various topics and events in the form of an online journal. Entries relatively often (2-3 times per week), generally informal, and do not usually run longer than 300-400 words.*

*Maintaining a blog allows candidates to get closer to their audience, their supporters. It also allows media, supporters and voters to learn more about the candidate, their life, and how they think.*

Some examples of successful Liberal MP blogs:

<http://glenpearson.wordpress.com> (Glen Pearson)

<http://www.shawnmurphymp.ca/blog.php> (Shawn Murphy)

<http://bobrae.ca/en/blog> (Bob Rae)

## Our community

*This section should focus on the riding and include several important local issues that are specific to your community. (Eg. ferry prices for Victoria, or Arts and Culture funding for Montreal, etc.) The section should also include a link to the riding's map and other information you find appropriate.*

*You can also use this section to highlight the impacts your candidate has made in the community, or what the candidate has done for the region in elected politics.*

## Issues

*This section should include the candidate's position on issues important to the community and/or the candidate. This should play to the candidate's strengths. Each issue should have its own page, and should be grouped in the 'Issues' section. To start you off, we've included some sample issues in the site template on **Employment Insurance, Agriculture**, etc. Please add your own issues and*

**Other suggestions:** Early learning childcare, fiscal responsibility, immigration, human rights, a 'new politics' of cooperation government, agriculture, etc.

## Photos

*This section is used to house **Photos** from Flickr. To activate this section, the candidate must have an account at [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com) with photographs. The account is entered into the CMS and upon doing this, the site will automatically generate pull photo albums to the site.*

## Videos

*This section is used to house **Videos** from Youtube. To activate this section, the candidate must have an account at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) with videos favourited or uploaded. The account is entered into the CMS and upon doing this, the site will automatically generate pull the videos to the site.*

## Contact us

*This section should include a physical address for the campaign office (and constituency offices, if necessary) as well as email, telephone and faxing information.*

## Other pages you have:

### Donate

Thank you for considering a donation to John's Campaign. We need your financial contribution to make John's campaign possible. Your donation will support volunteer coordination, outreach initiatives, policy development, and much more.

Your commitment to helping the Liberal Party of Canada and the community of Riding-Name-Smallville is sincerely appreciated.

### Volunteer

If you believe it's time for change in Ottawa, it's time to take the next step.

Please fill out the contact form below and we'll be in touch with you shortly about how you can help with the campaign.

The work you'll do going door-to-door, phoning undecided voters, helping events go smoothly and organizing other volunteers is truly invaluable.

With your help we can make sure Smallville is properly represented in Ottawa.

**And remember, you can create your own pages with their own content, to make your site as local, relevant and useful as possible.**