E-Advocacy
Assembly 2008

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Essential Online Advocacy Tools

- *E-mail*: action alerts and advocacy contacts
- *Web site*: focus for advocacy information
- *E-newsletter*: outreach on important issues

- Internet: reinvented civic engagement, expanded democratic participation
- Citizens feel empowered

**Salient characteristics**
- Available to anyone
- Fast advocacy action in a single day
- Link advocates and policy makers
Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Integrating Online and Offline

- Online advocacy campaign
  - Pieces relate, work together
  - Emails, Web sites, e-newsletters

- Integrate online with offline
  - Relate to traditional advocacy
  - Phone calls, lobbying visits, meetings at home, media coverage
Essential Online Advocacy Tools: E-mail
More people sending more messages to Congress

- Over 200 million messages yearly – 4 x 1990’s
  - 90 percent of communications
  - 100 million U.S. adults in 5 years (44% of all voting-age Americans)
- Response to alerts: 84% of communications
- More time on constituent mail: 75% Hill offices (cause: e-mail)
- Large percentage: mass form mail = preprinted postcards of ‘70s and ‘80s
Essential Online Advocacy Tools: E-mail

Getting Attention Online

Guiding principles:
- personally written message
- constituent contact counts
- “3-30-3-30” rule
  - 3 seconds: subject line
  - 30 seconds: message text
  - 3 minutes: one-page issue brief
  - 30 minutes: policy paper

Build relationships online
Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Web sites
Building Audiences, Informing Advocates

- Recruiting advocates on first impression
  - Showcase accomplishments, tell your story
  - Case-making information, statistics, public value
- Good organization is key
  - “Advocacy” clearly labeled
  - Don’t hide good information (“Resources” “Other Services”)
  - Least number of clicks
Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Web sites

Useful Characteristics

- Serving advocates: motivated and involved
  - Post a standing action alert
  - Sample talking points; “Tell Your Legislator”
- Serving the public: good information source
  - Post documents: introduction to an issue
  - Link to reports, fact sheets, supportive letters
  - Present information in layers; readers gather as needed
- Serving legislators: arts issues research source
  - Post content on state arts issues and programs
Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Web sites
State Arts Agency Approaches

- SAA Web sites and “Advocacy”
  - Advocacy front and center
  - Useful links
  - Look elsewhere

- Arizona Commission on the Arts
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Congressional Web Sites

- Principal point of contact
  - 92% Internet users contact through Web site
- Portal for communications
  - Ease of transmission
  - Assured acknowledgement
- Transmission controls
  - Contact information: home state or district
  - Constituent to legislator – preferred
- Legislator information
  - Sometimes informative
Essential Online Advocacy Tools: E-newsletter
Informing Advocates, Maintaining Interest

- A powerful educational tool
  - Timely information on arts policy issues
  - Advocacy tips
- Information valuable to advocates
  - Relevant trends, research-based arts facts
  - Address a specific arts policy theme
- Recruit advocates
  - Offer e-newsletter on your Web site
  - Turn a visitor into a contact
- Consider a blog: op-ed, a personal voice
Essential Online Advocacy Tools:
Other Web sites – Research and Access

- **Thomas**
  - All things congressional

- **AOL Government Guide**
  - Access legislators and staff

- **Open Secrets** and **FEC** websites/search
  - Campaign contributors

- **NASAA**
  - All things for SAAs
E-advocacy: Final Thoughts

- Internet and e-mails expand participation
- Electronic message builds relationships and credibility
- Diverse strategies carry more weight
- Experts insist: integrate online and offline
- Power is based on trust, transacted at the personal level