

## Technology

### Political parties' online push

Not all provincial party websites are created equal  
| Joseph Wilson

Although our tvs and news papers are filled with provincial electoral politics, the online arena is the new platform for grabbing votes.

The real battleground on the Web is occurring over at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), where all four parties are posting an array of commercials, attack ads and funny vignettes. The best of the bunch is a user-created Simpsons-themed mock-up that casts Dalton McGuinty as the mayor who ruined the town, although the video has recently been removed due to "copyright claim by Twentieth Century Fox."

There are several parodies of the popular Mac computer ads, one by the Greens (called Green/Grey Energy and Green/Grey Education) and one by the Libs (called John Tory Platform Costing; check out who plays the Mac and PC). The Liberals have collected the best of their anti-Tory vids at [www.torytube.ca](http://www.torytube.ca), including an embarrassing clip of John Tory responding to a French question with "...por favor."

As far as partisan sites are concerned, incumbent McGuinty has recently launched [www.dalton.ca](http://www.dalton.ca) in an effort to reveal more of his personal side. But only diehard fans would want to click on "McGuinty and Terri unplugged" for the inside scoop on how they hooked up in high school.

There's more official stuff over at [www.premier.gov.on.ca](http://www.premier.gov.on.ca), which has downloadable podcasts, videos of McGuinty's travels and a quiz you can take on Ontario trivia, although the site is a little buggy. See if you can beat my score of "ADODB.Field error '800a0bcd. "'

The official Liberal site at [www.ontarioliberal.ca](http://www.ontarioliberal.ca) contains more daily dispatches from the electioneering trenches. The colour scheme is good, and it's pretty easy to navigate.

A left column contains a long list of news items, including video clips, press releases, photos and, bizarrely, comments from someone called The Mole.

There's better colour scheme and a more stylish design on the PC site ([www.ontariopc.com](http://www.ontariopc.com)). John Tory's video blog is profiled front and centre, and along the right side of the blog page is a search feature to find videos by issue or location. The videos, however, are just clips from media appearances and don't really play like a video blog at all.

The Tory campaign site ([www.leadershipmatters.ca](http://www.leadershipmatters.ca)) has a completely different look and is a little harder to navigate. However, campaign organizers have realized that the Web is the place to appeal to youth and put the campaign blog smack in the middle of the page.

Speaking of youth, the Ontario PC Youth Association has its own site at [www.victory07.ca](http://www.victory07.ca), but it's weirdly cold and free of humour. The youth arm of the Ontario Liberal Party, on the other hand, has been busy launching a cleverly designed minimalist site at [www.ispeakto.ca](http://www.ispeakto.ca). It's clearly designed for the 18-to-25 age range with links like "I don't get it. Answer my questions in 10 seconds or less." Judging by the lack of comments, though, the site isn't well trafficked.

Attracting the youth vote should come naturally to the NDP, but the NDP Youth Party is all but invisible on-line. A site over at [www.bloggingdippers.org](http://www.bloggingdippers.org) is an unofficial platform for NDP supporters to voice their support of the federal NDP, but the provincial party has yet to capitalize on this energy.

The official NDP site at [www.ontariondp.com](http://www.ontariondp.com) has no videos, podcasts, blogs or other cool stuff on its main page. Even when you click on the quaint link to "multi-media content," all you get are high-res photos of Howard Hampton and several versions of the party's logo. Also, that orange colour just doesn't look good in a browser.

The Green Party's site at [www.gpo.ca](http://www.gpo.ca) has better imagery, and the three big links at the top immediately display the priorities of the party. As you scroll down, however, the headings for Campaign 07, News, Blogs and Calendar are all split up into awkward squares. It's refreshing, though, to see the blog is actually written by party leader Frank de Jong.

Before you head to the polls on October 10, be sure to inform yourself about the referendum on changing our electoral system to mixed-member proportional.

The site [www.yourbigdecision.ca](http://www.yourbigdecision.ca) was created by Elections Ontario, and it's predictably dry as a bone, full of PDF files and 10-point type. Skip straight to the video explaining the process. For spirited arguments, check out

[www.voteformmp.ca](http://www.voteformmp.ca) and [www.nommp.ca](http://www.nommp.ca) .

