

Voter Information in the Digital Age: *Grading State Election Websites*



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Each year millions of eligible voters choose not to vote for specific candidates or ballot measures. One reason is their inability to obtain the substantive information they need to feel comfortable making important electoral decisions. Although state election websites can potentially offer much of this needed information, most unfortunately fail to do so.

Voter Information in the Digital Age is the first national effort to assess the extent to which state election websites offer voters sufficient substantive candidate and ballot measure information. It analyzes the information currently provided by the 50 states and the District of Columbia. It scores and grades each state applying criteria taken from state-of-the-art practices in the states, in a number of pioneering cities and on innovative nonprofit and commercial websites. It assigns failing grades of “D” or “F” to the vast majority of state websites for inadequately informing their voters on Election Day.

Voter Information in the Digital Age provides examples of excellent voter information practices offered by some state, city and nonprofit websites. It recommends specific improvements and provides examples of innovations that states can use to improve their voter information websites, such as candidate and ballot measure videos, links to debates, campaign finance data, endorsements, editorials and ballot measure fiscal analyses.

CGS for 30 years has helped civic organizations, decision-makers and the media to strengthen democracy and improve government processes by providing rigorous research, nonpartisan analyses, strategic consulting and innovative media models of public information and civic engagement.

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