



TECHNOLOGY A PLANNING GUIDE FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Technology: A Planning Guide for Political Parties focuses on the potential for new ICTs and aims to help political parties strategically use them to complement traditional outreach methods as well as improve internal and external organization and communications. Sections include:

1. How tech can help

- **Outreach:** Technology can help party outreach by mobilizing current supporters, attracting new ones, considering member opinions, distributing party messages, and managing party communications from members and constituents.
Policy Development: Technology can help a party propose policies representative of its members' interests by soliciting their direct input, creating databases and polling tools for policy research, facilitating policymaker discussions, allowing for member feedback and/or approval, and communicating policy positions to members.
- **Management:** Technology can help a party's organization system, including procedures for communicating internally, managing resources, making decisions, tracking members and activists, managing internal knowledge, and training staff and members. CRM software can help a party accomplish these tasks.

2. Core Concepts

- **Databases:** One of the simplest and most important tools for political party organizing. While technology provides more sophisticated options, even parties in lower-tech environments need databases to decide whom to engage and when.
- **Audiences:** When a party has a message to deliver, it must have different strategies to ensure the message reaches its intended audience clearly and concisely.
- **Security:** Security considerations are particularly important for political parties, as they maintain a large amount of personal information about party members.

3. Preliminary Analysis

- **What problems are we trying to solve?** Gaining a clear idea of the problem at hand is critical: ICTs provide tools to solve specific problems.
- **What are our goals and what type of technology can help?** New technologies can help a party achieve some of its goals, but not all.
- **Selecting specific tools:** Not every tool will fit every goal or every party; the right tool depends on the party's goal, resources available and ICT environment.
- **Essential Considerations:** Before embarking on a technology project a party should consider several important factors, including its technological and security environment, whether it will include different levels of access, specific project features, and the possibility of project scope creep.

4. Program Planning and Rollout

- **Create a timeline and a budget:** These are essential in ensuring the party has the time, staff and money needed to accomplish its goals.
- **Set interim goals:** This can help keep the party on track and make sure it is sticking to the timeline and budget.
- **Periodic Assessments:** A party should conduct periodic assessments to make sure the project remains on track. Well-defined goals and clear timelines are important to this process. However, even after it achieves its goals, a party should continue to assess its projects to ensure that they are still useful and true to their original purposes.



The guide also includes:

Interactive Worksheets to help parties come up with a project timeline; decide between custom versus off-the-shelf software; understand the technological environment; and think through long- and short-term costs associated with tech projects.

A Toolkit to help parties learn more about specific tech tools, and their strengths and weaknesses including constituent relations management software; social media platforms; and mobile and smart phones.



This guide will help parties:

- Understand the ins-and-outs of basic tech tools
- Practice different tech planning and tool selection strategies
- Learn about implementing tech tools through the experiences of other parties
- Understand and assess various environmental and financial challenges they may face in implementing a tech based program

Find the guide online: www.Tech4Parties.org

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