

FURTHER QUESTIONS

How might you use the Internet to research a candidate's positions on moral issues?

Should a candidate's religion or spiritual beliefs play a part in an election? Why or why not?

NOTE

A survey by the Pew Research Center in January 2004 showed a large difference across age groups in the use of the Internet for learning about candidates and campaigns. Here is an excerpt from that report (see more complete chart on the unit Overview).

Where Americans of Different Ages Regularly Learn about the Candidates and Campaigns (percent reporting using each source)

Source: Pew Research Center, Jan 11, 2004

Media Source	Age Group		
	18-29	30-49	50+
Internet	20	16	7
Web Sites of News Organizations	15	13	8
ISP News Pages (e.g., AOL, Yahoo)	15	13	5

CONNECTIONS

(see thematic listing)

Reaching Voters

ADDITIONAL INFO

Issues of religious faith and moral values may have played a decisive role in the election of 2004. President Bush made a successful effort to reach out to Protestant Evangelical voters and to non-Protestant voters who were deeply rooted in their faith. Kerry was perceived as a secular candidate rather than as a man of faith and, though Catholic by background, he actually lost to Bush among Catholic voters (Ceaser and Busch 138). Bush won overwhelmingly among Protestant voters, among those who attended church weekly, and among those who felt that moral values were the most important issue.

In the 2004 campaign weblogs such as the Republican's "D-bunker" site were used as quick response opportunities to get in front of anticipated criticism. Liberal groups like MoveOn.org and the Center For American Progress (CAP) countered the Republican blogs with their own regularly updated websites. The authors of *All the President's Spin* argue that blogs can bring voters directly into the discussion by enabling diverse voices to be heard beyond the offerings of mainstream media. They also point out that the Internet may be able to serve a watchdog role by letting journalists know that untruths and spin will often be named by those outside the media establishment (Fritz, Keefer and Nyhan 250).