

with government in new ways). However, the *potential for e government* to look different from traditional notions of government remains, with the opening up of a wide range of new options for policymakers. Most of these potential applications of e-government have a key distinguishing feature: Governments can identify and treat groups of citizens differently according to their circumstances and need. For nodality, information can be targeted at specific groups, through websites used by specific age groups or group targeted emails. Treasure, in terms of social welfare benefits or tax credits, for example, can be easily means-tested according to other financial information held by government. Authority can also be targeted, through 'fast-track' border control systems, for example. Even physical organization can be group targeted, e.g., through barriers that respond to transponders fitted to police and emergency vehicles but not to normal cars, as used in city centers in several parts of the world. Furthermore, as Internet based technologies themselves developed toward Web 2.0 applications, where users generate content through recommender and reputational systems, blog, wikis, social networking sites, and user feedback systems, governments too have to innovate if they want to take advantage of applications like these.

See also:  CENSORSHIP  CHINA: MEDIA SYSTEM  E DEMOCRACY  EXPOSURE TO THE INTERNET  INFORMATION SOCIETY  SOCIAL MEDIA

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Elaboration Likelihood Model

DANIEL O'KEEFE

Northwestern University

The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) of → persuasion suggests that important variations in the nature of persuasion are a function of the likelihood that receivers will engage in elaboration of (that is, thinking about) information relevant to the persuasive issue. Depending on the degree of elaboration, two different kinds of persuasion process can be engaged. These two persuasion processes are called the “central route” and the “peripheral route” (Petty & Cacioppo 1986; → Media Effects).

The *central route* represents the persuasion processes involved when elaboration is relatively high. Where persuasion is achieved through the central route, it commonly comes about through extensive issue-relevant thinking: careful examination of the information contained in the message, close scrutiny of the message's arguments, and so on. The *peripheral route* represents the persuasion processes involved when elaboration is relatively low. Where persuasion is achieved through peripheral routes, it commonly comes about because the receiver employs some simple decision rule (some heuristic principle) to evaluate the advocated position. For example, receivers might be guided by whether they find the communicator credible (→ Information Processing).

The amount of elaboration in a given situation (and hence which route is activated) is influenced by a number of factors, which can be classified broadly as influencing either elaboration motivation or elaboration ability. Elaboration motivation can be influenced by the relevance of the topic (greater personal relevance leads to greater elaboration motivation) and by the receiver's level of ‘need for cognition,’ a personality characteristic reflecting the tendency to enjoy thinking

(→ Personality and Exposure to Communication). Elaboration ability can be influenced by the presence of distraction in the persuasive setting or the amount of relevant background knowledge.

Because central-route and peripheral-route persuasion have different *underlying processes*, the factors determining persuasive success correspondingly differ. In *central-route persuasion*, persuasive effects depend upon the predominant valence (positive or negative) of the receiver's issue-relevant thoughts. To the extent that the receiver is led to have predominantly favorable thoughts about the advocated position, the message will presumably be relatively successful. The predominant valence of elaboration is influenced by whether the message's advocated position is pro-attitudinal or counter-attitudinal for the receiver (everything else being equal, pro-attitudinal messages will likely evoke predominantly favorable thoughts, counter-attitudinal messages predominantly unfavorable thoughts) and by the strength of the message's arguments (better-quality arguments lead to more positive thoughts).

By contrast, in *peripheral-route persuasion*, receivers use heuristic principles, simple decision procedures activated by peripheral cues. For example, in the credibility heuristic, rather than carefully considering the message's arguments, receivers simply rely on the communicator's apparent expertise as a guide to what to believe. Other heuristics are based on the receiver's liking for the communicator and on the reactions of others to the message. As elaboration increases, the influence of such heuristics diminishes – but where receivers are unable or unmotivated to engage in message scrutiny, these shortcuts are relied upon.

The ELM emphasizes that any given variable can *influence persuasion in three ways*. It might affect the degree of elaboration (and thus influence the degree to which central-route or peripheral-route processes are engaged), it might serve as a peripheral cue (and so influence persuasive outcomes when peripheral-route persuasion is occurring), or it might influence the valence of elaboration (and so influence persuasive outcomes when central-route persuasion is occurring). For example, credibility might activate the credibility heuristic or it might influence the amount of elaboration (as when receivers decide that the communicator's expertise makes the message worth

attending to closely). Because variables can play different roles in persuasion, a variable might have very different effects on persuasion from one situation to the next.

See also: ► ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR CONSISTENCY
► ATTITUDES ► INFORMATION PROCESSING
► INVOLVEMENT WITH MEDIA CONTENT
► MEDIA EFFECTS ► PERSONALITY AND EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICATION ► PERSUASION

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Election Campaign Communication

HOLLI A. SEMETKO

Emory University

Election campaigns are among the most important events in the lives of democracies and societies in transition. Campaigns often constitute the high points in public debate about political issues (→ Political Communication). Election campaign communication is shaped by different national, cultural, and regional contexts, party and media systems, candidate characteristics, and regulatory environments