

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 21, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: JOHN PODESTA

FROM: LORETTA UCELLI
JOSH GOTTHEIMER

CC: JOE LOCKHART
BRUCE REED
GENE SPERLING
KAREN TRAMONTANO
MINYON MOORE
STEPHANIE STREETT

SUBJECT: WEBSITE CHAT SERIES

Earlier this year, on the heels of your successful DLC Internet Town Hall Meeting, we proposed a series of online chats – dubbed “Webside Chats” – that would allow you to speak directly to the American people via the Internet. By utilizing the latest technology, these chats would offer you the opportunity to target specific constituency groups -- including students, mothers, and older Americans -- to discuss your agenda, accomplishments, and other relevant issues.

To date, you have used the Internet on several occasions as an effective form of communication. In November, you held an online town hall meeting at George Washington University; last Christmas, you purchased gifts online from the Oval Office; in January, you responded to electronic mail following your State of the Union Address; and in February, you gave your first online interview. Following that event, you asked us to propose other online opportunities for you to consider.

After conferring with your press and policy offices, we suggest that you conduct a series of Webside Chats during the next several months. Each chat would be conducted in an interview format, and would address a specific topic. You would be joined by a reporter or media representative who would moderate the discussion, and present you with questions sent by the public via electronic mail. The press office would determine the proper media agency to conduct the online interview, and help recommend the topic, target audience and venue for each virtual discussion.

We would like to schedule a Webside Chat at an elementary school during your School Reform Tour early next month. We are also considering options for other chats, including one on the culture of violence, and one targeted at older Americans. After the first chat, our office, in conjunction with the press office, will determine the best way to proceed.

I. EDUCATION

We suggest you hold your first Webside Chat as part of your School Reform Tour next month. This would offer you the opportunity to address education issues, and to demonstrate the power of technology in the classroom. Your Administration has introduced several initiatives to help connect classrooms and libraries to the Internet, giving them access to information with the click of a mouse. It's time to take full advantage of that progress, by plugging into this network yourself from a charter school, and "chatting" directly with students about college opportunities, interactive learning, and other challenges young people face in their schools and communities.

We propose that the Channel One Network conduct the first interview. Channel One is a cable television and Internet company with programming that reaches 12,000 middle, junior and high schools, 8 million students, and 400,000 educators.

Location/ Date: At a middle school, during your School Reform Tour early next month.

Would you like to hold a Webside Chat during your School Reform Tour? ___ Yes ___ No

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

II. SENIORS

In celebrating the 35th Anniversary of Medicare this July, we suggest you conduct a Webside chat targeted at the senior population. In your online discussion, you could address issues important to older Americans, such as Social Security, Medicare, prescription drugs, and other health care issues.

Seniors are the fastest growing group of Internet users. By providing advice from health advice to safety tips, the Internet offers them an opportunity to easily tap resources that have long been out of their reach.

We suggest that AARP.org, the Internet division of AARP, conduct this online interview. AARP is the largest organization representing the interests of older Americans. AARP.org and its monthly magazine, *Modern Maturity*, have an audience of more than 34 million members.

III. KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE FROM VIOLENCE

As part of our ongoing discussion, we suggest you conduct a Webside Chat on issues regarding the culture of violence. We believe that it would be most effective to target this discussion to mothers, a group that traditionally has been most concerned with the recent rash of violence in our country. The Internet has become an essential tool for mothers, offering them information on parenting, as well as an at-home outlet for research and conversation on child-related issues.

We suggest that Oxygen.com host this interview. Oxygen is the first combined online and on-air network designed to serve women, and therefore would present a logical connection to this issue.

IV. DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER BLAIR

You have already agreed to conduct an Internet conversation with Prime Minister Tony Blair this summer. The DLC is hosting and organizing the event. The Prime Minister will be online in London, and you will be at a site in Washington, DC. While the topic has yet to be determined, we suggest you address the history and principles of the Third Way, and your vision of democracy in the 21st Century.