

Internet Voting Project Report

Executive Summary
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The following are key findings from the research, which are explained more fully in the report.

INTERNET VOTERS' SURVEY

The Online Voting Process

- There is strong satisfaction with online voting as 95 percent of respondents report being satisfied
- Online voters said that casting a ballot online was “easy”, “simple”, “straightforward”, “private”, and “convenient”
- 95 percent of online voters say they would recommend the voting method to others
- Internet voting was the preferred voting method for voters in 93 percent of the communities that participated in this research
- Voting from home is the preferred remote voting location (88 percent of respondents said they voted from home)

Why are Voters Drawn to Online Ballots?

- **Convenience is the primary reason voters decided to vote online**
- Younger voters (aged 18-24) are more likely than any other group to say the top reason they voted online was because of accessibility

Reported Use in Future Elections

- A strong majority of online voters say they would use the voting method in a future election:
 - o 98 percent say they would likely use it a future municipal election
 - o 95 percent report being likely to use it in a provincial election
 - o 94 percent indicate they are likely to use it in a federal election

Online Voter Profile

- **The typical online voter is older, educated and wealthier.**
- **The average age is 53.**
 - o Of all age groups, those aged 55-64 years were the biggest users of online voting in the 2014 municipal election.
- **Has an annual household income of \$80,000 or more before taxes.**

- **Resides in an urban or suburban area.**
 - However, rural voters were more likely to choose online ballots than to vote by paper at the polls.

Online Voter Profile (Cont.)

- Reports having voted in most of the past elections they were eligible to participate in
- **Has a fast Internet connection at home and uses the Internet frequently** (93 percent say they use it everyday)
- **Is interested in politics (89 percent)**

PAPER VOTERS' SURVEY

Satisfaction with the Paper Voting Process

- **68 percent of paper voters are satisfied with the voting method.**

Knowledge and Opinions of Internet Voting

- A majority, 89 percent, were aware of online voting.
- Among paper voters the **top concern about Internet voting is security of the voting process**, 37 percent.
 - o The second largest group, 32 percent, report having no concerns about the technology.
 - o This latter group did not use it because they 'forgot', 'waited too long', for reasons that are administrative in nature, or because they had not decided whom to vote for in time.
- **Internet voting is perceived to be the safest remote voting option.**
 - o 66 percent believe telephone voting to be less than safe than voting by Internet.
 - o 54 percent believe voting by mail to be less safe than online voting.

Using Internet Voting in the Future

- **78 percent would use online voting in a future election.**
 - o 47 percent of this group would do so under special circumstances such as inclement weather or illness.
 - o 30 percent would do so 'no matter what'.
- **'Convenience'** is the primary reason paper voters would vote online in a future election.

Paper Voter Profile

- **Average age: 44 years**
 - o Voters under 44 years of age were more inclined to vote by paper, while those over the age of 45 years voted more frequently by Internet.
- **Annual household income of \$60,000-\$79,999 before taxes.**
- **Resides in an urban or suburban area.**
 - o Paper voters were more likely to live in an urban area than Internet voters, and less likely to live in a rural one.

Paper Voter Profile (Cont.)

- They are committed voters.
 - Report having voted in most of the past elections they were eligible to participate in.
- **Have fast Internet connections and go online everyday.**

CANDIDATES' SURVEY

Candidates' Satisfaction with the Online Voting Process

- **A majority of candidates (64 percent) are satisfied with online voting**
- Similar levels of satisfaction are reported for the security of the election (73 percent) and the posting of election results (64 percent).

How Candidates Learnt about Internet Voting

- **Candidates were most likely to have heard about online voting via municipal-led information initiatives.**
- Specifically, the municipal website, Voter Information Packages, candidate information sessions, and local newspaper notices were the top sources that informed candidates about Internet voting.

Influence on Candidates' Campaigns

- **A majority of candidates (64 percent) say that Internet voting affected their campaign.**
- Popularly cited impacts include: making the beginning of campaign more crucial for attracting and mobilizing supporters, increased voter turnout, a larger number of young voters, talks with electors focusing on the voting method instead of election issues, and a negative impact on older electors.
- Candidates encountered many more electors that had already voted than in previous elections.
 - o 91 percent of candidates said that more than half of those who had voted before Election Day reported voting online.

Candidates' Overall Opinions of Internet Voting

- **80 percent of candidates feel favourably about having Internet voting as an additional voting method.**
- **A majority of candidates (64 percent) is against having Internet voting as the only voting method in elections.**

ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

Satisfaction with the Online Voting Process

- **96 percent of administrators report being satisfied with Internet voting**
- **97 percent of respondents say they would recommend using Internet voting in the 2018 municipal election**
- 96 percent feel it should be offered as an option in provincial elections
- 95 percent believe it should be used in federal elections

Why Internet Voting?

- **Accessibility for electors is the top reason administrators cite for adopting Internet voting**
- Improving voter turnout and convenience are other common rationales
- The **top three benefits** of Internet voting from an administrator's point of view include: **convenience, accessibility, and counting efficiency.**
- **Public education and outreach, negative media, and potential for fraud are the biggest challenges.**
- Administrators believe the biggest benefits for electors are: convenience, accessibility, and government keeping up with technological change.
- They see the biggest challenges for electors as being familiarity with computers, learning a new voting method, and access to a computer or Internet connection.

Impacts of Internet Voting

- The costs of introducing Internet voting vary depending on the municipality and the approach used.
- Although many administrators say they are unsure of the cost impact, there are more respondents who say that Internet voting decreased the cost of the election than those who believe there was an increase.
- A majority (58 percent) agree voter turnout was positively affected by Internet voting.
- 74 percent agree the **tabulation of election results is more efficient with Internet voting.**
- A majority of respondents do not believe Internet voting has more risks than other remote voting options such as voting by mail (71 percent) and telephone voting (53 percent)