

## **Centre for Public Involvement Online Survey on Internet Voting**

### **Background information:**

The online survey consisted of 35 questions, including a final open-ended question for comments and feedback. Multiple choice and ranking scale types of questions were utilized to determine general attitudes towards internet voting, voting behavior, participation in municipal, provincial and federal elections, interest in politics, trust in government and political efficacy, computer and Internet usage, and knowledge of the City public involvement process. A set of demographic questions (questions 19 to 24) was included to cross-tabulate demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, income, marital status, and geographical location) with attitudinal data.

Links to the survey were posted on the City of Edmonton and CPI website. The online survey was open from September 1 to December 9, 2012. Participants were asked to provide consent to participate in a post-survey measuring learning and opinion change in the wake of the Jellybean Internet Voting Election and CPI Public Involvement Campaign. A link to the online follow-up questionnaire will be emailed to all respondents who consented to participate on December 10, 2012, and responses will be collected until December 17, 2012.

### **Summary of results:**

The online survey was completed by 400 citizens. The results reported below are preliminary and limited to a small number of attitudinal questions that could be of particular interest to policy-makers. Appendix A provides the original survey and raw data in a summary form, including all open-ended responses. Survey data will be analyzed in January 2013, and the final results will be presented in a peer-reviewed academic publication.

### ***Public Acceptance of Internet Voting***

The survey data has shown a strong public support for the introduction of Internet voting option in the 2013 Edmonton election. The opening survey question, *“Do you agree that Internet voting should be introduced as an option for eligible electors\* in the 2013 Edmonton election? (\*Electors will be allowed to use the Internet to cast their vote if they are unable to vote on Election day due to physical incapacity, absence from the local jurisdiction, being a candidate, official agent or scrutineer, or working for the election)”* shows that 54% of the respondents strongly agree, 22.5% agree, 5% are undecided, 5.3% disagree, and 13.3% strongly disagree (based on 400 responses).

A subsequent question, *“Do you agree that Internet voting should be available to all citizens who are eligible to vote in Edmonton municipal elections?”* asked about extending the availability of an Internet voting option to all electors. The following responses were provided: 56.5% of respondents strongly agree, 19.8% agree, 5.8% are undecided, 3.5% disagree, and 14.3% strongly disagree (based on 398 responses).

### ***Likelihood of Using Internet Voting in Future Municipal Election***

Over two-thirds of respondents indicate they would use Internet to vote in municipal elections, if this option is available. The following question was asked: "If available to everyone, how likely is it that you would use the Internet to vote in future municipal elections?" Respondents were asked to use a rating scale of 1 to 7, where 1 was very unlikely and 7 was very likely. 68.2% of the respondents stated it was very likely (54.4%) or likely (11.8%) they would vote online, while 20% indicated it was unlikely (5.5%) or very unlikely (14.5%) that they would use this voting option (based on 399 responses).

Similar ratings were provided on the questions asking about the likelihood of using Internet voting in provincial and federal elections, should such option became available (see Appendix A, pp. 4-5)

Moreover, 66.5% or 266 out of the 400 respondents have indicated that they would be more inclined to vote in the 2013 municipal elections if Internet voting were available to everyone.

### ***Reasons for Using Paper Ballots***

Respondents who opposed Internet voting were asked to indicate the reasons why they would consider voting in person. Data has shown that security concerns are paramount, with 94 % of the respondents selecting this reason. Out of the 84 respondents, 42.9% also point out to familiarity with traditional paper ballots, 61.9% refuse sharing their voting preference and personal information online, 22.6% indicate that they like going to the polls or being with other people when voting, 2.4% do not have Internet, 2.4% do not have access to a computer, 1.2% do not use a computer. Some respondents have cited other reasons (e.g., showing commitment or respect to the democratic process, ballot secrecy, inequality in access to technology, avoiding coercion, etc.). All 21 open-ended responses are included on p. 19 of Appendix A.

### ***Reasons for Using Internet Voting***

This question was answered by 355 respondents. Convenience is the major reason why people would consider voting online, with 83.9% selecting this option. 64.5% Internet voting is more accessible, 51% like using online technology, 21.4% want to try something new, 17.2% will be out of the city at election time, and 14.4% indicating they do not like in-person voting. 44 participants listed other reasons (e.g., inability to vote in person due to health reasons, faster election results, higher voter turnout, ability to enable more layers of security and redundancy, and eliminate electoral fraud, etc.), as shown on p. 21-22 of Appendix A.

### ***Open-ended responses***

128 participants have provided additional comments in question 35, including a range of specific concerns regarding the security of Internet voting systems, feedback on the Jellybean Internet Election and information resources on the City website, support for the introduction of online voting, evaluation of the survey questions, etc. (see pp. 58-76, Appendix A)