

## Summary report- CPI-Citizens Roundtables

The Centre for Public Involvement (CPI), implemented three Citizen Roundtable sessions to date, as one component of the overall public involvement campaign on Internet voting. The purpose of the overall campaign was to understand the needs, concerns and readiness of citizens to adopt internet voting as one option for future general elections in the City of Edmonton. The Citizens Roundtables were two hour sessions designed to support learning and general feedback from targeted groups such as seniors, persons living with disabilities and the general public.

Two of the Citizens Roundtables were held in partnership with the West Edmonton Seniors Centre, and the Millwoods Seniors Centre. The third one was held at the Faculty of Extension. See **Appendix 7 for the information poster**. Two further Roundtables will be completed in January, 2013 that will target an additional senior's centre and persons living with disabilities. The Centre would also like to undertake a roundtable with elected officials.

Each participant was given a comprehensive Issues Guide that outlined eight major areas of consideration for Remote Internet Voting. The Issues Guide was prepared for CPI, by Dr. Nicole Goodman, a scholar at McMaster University in consultation with CPI research and project teams. The long version of the guide is included in **Appendix 5**. Forty-five individuals have completed the roundtables to date and a summary report from the roundtable will be sent back to participants.

### Observations

- English was a second language for some Roundtable participants and this is an important factor in any communications about the decision made on Internet voting, or education if it is adopted.
- Additional Roundtables would be beneficial for building public knowledge of issues related to Internet voting, even though there are not many unique responses being collected.
- Many participants were interested in discussing civic participation and voter turn-out in general.
- The use of technology for enhancing civic participation (not Internet voting) was a topic addressed across multiple roundtables.
- The overall knowledge level about Internet voting was low with the exception of a few participants.
- All participants were very interested in knowing the key motive of the City of Edmonton in potentially adopting Internet voting.
- A majority of citizens had substantial clarifying questions regarding procedures, risks and processes that currently exist with paper ballot voting. This lack of information made it difficult for participants to compare with Internet voting.
- There were many participants who indicated they would not personally use Internet voting but had family members, or knew of others, who would.
- Many participants were not aware that Internet voting was considered as an **option**, and that it would not replace existing voting processes.
- There were two participants that articulated strong opposition to Internet voting for reasons related to security and privacy. Another participant also articulated opposition because of the ability for votes to be influenced.
- One participant from the Roundtables had voted in the Jelly Bean Election.
- Seniors exhibited a range of responses in whether they would adopt Internet voting or not.

### Summary of feedback

**Accessibility, Security and Privacy** were the primary issues discussed. There were varied opinions and a majority of participants articulated concerns and benefits of Internet voting.

#### Trust

1. Trust in service providers was indicated as a key concern. Participants wanted to know how the Internet voting service provider is selected, monitored and evaluated. Participants were also concerned about whether the service provider was required to disclose information such as denial or disruptions of service.

It was also discussed, that there are different definitions of disruption or denial and that the City should articulate their requirements or standards to the service providers. For example one participant asked, "Does a private service provider have to disclose breaches in security".

2. Impact of Internet voting on campaigning and the need for candidates to act ethically, was also addressed across the roundtables. The overall concern was about whether or not it would be easier for political candidates to influence votes, for example through links on their websites. For example one participant asked, ""Are we going to see on the computers, about the candidates?"

3. Several participants cited other jurisdictions for both positive and negative examples and suggested that, the City of Edmonton Internet voting system and processes should be informed by research and procedures used elsewhere. Some examples from participants:

“Halifax councilor wants to drop e-voting and we need to recognize e-voting problems elsewhere”.

“Holland is a good example to learn from”.

#### Accessibility and usability

1. The benefits of Internet voting for those not able to vote in person, was expressed by many participants at all of the Roundtables. Two examples of this are as follows:

"I will be able to vote when I am out of country”

“It is good if you are out of town and not able to get to the voting station”.

2. Internet Voting was articulated by participants as providing important benefits for those with different abilities and for seniors. Here are some examples from participants:

"I live in a senior’s residence and now with the aging population many people are computer literate. Internet voting will make a difference, especially for people with wheelchairs or walkers”.

“There are many opportunities for accessibility via Internet voting”

“I believe that the benefits of online voting outweigh the keeping things the same”

3. Access to computers was articulated as a key component of adopting Internet voting and this was stated on multiple occasions. Suggestions were also made about the City providing secure public computer access for Internet voting.

"There will still be a fair amount of seniors who don’t have computers”

4. Usability of the Internet voting system was also articulated as an important factor in the adoption of Internet voting and the registration system must be easy to use. In relation to this, participants also suggested that there needs to be **targeted education and training with seniors**.

"If the registration process or system is too hard, it will not be used”

#### Security and authentication

Security Issues were expressed as key concerns. Several participants in the roundtables had done prior research on the topic, and provided some technical security concerns.

1. Education about security systems and measures that the City will have in place if it adopts Internet voting was discussed by multiple participants. One participant commented on this in relation to the Jelly

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Bean Election and said, "There is a need for more education to the public about the security measures and tests being done. For example, it should be known to the public, the fact that the City hired hackers to try to get into the system".

2. Some participants articulated concerns about potential opportunities for hacking the Internet voting system. In relation to this, there were also some concerns about the many different forms of hacking, including some that are not detectable or visible.

"I am very concerned about the opportunities that exist for hacking or more correctly cracking the system and this must be further tested by more expanded use of trial methods such as the Jelly Bean Election"

3. There were concerns and questions about verification of votes

"There is no way to ensure that the real server counted the votes properly on Election Day. Programming errors happen. Sometimes programming errors are not detected in testing environments and are caught in the real world"

4. Participants articulated concerns and questions about how to know if a computer is secure and whether the actual Internet voting site is from the City of Edmonton and not a false one.

"There is no way to ensure that voters are not misdirected to a false server where their information is collected and their vote changed, so it can be submitted to the real server".

5. Several participants with some technical knowledge about Internet voting raised concerns about viruses, Trojan horses, malware or other ways that computers could be infected. These participants expressed that, risks and infections, could impact results and affect a large number of voters who used the Internet for voting.

6. Denial or disruption of the service of Internet voting was expressed by a number of participants and also relates to the standards of the service provider, discussed under trust.

7. There were several participants who indicated that there is no form of Internet voting that is secure and it should not be implemented.

### **Fraud and privacy**

1. Storage of information or data generated as result of Internet voting, was a question and concern articulated across all of the Citizens roundtables.

2. Some participants articulated that the use of Internet voting prevents citizens from voting multiple times. However more participants articulated this same concern as a question, about whether the use of the Internet made voting multiple times possible or easier. For example this was articulated by one participant who said, "How will the "one vote" per citizen be guaranteed?".

3. Participants also expressed that, Internet voting may make it easier for votes to be influenced and in the case of seniors this can happen by family members. Participants had questions about what the City has in place or will have in place to prevent this. One participant indicated that his vote could be influenced by his grandchild because they provide support in using the Internet.

4. Election fraud was an issue discussed by a few participants, both as concern and question about this generally, including the paper ballot process.

One participated stated that, "Election fraud has not been treated as a serious".

### **Accuracy**

1. One primary concern and question, by participants was how Internet voting impacts voter recounts and accuracy. There were opinions expressed about potential benefits and concerns. This was one area where participants also questioned what is in place with the paper ballot process.

"Electronic results are not viable. No one can prove vote is accurate or inaccurate"

## Outcomes of the Centre for Public Involvement Processes

"There is no way to perform an audit on an electronic system we must trust the numbers"

"There is no way for voters to be sure that their vote was not changed after it was submitted via the Internet either by a third party or the election server".

### **Turnout**

1. Overall participants wanted information on whether Internet voting impacted overall voter turnout and articulated that they felt that there was potential for increasing turnout.

Participants also indicated that it is critical for the City to articulate that Internet voting will not solve apathy or address lack of participation in elections. As one participant indicated, "Internet voting is not going to solve apathy".

2. The other primary feedback in relation to turnout was that participants articulated concerns for ensuring that all people can vote, such as homeless people. This was less related to Internet voting but was discussed as a need in all voting systems.

### **Cost**

1. Many participants indicated concern that the Internet voting system would be costly and having both the paper ballot and Internet system would increase costs for running elections.

One participant articulated this in regards to the paper ballot system, "If it's not broke- don't fix it".

2. The other primary concern related with costs was questions about the potential resources needed for training people and election workers to complete the registration work and other processes required for Internet voting.

### **Others comments:**

#### **Political participation**

- Internet voting will further isolate senior people. "I feel like a citizen when I go to the booth, line up, talk to others, as part of a community".
- "Instead of voting on Internet going to booth for voting is advisable. Because of that meeting with other seniors' is possible"

#### **Employment at voting stations**

- "It is critical to ensure that no jobs for seniors would be lost due to Internet voting"

#### **E-democracy**

- "Internet voting would be great for other decision making by the City such as referendums"
- "Have internet voting on 'small City decisions as well'

#### **Leadership**

"Why did it take Edmonton so long to get this internet voting started? Why do we always have to be followers to the rest of the world?"