

Voters Expect Next President to be as Internet Savvy as They Are, Survey Finds

Internet #1 Source of Candidate Info for Voters, According to Zogby/Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee Survey

Washington, DC, Jan. 30 –Voters sent a clear message to the presidential campaigns, make the technology a top policy priority. 44.7 percent expect the next President to be Internet savvy, according to a new poll conducted by Zogby International on behalf of the Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee in advance of its annual policy conference in Washington. The Zogby poll underscores how mainstream the Internet has become to Americans.

Not surprisingly, the Internet has dethroned radio and television as the primary source of candidate information for an increasingly Internet savvy electorate. 47.7 percent of those polled cited the Internet as the primary source of their knowledge of the presidential candidates. Only 31 percent and 13 percent cited television and radio respectively as the primary source. The poll also revealed that the next president should prioritize energy technology policy foremost with privacy and security policy next.

Despite the increasing pro-technology positions voters overwhelmingly rejected Internet voting, citing concerns over cyber security voting fraud.

"The Internet has become the ultimate tool for democracy," said Tim Lordan, executive director. "The Internet as 'fundraiser' has been understood for some time, but the displacement of television and radio as top sources of voter information is a sea change that is destined to advantage the most Internet savvy candidate of the pack."

The survey was released in advance of the Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee annual State of the Net policy conference in Washington, DC on Jan. 30. Representatives from the presidential candidates expected to discuss Internet policy on the opening panel called POTUS 2.0 '09.

Among the poll results:

- Concerns over voter fraud doomed prospects for Internet voting with 67.2 percent saying it was a bad idea.
- While Energy Technology (37.7 percent) and Privacy/Security (28.9 percent) placed first and second in issues to be addressed by the next president, Health IT surprisingly never rose above third in priority among any demographic including seniors. Digital divide remained a priority among those polled, yet placed only fourth.

The poll sheds light on the enigmatic state of privacy expectations among Americans. Americans uniformly share a visceral privacy concern when their geo-location (GPS) data is exposed (49.4 percent). Concerns over other exposures were overall much lower: 11.1 percent if someone posted a picture of them in a swimsuit; 10.7 percent if someone posted a picture of them visibly drunk; 9.2 percent if someone posted a video of them simply talking with their friends. The fact that there was

a negligible difference in privacy concerns between the posting of a drunken photo and the posting of a seemingly benign video of them speaking with their friends indicates that video by its nature elicits a more visceral privacy concern than mere photos, regardless of the substance.

Among the age groups polled, 18-24 year-olds and those over 70 expressed the most privacy concern over the posting of a drunken photo. Remarkably, contrasted with the drunken photo, 25-34 year-olds were more concerned about the posting of a video of them speaking with their friends while 35-54 year-olds were more concerned with the posting of them in a swimsuit.

Despite the perception of being tech savvy, fewer 18-24 year-olds believed they could effectively do their job as well from home than any other age group except seniors over 70. Interestingly, more women (30.2%) believed they could always do their job as well from home than did their male counterparts (21.9%).

In yet another reproach of Britney Spears behavior, 83.3 percent of those polled condemned SMS or email as an acceptable method to break off a romance.

The Zogby poll surveyed 3,585 adults and was conducted from 1/21-1/23. It has a margin of error of +/- 1.7 percent. Conference sponsor 463 Communications helped conceive and develop the survey.

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