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Vox Pop Labs Inc.

# MyDemocracy.ca

Online digital consultation and engagement platform

## Executive Summary

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VOX POP LABS

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

## 1. Executive summary

MyDemocracy.ca was an innovative public engagement and consultation initiative commissioned by the Government of Canada in an effort to foster a more inclusive national dialogue on electoral reform.

An interactive online application that surveyed users about their views on how democracy should be practiced in Canada, MyDemocracy.ca analyzed responses in real time and returned to users a rendering of how their respective democratic values situated them within the discourse on electoral reform. It adopted a user experience and interface design that were intended to be both accessible and compelling to all Canadians, irrespective of their level of political interest, knowledge or civic engagement.

The objective of the initiative was to increase engagement in the dialogue both within the general population and among underrepresented groups such as youth. In addition, it was to serve as an innovative means of sampling Canadian public opinion in an effort to promote policymaking that is responsive to the views of Canadians.

MyDemocracy.ca relied on a robust research design developed by Canadian social and data scientists from Vox Pop Labs in consultation with a panel of political scientists that included recognized experts in the fields of survey methodology and electoral systems.

MyDemocracy.ca was launched on 5 December 2016, accompanied by invitations mailed to every household in Canada directly inviting Canadians to participate in the initiative. By the close of the initiative on 15 January 2017, approximately 383,074 unique users had completed MyDemocracy.ca, with 96 per cent of users originating from within Canada, making it one of the largest and most ambitious public consultations ever undertaken in Canada.

User responses to MyDemocracy.ca were weighted to the census in an effort to increase the representativeness of the findings and better reflect the views of Canadians on a number of key considerations within the electoral reform discourse.

The key findings to emerge from the analysis are as follows:

- **Canadians are generally satisfied with Canada’s democracy**  
Though satisfaction does not necessarily preclude a desire for reforming the electoral system, a majority of Canadians (67%) report being somewhat or very satisfied with the way democracy works in Canada.
- **Canadians value features often associated with different electoral systems**  
Many Canadians simultaneously hold preferences for various attributes that are commonly associated with different families of electoral systems.
- **Canadians want a voting system that is easy to understand**  
Canadians are receptive to options to express their preferences with greater specificity, but not if the result is a ballot that is more difficult to interpret.
- **Canadians are divided on special measures to promote diversity in Parliament**  
Opinion in Canada is split as to whether special measures should be taken to increase the representation of groups that are currently underrepresented in Parliament.
- **Broad support for greater freedom for Members of Parliament**  
Perhaps the most consistent and clear finding from the analysis is that Canadians want to see a relaxing of party discipline and Members of Parliament exert more autonomy so as to better represent the interests of their constituents.
- **Canadians oppose mandatory voting**  
Although Canadians are divided on the principle of whether voting is an obligation or a choice, the majority of Canadians (53%) do not support mandatory voting.
- **Support for online voting turns on security**  
Canadians feel that online voting in federal elections would have a positive effect on voter turnout. They support online voting in principle, but their support is contingent on assurances that online voting would not result in increased security risks.

- **Canadians oppose lowering the voting age**  
A majority of Canadians (66%) feel that the age at which Canadians are eligible to vote should not be lowered from 18.
- **Canadians support limits on the length of election campaigns**  
An overwhelming majority of Canadians (90%) support placing limits on the terms of federal election campaigns.