

E-Voter and the Highland Youth Voice Elections

Full Evaluation Report

Version 1

International Teledemocracy Centre

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Introduction

This report reflects on the outcomes of the design and implementation of the *e-voter* website, using evidence that is currently available. E-voter was used from mid-September 2000 through the Highland Youth Voice election in the first week of October, providing on-line voting and discussion, candidate information, background to the election process, and election results. Of the 26 secondary schools in Highland, 9 opted to use e-voter. There were 12 that held elections using paper ballots, and a further 8 that had no election because their candidates were unopposed.

The report addresses three main questions relating to the aims of the *e-voter* project: -

1. Did e-voter **encourage voting** by : -
 - (a) Reducing HC and schools' administrative overheads in distributing paper ballots, organising the vote, and counting the returns?
 - (b) Presenting a novel and easy to use method of voting?
2. Was online voting **reasonably secure**, given the efforts to ensure that every voter had a PIN, password and ID as a requirement for logging in and voting?
3. Did the e-voter site **engage voters attention and participation, with news and opinion**:-
 - (a) using the *News* and *Results* pages to communicate background information and updates on the the election process; from Highland Council to school election coordinators, candidates and voters ?
 - (b) using the *Candidate Statements* pages to publicise each school's candidates and their views?
 - (c) using the *Comments* pages for young people to exchange their opinions on 'key issues' with each other?

This is an **interim** report because it does not take into account the results of planned focus groups with students and election coordinators from the participating schools. We have surveyed schools in order to build a broad brush picture of what young people thought of e-voter in relation to the Highland Youth Voice election. Results of this are in **Annex 3**. In addition we can draw on the following sources: -

- Implementation issues encountered through ITC's liason with HC and schools
- Observation of voting practice in 3 schools
- The election results (see **Annex 1**)
- Comparison of HYV and local election turnout figures (see **Annex 2**)
- Log-files from the e-voter site
- Postings on the Comment pages

Focus groups will provide a more detailed picture of what worked and why.

In the body of the report our conclusions on the questions above are enclosed in boxes.

A summary of these conclusions also follows overleaf.

Summary of conclusions

We are confident that the use of e-voter substantially reduced the amount of classroom time that needed to be allocated for voting (e.g. Invergordon reported 50% less time required than scheduled). During voting the Election Results page provided coordinators in 'online' schools with the ability to monitor turnout in their own schools and take appropriate action. E-voter allowed quick turnaround of the final results, produced in a standardized format with the turnout figures computed automatically. The results also indicate that the online voting procedure was effective in encouraging students to cast all their votes (2 or 3 depending on the size of the school roll). We cannot as yet tell what the impact on election administration would be for an average-sized school, since larger ones tended to be those who opted-out of on-line voting.

We are reasonably satisfied that only a small minority of students surveyed reported any difficulties understanding or using the online voting screens.

Regarding security issues, *technical* security to prevent hackers accessing the system would require encryption techniques which are much more costly to implement. *Administratively*, PIN numbers for voting could be distributed more securely. It may be possible to reuse existing passwords. The privacy and accuracy of online voting could be improved further with the following measures : -

1. Reducing the number of steps needed to complete the online voting.
2. Providing sample screens and explanatory notes to Election Coordinators, well before voting takes place.
3. Adapting computer labs/ classrooms when feasible, so that a supervisor can check that one person at a time is at any computer, and that they have seen a 'your vote has been confirmed' message.
4. Changing the 'thankyou for your vote' message to indicate whose vote this refers to;
5. We recommend that Election Coordinators maintain a written record of who has voted, i.e. who has seen the 'thank you' message. Then should any discrepancy arise with the ITC records, a decision can be taken on which students to allow a second opportunity to vote.

The website was also intended to attract young people's attention and involvement by presenting background information, news and opinion. We can make the following points on its success in doing that:-

1. From the e-voter log files (an automatically generated record of which pages have been visited on the website), we know that the *News* pages were not read to any significant extent.
2. Even so, the number of survey respondents who thought language used to describe the election was "too difficult" was small in comparison to those who thought it "too easy", and most thought it "about right". A similarly small minority thought that there was "too much detail" in relation to those who thought it "not detailed enough".
3. To encourage a sense of 'ownership' of the *News* pages among young people it would be better to involve them directly in producing news items. There should also be a clearer distinction between these items and those produced by Wellbeing Alliance partners.

Of the various forms of communication that we surveyed young people about:-

- ❑ Face to face events were thought to be the most helpful
- ❑ The website complements printed sources of information, but does not replace them. That role could be supported by laying out web pages so that they can easily be printed, and including longer pieces of text in a printer-ready format.

Referring to the website itself:-

- ❑ Voters were mostly 'very interested' in seeing the results for each candidate in their own school, and slightly less so in seeing the election turnout. There was less interest in seeing who got elected from other schools, although about a third were "quite" or "very" interested.
- ❑ The list of candidates for each school was the most frequently visited page on the site, apart from the home page. Also about a third of the visits to the candidates list were followed by visits to the more detailed candidate statements.
- ❑ Teachers' role in encouraging people to visit the on-line discussion seems to have been the most significant factor in starting off its use. Unfortunately there was little time for this, and only students in one school (Thurso High) made any substantial use of it. However the quality of the contributions and exchange of views was good.

Encouraging Voting

(a) By reducing administration overheads

It is important here to distinguish between aspects of e-voter and aspects of the underlying technology implemented in the relevant schools, and of the internet more generally.

E-voter: Visits were made to 3 schools during the voting period, 2 of which had opted for on-line voting. Election coordinators in these schools appeared happy with the design of the online voting features (though there were some problems with internet availability, and with passwords which we shall return to later). During the voting period we also monitored the website and experienced no technical problems with the ITC computer¹ which 'hosts' e-voter, or with Napier University's internet connections. Voting results were recorded in a database and a count was available immediately following close of voting. The 'online' results were output from the system, but were not published in the results pages until all returns had been received from the 'offline' (or opt-out) schools. These were received via e-mail from The Highland Council, and were merged into a spreadsheet of all results for presentation in a consistent format (Annex 1).

The voting screen displayed a message to remind students, if they voted for fewer candidates than they were eligible to. The figure in the results table (Annex 1) for "% of eligible votes cast" shows the number of votes actually cast by voters against the number of votes that they could have cast. The figure was on average 4% higher in the 'online' schools.

We are confident that the use of e-voter substantially reduced the amount of classroom time that needed to be allocated for voting (e.g. Invergordon reported 50% less time required than scheduled). During voting the Election Results page provided coordinators in 'online' schools with the ability to monitor turnout in their own schools and take appropriate action. E-voter also allowed quick turnaround of the final results, produced in a standardized format with the turnout figures computed automatically.

The results also indicate that the online voting procedure was effective in encouraging students to cast all their votes (2 or 3 depending on the size of the school roll).

Underlying technology: There were some issues regarding the underlying technology in schools – mainly occasional bottlenecks in the internet connections between schools and Napier University. At best these made the online voting unacceptably slow, and at worst impossible to use. Sometimes this increased the admin overhead, since on some occasions voting had to be re-scheduled.

It is also worth noting here that anxieties about ICT capabilities were a major factor in the decision by 12 schools to opt out of on-line voting, the other contributory factor being the demands of the SQA exam results crisis. Both of these meant that those schools that opted out were larger schools (averaging 597 students as opposed to 490 for Highland as a whole). These schools could be expected to have more complex administration systems, and appear to have been less far advanced in network and internet implementation.

This means that the information available on the impact of e-voter on administration does not reflect the average school size and complexity of the administrative tasks involved. It is worth noting however that the two larger schools that voted online had relatively lower turnout figures. The administrative issues in larger vs. smaller schools deserve further attention in follow-up discussions with Election Coordinators.

¹ On one occasion just following the e-voter launch the server did fail and was out of action for almost 2 days. Fortunately this had little impact as at that stage very few students had been issued with passwords.

(b) By presenting a novel and easy-to-use form of voting

Before launching e-voter we tested it with student volunteers from Invergordon Academy, from a range of age groups and computing abilities. They identified several problems - in getting out of the voting screen, and in getting in to in the first place, since it was difficult to avoid entering the user-ids, passwords and PINS unless these were available on paper, in typed form (rather than handwritten).

These problems were addressed and (from the information available) were not encountered to any significant extent during voting itself. From the election results (Annex 1 and 2) we can see that the turnout in the 'online' schools was higher (73%) than in the 'paper' schools voting with conventional ballot procedures (68%). Also, the overall turnout for the HYV elections was in almost all council areas higher than the 1999 local council elections. These figures suggest that there were no major problems in using e-voter. They do not however tell us whether or not e-voter itself influenced the turnout.

The questionnaire (Annex 3) asked more specifically about the ease-of-use of the system, and about students' reasons for voting or not. There we find that:-

- a large majority of those who had used e-voter found it 'very' or 'quite' easy to use.
- e-voter was mentioned as the reason for taking part in the election by some respondents (4 of the 409), although it may have been a contributory factor for many more. The main reasons given for taking part or not are quite informative:-

Reasons for taking part (272 responses)	Reasons for not taking part (112 responses)
1. To put forward views and exercise a choice (57)	1. Not interested (31)
2. Given no choice by teachers (51)	2. Didn't know enough about it (21)
3. Seemed a good/interesting/fun thing (35)	3. Lack of time (12)
4. To benefit young people in Highland/ local area/ own school (30)	4. Lost, forgot, or did not get password, did not know how to use, or 'website not working' (12)
5. Candidate was friend or relative (26)	5. Absent during voting (9)
6. Friends/ everyone else took part (15)	

Note: These were open-ended questions, and some responses fitted more than one category.

NB. the questionnaire responses need to be interpreted with some caution, for two reasons. Firstly in the 'paper' (opt-out) schools a higher proportion of those responding to the survey had voted than is indicated by the actual turnout figures for the same schools. Secondly, the sample of schools was skewed in favour 'online' schools (that 'opted in' to online voting)- 5 of the 8 surveyed schools voted online, though only 9 of the 29 schools did so.

We are reasonably satisfied that only a small minority of students surveyed reported any difficulties understanding or using the online voting screens. There were however some administration and training issues relating to online voting that we draw attention to below.

Online Voting Security

There are two aspects to this:- firstly, the adequacy of the technical methods and secondly the administration of voting. Both aspects are needed to ensure the following criteria are met:-

(a) Ensuring that only eligible voters could vote, and only once.

Technically, only people issued with all 3 identifiers (user id, password, and PIN number) could vote online. So although it was possible to vote 'remotely', i.e. anywhere with internet access, to do this meant knowing a valid user id, password and PIN in combination. Although user id's were designed to be easily recognisable, and could therefore be guessed by anyone familiar with individual schools, the passwords and PINS were each assigned randomly so that they could not be guessed. Also, once a vote had been recorded against a user id, that id could not be used again.

Additional levels of security to prevent hackers accessing the system would require encryption techniques which are much more costly to implement. It is very difficult to assess the likelihood of a hacker either maliciously attacking the server, or intercepting a password 'online'. However they seem to us to be less likely events than more conventional 'offline' interference in paper balloting, or password disclosure.

Administration. Distributing the 'login' details via schools meant, in principle, that only students on the school roll received them. Issuing passwords proved to be a difficult task, partly as the original plan (to ask students to define their own passwords and provide them to Election Coordinators in registration classes) had to be revised. Issuing passwords centrally, from an automatically generated list of words, inevitably resulted in some students being issued with passwords that they or their teacher thought inappropriate. These were changed, but at the cost of delays in the system being available for non-voting purposes (like using the Comments page).

The need for passwords and PINS to be easy to remember conflicted with the need for security because the solution (sticking labels in diaries or workbooks) meant that passwords and PINS could relatively easily be discovered by fellow students.

A more secure alternative would be to distribute PINS in a more secure form (e.g. a card enclosed in an envelope) directly to students. To provide the extra security, PINS should not be recorded in the same place as passwords. This also implies distributing PINS separately from passwords. Rather than having separate distributions, Highland Council are exploring the possibility of using existing passwords issued for access to school networks. Whichever method is chosen, security mainly depends on students valuing the secrecy of their own vote.

(b) Ensuring that the person who logs-in to vote actually does vote.

Technically As above, the need to know valid login details provides insurance against voters being wrongly identified. That is it helps ensure that the person who 'logs in' to vote is the person they claim to be. There is still the possibility of deliberate fraud, i.e. of a voter's login details being discovered by someone else, and that person voting. However a separate issue is whether the system technically prevents a validly identified voter logging in, then **allowing somebody else to cast their vote** (whether by accident or intention). It is not possible to prevent this technically except using 'biometric' techniques such as eyeball scanning, and these would clearly not be feasible for some years.

The only additional technical measure we could take, to minimise the possibility of this happening by accident, would be to simplify the voting screen further to make it clearer that a vote has been recorded **only** when the confirmation message is displayed on the screen. Until the vote is recorded and confirmed it is possible for the next user to 'backtrack' and unknowingly cast their vote in the name of the previous user. Currently, a confirmation message is displayed but not on the same page as the vote is actually cast and, without being physically present, it is impossible to tell whether the person who logged in stayed around to read it.

Administration From observation we were aware that online voting often took place in computer labs (as would be expected), and that students used the computers as they normally would for other purposes. That is, groups of friends would frequently 'pair up' around a computer, and watch each other's actions on screen. This allows for the possibility of 'peer pressure' influencing voting, since privacy is compromised. It also increases the possibility that voting is not completed by the person to log in, but by the next person to take their turn at the screen. (N.B. No criticism of any school is intended here!).

Also from observation, a 'polling booth' arrangement of the form set up by (e.g.) Millburn Academy prevents this happening, and preserves privacy. That is, a voter who enters a booth can be observed entering their ballot paper into a ballot box, and is recognisably the same person to have presented themselves to the polling clerks. There is also the view that this more formal arrangement encourages a sense of 'civic duty' among young people since the procedures for ensuring fair play are highly visible.

A middle ground, combining the best of both worlds, would be preferable next time round. That is, where a number of computers are in use in the same room, screens could be erected at either side to prevent overlooking. A supervisor would then check that each voter received a 'your vote has been confirmed' message before their place was taken by the next in line. Several Election Coordinators reported experimenting successfully with this kind of arrangement.

For future online elections, privacy and accuracy of online voting could be improved by :-

1. Reducing the number of steps needed to complete the online voting.
2. Providing sample screens and explanatory notes to Election Coordinators, well before voting takes place.
3. Adapting computer labs/ classrooms when feasible, so that a supervisor can check that one person at a time is at any computer, and that they have seen a 'your vote has been confirmed' message.

(c) Ensuring that Election Coordinators can check who has voted

Election Coordinators could check whose votes had been recorded in the system, by contacting ITC. From there we could automatically generate a list of the user-ids of people who had successfully voted in any particular school. This was used on two occasions. In one case however this was not enough to resolve a discrepancy between the number of students that the Election Coordinator had counted voting, and the number recorded by the system. The only possible explanations are that (a) students had mistakenly used the same log-in id to vote by 'backtracking' through screens, when a previous voter had not used all their votes; (b) the Election Coordinator's record of all students who had voted was inaccurate, or (c) the system had occasionally displayed a 'thankyou for your vote' message despite failing to record the corresponding vote. The discrepancy was resolved by the Election Coordinator holding a paper ballot of the class in question. Since we could not find any technical fault in how the system recorded votes, and the discrepancy was only noticed because the Election Coordinator had kept a record, our conclusions are:-

- ❑ The 'thankyou for your vote' message should indicate whose vote this refers to, to avoid any possible confusion;
- ❑ We recommend that Election Coordinators maintain a written record of who has voted, i.e. who has seen the 'thank you' message. Then should any discrepancy arise with the ITC records, a decision can be taken on which students to allow a second opportunity to vote.

(d) Ensuring that votes for candidates cannot be linked to specific voters

The online vote made sure that the election authorities (whether in Schools or the Highland Council) could not tell who had voted for whom. This is normally an important consideration because it guards against intimidation of voters to vote in a particular way.

- ❑ The more that HYV is successful and elected representatives have real decision-making power, the more probable that bullying could become a factor in election counts. Online voting helps to avoid this hopefully small possibility.

3. Attracting participation, with news and opinion:-

(a) About the election process using the *News* and *Results* pages

The “News” page was intended to be a more appealing way of presenting the background to the election than simply calling it “background information”. In terms of graphic design it was not feasible to devote the level of resource typical of commercial sites that are popular with young people, or to involve young people themselves in the design work (because of the timescales). In terms of its content, this was partly written by ITC, and partly by the Council. Although it was carefully worded to be straightforward without being patronising, it was again not written in consultation with young people.

- ❑ From the e-voter log files (an automatically generated record of which pages have been visited on the website), we know that the *News* pages were not read to any significant extent.
- ❑ Even so, the number of survey respondents who thought language used to describe the election was “too difficult” was small in comparison to those who thought it “too easy”, and most thought it “about right”.
- ❑ A similarly small minority thought that there was “too much detail” in relation to those who thought it “not detailed enough”.
- ❑ To encourage a sense of ‘ownership’ of the *News* pages among young people it would be better to involve them directly in producing news items, and to identify the authors of the background information.

Our survey asked young people’s views on which forms of communication they thought helpful or unhelpful in finding out about the election. The results are shown below:-

What helped?

Schools **opting out** of online voting: -

<i>paper</i>	helpful	no opinion	unhelpful
1) A talk at assembly or registration class	61%	18%	8%
2) Posters or leaflets from candidates	40%	18%	15%
3) Discussion in class (e.g. in PSE or Modern Studies)	34%	18%	12%
4) Talking to friends	28%	18%	9%
5) Meeting candidates during break times	18%	25%	12%
6) Access to Highland Youth Voice website	13%	23%	15%
7) Newspapers or radio	6%	24%	16%
8) E-mailing friends	5%	28%	15%

Schools **opting in** to online voting: -

<i>online</i>	helpful	no opinion	unhelpful
1) A talk at assembly or registration class	60%	19%	19%
2) Posters or leaflets from candidates	44%	25%	25%
3) Access to Highland Youth Voice website	34%	22%	24%
4) Discussion in class (e.g. in PSE or Modern Studies)	33%	24%	27%
5) Talking to friends	31%	21%	36%
6) Meeting candidates during break times	12%	29%	40%
7) Newspapers or radio	5%	27%	45%
8) E-mailing friends	3%	25%	55%

An important point to note about these figures is that they do not tell us which forms of communication were **available** in each school, or which forms were **actually used or seen** by individual respondents. To distinguish between these would have over-complicated the questionnaire. The only exception is the website itself. When asked, 11% of young people in 'opt-out' schools said they had seen it, and 61% in 'opt-in' schools. So more people in 'opt-out' schools said the website was 'helpful' than said they had actually seen it! To some extent (as with all surveys) it is likely that some people gave the replies that they thought were expected, or even ticked boxes randomly. With that word of caution we can still conclude that:-

- ☐ Face to face events were thought to be the most helpful
- ☐ The website complements printed sources of information, but does not replace them. That role could be supported by laying out web pages so that they can easily be printed, and including more detailed background information in a printer-ready format.

Interest in the *Results* Pages

The survey questions relating to this show that:-

- ☐ Voters were mostly 'very interested' in seeing the results for each candidate in their own school, and slightly less so in seeing the election turnout. There was less interest in seeing who got elected from other schools, although about a third were "quite" or "very" interested.

(b) About candidates and their views... the *Candidate Statements* pages

1. Although the survey did not ask specific questions about this, we can tell from the e-voter log files that the list of candidates for each school was the most frequently visited page on the site, apart from the home page. Also about a third of the visits to the candidates list were followed by visits to the more detailed candidate statements.
2. From our experience, there was some confusion over whether 'opt-out' schools should provide candidate statements for the site, and whether candidates whose parents did not approve of their statements being on the site could still stand for election. These issues were resolved as they arose but are worth noting for future reference.

(c) About other voters views on key issues... the *Comments* pages

The Comments page was structured around 'key issues' that were considered to be important (on the basis of previous work with young people in Highland, and the Scottish Youth Summit).

We had hoped that the Comments pages would be used to help voters put across their views to candidates, find out what their peers thought, and get a sense of the differences and similarities in views on issues affecting young people throughout Highland. The Comments page was actually the only direct way that individual young people could exchange views with all young people in every school.

In practice of course this depended on people knowing about and being able to access the site. Owing to the short time available, and problems distributing passwords, there does not appear to have been enough time for Election Coordinators to schedule any classroom time for online discussion. However it is also possible that the potential benefits of this (e.g. for citizenship education) were not apparent to them, or were not thought worth pursuing.

The main exception to this was Thurso High School. Following a computing class there in which young people were asked to use the comment page, a substantial number of comments was made over the following 3 weeks. So much so that the page gave the impression of belonging exclusively to Thurso (on a rare occasion when comments appeared from students in other schools, they got replies asking them to use their own comment page!). A total of 209 comments were made, with "Youth Facilities" and "Smoking" getting the most attention.

1. Teachers' role in encouraging people to visit the on-line discussion seems to have been the most significant factor in it being used.
2. Because the comments were so weighted towards the one school we have not analysed them in depth. However in general terms the comments were more 'measured' and the exchanges of views more substantial than the Scottish Youth Summit e-consultation. This may be partly because anonymous contributions were not allowed, and that students knew their comments might be identified by teachers (as well as their peers).

Final Comments: Improving the Youth Voice Website

Our survey asked what would be the biggest improvement we could make to the website, and asked for comments. There were 171 comments which we have summarised below:

The website in general

- ☐ Should have been better publicised (28)
- ☐ Don't know/ No opinion (21)
- ☐ Good, generally pleased with it (15)
- ☐ Make it more fun/ appealing to teens (14)
- ☐ Rubbish, boring, too superficial (13)
- ☐ No chance to use except for voting (8)

More specific suggestions

- ☐ Music, games, & competitions to make it more appealing (15)
- ☐ More colourful & interesting graphics (13)
- ☐ Easier to read text (6)
- ☐ Feedback on how young people's views are taken up (6)
- ☐ Photographs, video, & audio e.g. spoken word (5)
- ☐ More local information and consultation (3)

About the election in general

- ☐ Better candidate publicity (6), younger candidates (2) better candidates (2)
- ☐ Get more people involved (4)
- ☐ Voting should be at set times, campaigning at lunchtime excludes those who have to go home, advertise on TV, get sponsorship from major companies, more reasonable ideas (all 1 each)

To take these ideas forward, three scenarios are currently being explored with the Highland Youth Voice team in the Council.

1. Increase involvement by seeking volunteers in each school to act as web editors, and building on existing school newsletters or magazines;
2. Continue to support communication between young people and their Youth Voice representatives, using a discussion forum to consult on key issues and the actions that should be taken, voting on these, and 'expert' evidence from Wellbeing Alliance partners;
3. Support the new Executive committee of the Youth Voice to communicate between meetings, by providing help with the use of web-based e-mail and "e-groups".

Annex 1

Highland Youth Voice Election Results

area/school	reg'd voters	no. of reps	ballot: 1=online; 2=paper; 3=none	no. reps elected	no. of candidates	participating voters	votes cast	% of eligible votes cast	turnout	May '99 local elections
Caithness										
Thurso High	962	3	1	3	6	457	1193	87%	48%	
Wick High	904	3	2	3	4	718	2130	99%	79%	
Area Total/ Avg.	1866	6		6	10	1175	3323		63%	61%
Sutherland										
Dornoch Academy	194	2	1	2	3	88	154	88%	45%	
Farr High	90	2	1	2	4	81	161	99%	90%	
Golspie High	410	2	3	2	2					
Kinlochbervie High	103	2	1	2	4	89	160	90%	86%	
Area Total/ Avg.	797	8		8	13	258	475		74%	68%
Ross and Cromarty										
Alness Academy	575	2	2	2	5	197	370	94%	34%	
Dingwall Academy	1109	3	1	3	9	508	1357	89%	46%	
Fortrose Academy	621	2	3	2	2					
Gairloch Academy	210	2	2	2	4	199	363	91%	95%	
Invergordon Academy	403	2	1	2	4	320	603	94%	79%	
Tain Royal Academy	698	2	2	2	7	359	717	100%	51%	
Ullapool High	212	2	3	2	2					
Area Total/ Avg.	3828	15		15	33	1583	3410		61%	63%
Inverness										
Charleston Academy	885	3	2	2	2					
Culloden Academy	983	3	3	3	3					
Drummond	51	2	2	2	3	41	81	99%	80%	
Glenurquart High	181	2	1	2	3	146	269	92%	81%	
Inverness High	508	2	3	1	1					
Inverness Royal Academy	817	3	2	3	5	678	1550	76%	83%	
Kilchuimen Academy	58	2	3	2	2					
Millburn Academy	1087	3	2	3	5	527	1170	74%	48%	
Area Total/ Avg.	4570	18		18	24	1392	3070		73%	63%
Badenoch and Strathspey										
Grantown Grammar	343	2	2	2	5	312	616	99%	91%	
Kingussie High	419	2	2	2	7	356	701	98%	85%	
Area Total/ Avg.	762	4		4	12	668	1317		88%	62%
Nairn										
Nairn Academy	800	3	3	2	2					
Area Total/ Avg.	800	3		2	2	0	0			62%
Skye and Lochalsh										
Plockton High	320	2	1	2	4	278	554	100%	87%	
Portree High	678	2	3	2	2					
Area Total/ Avg.	998	4		4	6	278	554		87%	70%
Lochaber										
Kinlochleven High	113	2	2	2	4	80	98	61%	71%	
Lochaber High	1062	3	2	3	4	346	796	77%	33%	
Mallaig High	153	2	1	2	6	140	261	93%	92%	
Area Total/ Avg.	1328	7		7	14	566	1155		65%	65%
Total	14949	65		64	114	5920	13304	90%	71%	64%
totals & averages										
	online (9 schools)			20	43	2107	4712	92%	73%	
	offline (12 schools)			28	55	3813	8592	88%	68%	
	unopposed (8 schools)			16	16					

Annex 2 HYV Election Turnout Comparison with May '99 Local Elections

Area	Highland Youth Voice	May '99 Local Elections
Caithness	63%	61%
Sutherland	74%	68%
Ross and Cromarty	61%	63%
Inverness	73%	63%
Badenoch and Strathspey	88%	62%
Nairn	-	62%
Skye & Lochalsh	87%	70%
Lochaber	65%	65%
Mean	71 %	64 %

Annex 3 Highland Youth Voice The Election Questionnaire

RESULTS INTEGRATED WITH QUESTIONS IN ORIGINAL FORMAT



Note

551 questionnaires were distributed representing 10 % of the school roll in the 8 schools below. 400 (73 %) were returned.

	roll	10%	Voted online?
Alness	575	58	no
Invergordon	403	40	yes
Dingwall	1109	111	yes
Mallaig	153	15	yes
Plockton	320	32	yes
Millburn	1087	109	no
Thurso	962	96	yes
Wick	904	90	no
total		551	
returns		400	73%

74% of pupils surveyed were in schools that opted to vote on-line. This balance was reflected in the actual returns (67% online).

Separate figures are given for schools that voted “online” or with “paper”. This is not meant to suggest that the method of voting *explains* differences in the figures, as each difference may be influenced by other factors.

The text that follows is that of the original questionnaire, with results inserted below.

Now that the Highland Youth Voice representatives have been elected, we would like to know what you thought of the election and what difference you think the Youth Voice will make to you, your friends, your school and your community. This survey is being carried out by the International Teledemocracy Centre, Napier University, to help improve the way that elections like this are carried out in future. Please answer all the questions that are relevant to you. You do not have to put your name on the questionnaire, so your answers are **confidential**. The questions are in 2 sections:-

A. Highland Youth Voice **In General**

These questions ask for your views on how well you think the election worked, and how well the Highland Youth Voice *will* work.

B. Highland Youth Voice **Website**

These questions ask for your views on the website that was put together for the election (www.highlandyouthvoice.org). If you did not get the chance to use this website you can skip this section, but we are still interested in what you think the website should provide in the future.

When you have finished please put your questionnaire in the envelope provided and it will be collected in your registration class.

A. Highland Youth Voice In General

How Highland Youth Voice will work

1. How well do you think Highland Youth Voice will work, as a way for young people in your area to **get their views across** to decision makers in the Wellbeing Alliance?

	paper	online
Very well	11%	7%
Quite well	49%	45%
Don't know	24%	26%
Quite poorly	3%	6%
Very poorly	2%	4%
Don't know what Wellbeing Alliance is	17%	21%

2. How well do you think Highland Youth Voice will work, to **make things better** for young people in your community?

	paper	online
Very well	19%	12%
Quite well	47%	46%
Don't know	27%	31%
Quite poorly	4%	7%
Very poorly	3%	4%

3. How did you find out about the elections for the Youth Voice?

	paper	online
Discussion in class (e.g. in PSE, Modern Studies)	37%	25%
A talk at assembly or registration class	63%	69%
Posters or leaflets from candidates	34%	37%
My school election co-ordinator	2%	3%
Access to Highland Youth Voice website	1%	16%
Meeting candidates during break times	9%	6%
Newspapers or radio	3%	1%
Talking to friends	16%	23%
E-mail from a friend	1%	0%
I did not know the elections were taking place	5%	3%

4. Which of these methods of finding out about the elections were **helpful** to you?

<i>paper</i>	helpful	no opinion	unhelpful
9) A talk at assembly or registration class	61%	18%	8%
10) Posters or leaflets from candidates	40%	18%	15%
11) Discussion in class (e.g. in PSE or Modern Studies)	34%	18%	12%
12) Talking to friends	28%	18%	9%
13) Meeting candidates during break times	18%	25%	12%
14) Access to Highland Youth Voice website	13%	23%	15%
15) Newspapers or radio	6%	24%	16%
16) E-mailing friends	5%	28%	15%

<i>online</i>	helpful	no opinion	unhelpful
☐ A talk at assembly or registration class	60%	19%	19%
☐ Posters or leaflets from candidates	44%	25%	25%
☐ Access to Highland Youth Voice website	34%	22%	24%
☐ Discussion in class (e.g. in PSE or Modern Studies)	33%	24%	27%
☐ Talking to friends	31%	21%	36%
☐ Meeting candidates during break times	12%	29%	40%
☐ Newspapers or radio	5%	27%	45%
☐ E-mailing friends	3%	25%	55%

17) Which of these did you do in the election?

(please tick whichever boxes apply to you)

	paper	online
Stood as a candidate	5%	1%
Helped someone else stand as a candidate	6%	6%
Voted on the Highland Youth Voice website	1%	61%
Voted using a printed ballot paper	71%	7%
Made comments on the website	2%	3%
Did not take part	15%	27%
Note: turnout figures for the schools concerned:	54%	70%

If you did not take part, can you tell us why not?

18) What sorts of things made you **feel like taking part** in the election?

Comments received were discussed in the main body of the report.

19) Was the amount of time to conduct the election : -

	paper	online	mean
Too much time	5%	9%	7%
Just right	69%	62%	65%
Not enough time	18%	23%	20%

B. Highland Youth Voice and the Website

1. Have you seen the Highland Youth Voice website?

	paper	online
yes	11%	61%
no	74%	35%

If you ticked "yes" here please answer the rest of the questions, otherwise go to the last question at the end of this questionnaire.

The following analysis is only of those responding 'yes' above

2. Where were you when you saw the Highland Youth Voice website? Please tick all that apply.

	paper	online
Home	67%	11%
A friend's home	13%	2%
School	7%	72%
Club/café/centre	0%	0%
Library	0%	10%

Other (please write in)

Mum's work (1) Prison library (1)

3. Did you e-mail a friend about the site at any time?

	paper	online
yes	13%	3%
no	87%	96%

4. Do you think the screens (colours, graphics, general appearance) looked...

	paper	online
Good	33%	35%
No strong opinion	27%	47%
Boring	40%	16%

5. Did you find that reading the text on the screens was

	paper	online
Too difficult	7%	7%
About right	67%	78%
Too easy	27%	13%

6. Do you think the language used to describe the election was : -

	paper	online
Too difficult	7%	4%
About right	73%	86%
Too easy	20%	7%

7. Was the amount of background information given in "election news" : -

	paper	online
Too much detail	7%	11%
Just right	33%	65%
Not detailed enough	53%	16%

8. How **easy or difficult** was it to go from one page to another?

	paper	online
Very easy	40%	40%
Quite easy, but it should have been easier	47%	28%
No opinion either way	0%	15%
Quite difficult, but I managed eventually ..	0%	7%
Very difficult, and I could not do it	13%	1%

How interested were you in these parts of the Results pages ...

9. Seeing how many people voted in each school (the election turnout)?

	paper	online
Very interested	40%	22%
Quite Interested	27%	40%
Not interested	33%	34%

10. Seeing the results for each candidate in your school?

	paper	online
Very interested	67%	35%
Quite Interested	13%	47%
Not interested	20%	11%

11. Seeing who got elected from other schools?

	paper	online
Very interested	27%	12%
Quite Interested	13%	25%
Not interested	60%	56%

The final question!

The Highland Youth Voice website might be kept going. What is the biggest improvement that we could make to it? If you have any opinions please tell us here (if you run out of space please continue on a separate sheet).

Comments received were discussed in the main body of the report.

*Thank you very much **for giving us your views. Please put your questionnaire in the envelope provided and hand it back in registration class.***
A summary of the results will be posted on the website and sent to your Head Teacher.
