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Current Issues 2011:02/ May 2011

## **ONLINE VOTING**

Voter turnout in elections is dropping. Internet voting is used in some European countries, and has been under discussion in others for a number of years. With the growth of the Internet and online life in general, some argue for online voting as a viable addition to the ways voters can record their choices.

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## ONLINE VOTING

Internet voting or e-voting allows a voter to record a secure and secret ballot electronically. Proponents say it will improve voter turnout, cut costs, and improve access, while opponents are wary of losing the paper ballot.

Several B.C. municipalities are looking at e-voting, including Vancouver, which recently approved in principle a project to let people vote online in advance civic polls. In Ontario in 2010, 44 municipalities were offering online voting as an alternative. Internationally, Estonia offered a version of internet voting as far back as October 2005, and other European countries have examined the issue extensively. Arizona Democrats became the first Americans to vote over the Internet in the March 2000 primary. Online voting is also used in the non-government sector, such as union elections.

There are many issues that need to be addressed, among them security and privacy, verification of voter identity, as well as possible loss of data. Experts ask, will online voting make casting a vote easier and the process more accessible, or will the digital divide disenfranchise a portion of the electorate? Also, will convenience really overcome voter apathy?

The documents in this current issue examine the impact of online voting on the ballot process and the electorate.

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