

Advisory Committee on Standards for Voting Technologies

Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

June 29th, 2022, 9:00am – 4:00pm

75 Lower Simcoe St, Toronto, ON M5J 3A6

Committee Attendees:

- Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Committee Chair
- Dr. Mkabi Walcott, Standards Council of Canada Representative
- Dr. Nicole Goodman, Academic Advisor
- Michael Crase, Political Party Appointee - Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
- Dan Duncan, Political Party Appointee - Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
- Karla Webber-Gallagher, Political Party Appointee - New Democratic Party of Ontario
- Donald Eady, Political Party Appointee - New Democratic Party of Ontario
- Milton Chan, Political Party Appointee - Ontario Liberal Party
- Christine McMillan, Political Party Appointee - Ontario Liberal Party
- Craig Cantin, Political Party Appointee - Green Party of Ontario
- Fiona Mackintosh, Executive Director of the Advisory Committee
- Amanda Tieber, Research Coordinator for the Advisory Committee
- Susan Hammad, Administrative Support, Elections Ontario

Invitees:

- Dr. Aleksander Essex, Associate Professor of Software Engineering, Western University
 - Julia Hancock, Senior Project Manager, CIO Strategy Council
 - Ardita Driza Maurer, Legal consultant, Lead expert for the Council of Europe CDDG (European Committee on Democracy and Governance) on the Committee of Ministers Guidelines on the use of information and communication technology
 - Vanessa Clowe, Sector Lead, Democratic Institutions Advice & Guidance, Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (CCCS)
 - Gbolahan Olude, Senior Analyst, Democratic Institutions Advice & Guidance, CCCS
 - Nicolas Pare, Senior Cyber Security Analyst, Democratic Institutions Advice & Guidance, CCCS
 - Noah Nickel, Research Associate, Brock University
-

Opening Remarks and Chair Comments

- The Chair, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, outlined the agenda and meeting objectives for the meeting.
- The April 6th meeting minutes were adopted.

Experiences and Feedback from the 2022 Ontario General Election

- The Chair opened the floor to provide the Advisory Committee members an opportunity to share their feedback and experiences with technology in the polls at the 2022 Ontario General Election.

- The Advisory Committee shared their experiences on Election Day with respect to the technology, specifically regarding the electronic poll books.
- The Advisory Committee discussed how the electronic poll book experiences on Election Day impacted the political parties and electors.
- An Advisory Committee member discussed their perspective on the role of the media with relating to electronic poll books on Election Day and the potential impacts on elector participation rates.

Technology at Polls

- The Advisory Committee also addressed aspects relating to the implementation of tabulators. Specifically, the size of polls resulting from the implementation of technology. The Advisory Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages that technology enabled polls can have on the elector experience. The Advisory Committee later discussed the potential impacts larger polls may have on elector participation and turnout.

Electronic Poll Book Strike Off Information

- The Advisory Committee members discussed a need for strong contingency protocols and digital literacy training for technology enabled election processes.
- The Advisory Committee discussed the need to balance human resource constraints (training and recruitment) with technology solutions.

Rural Experience

- The Advisory Committee also discussed how the experience with technology in the polls was uneven across the province. One Advisory Committee member highlighted that there were different experiences in rural ridings compared to the urban experience. The Advisory Committee discussed the potential impacts on rural voter turnout and participation.

The Impact of Election Technology on Election Integrity

- The Advisory Committee Academic Advisor, Dr. Nicole Goodman, conducted a presentation on jurisdictional cases that had piloted voting technologies and then halted or cancelled those initiatives.
- Dr. Goodman explored why these initiatives were cancelled and the impact this had on public perception and election integrity. Dr. Goodman also addressed the extent to which technical issues can affect public perception even when governments do not cancel those programmes.

[The Committee recessed at 10:15 a.m. and reconvened at 10:30 a.m.].

Standards Development Process Update

- The Senior Project Manager from CIO Strategy Council (CIO SC), Julia Hancock, updated the Advisory Committee on the standards development process.
- Hancock informed the Advisory Committee that the CIO Strategy Council has published a news release announcing the development of the standard and that stakeholder outreach for the Technical Committee and Expert Drafting Team has commenced. The Advisory Committee will be presented with the CIO Initial Draft Standard at the September Advisory Committee meeting.

The Council of Europe: Developing Electronic Voting Standards and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Guidelines

- Ardita Driza Maurer, Legal consultant, Lead expert for the Council of Europe CDDG (European Committee on Democracy and Governance), presented on the development of the Council of Europe (CoE) e-voting standards and ICT guidelines.
- Maurer discussed how the CoE developed and redrafted their e-voting standards and provided recommendations and considerations to the Advisory Committee on the standards development process. Maurer went on to explain the differences between the e-voting standards and the ICT guidelines and highlighted the principles used in both documents.

[The Advisory Committee recessed at 12:00 p.m. and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.]

Security Considerations for Electronic Poll Books

- Vanessa Clowe, Sector Lead of Democratic Institutions Advice & Guidance, Gbolahan Olude, Senior Analyst, and Nicolas Pare, Senior Cyber Security Analyst from the CCCS conducted a presentation on their recent report, Security Considerations for Electronic Poll Books.
- The CCCS representatives outlined the generic elections architecture, electronic poll book systems and designs, and provided the Advisory Committee members with security best practices to consider when developing technical standards for electronic poll books.

Discussion on Edits to the Democratic Election Principles and Technical Design Principles

Democratic Election Principles

- The Executive Director, Fiona Mackintosh, reviewed the redrafted principles and opened the discussion for any comments and feedback on the principles.
- The Advisory Committee agreed that the title of the Democratic Principles should officially be stated as “Democratic Election Principles.”
- The Advisory Committee agreed that the verifiability principle in the Democratic Election Principles should be redrafted to include language around the various stakeholders and individuals who are permitted to verify and meaningfully scrutinize the election, such as candidates, political parties, scrutineers, and other individuals as permitted under the Ontario *Election Act*. The Advisory Committee noted that the ability to scrutinize and verify the election is an integral part of the election process and it is important to identify which authorized individuals or entities are granted these abilities.
- Another Advisory Committee member stated that the description of ballots under the verifiability principle is too vague in nature and motioned to include the verifiability of paper ballots.

Technical Design Principles: Vote Tabulators and Electronic Poll Books

- The Executive Director and Research Coordinator, Amanda Tieber, noted that the vote tabulators and electronic poll books Technical Design Principles have been separated into two documents. The Committee Administrators explained that vote tabulators are seen as voting technologies and electronic poll books are election technologies. As a result, what applies to voting technologies might not fully apply to election technologies. The Committee Administrators went on to state that the principles and standards for both technologies should be separate to ensure the technical designs and specifications of each are clearly articulated.

- An Advisory Committee Member noted that the voting technology design and election technology design principles should be redrafted to ensure that trustworthy materials are more adequately explained.
- Another Advisory Committee Member noted that since technology was introduced in the 2018 Ontario General Election there has been a decrease in the ability to meaningfully scrutinize. The Advisory Committee members recommended that the implementation of technology in the polls must maintain the level of detail in reporting, transparency, and scrutiny.

[The Advisory Committee recessed at 3:00 p.m. and reconvened at 3:10 p.m.].

Committee Workplan and Research Agenda

- The Executive Director provided an update to the Advisory Committee on the workplan for the standards development process. The Executive Director notified the Advisory Committee that the project is expected to be completed by 2023 and a detailed calendar of milestones will be provided to the members for their review and consideration.
- The Research Coordinator outlined the research and meeting agendas that will be discussed at the remaining 2022 Advisory Committee meetings.

The meeting of the Advisory Committee adjourned at 4:00pm.