

# Political participation and how it works in different forms of government



Voter turn-out rates in the United States are among the worst in the developed world, and indeed, those political systems where voting is commonplace. There is a lot of fluctuation in the demographics with regard to who turns out, except for the fact that the elderly seem to be consistent in their turning out with strong numbers. Another fairly consistent pattern of voter turn out in the United States, is at the other end of the age spectrum. Young people don't vote with a very high proportion of their age group overall [Sherrod, Torney-Punta, and Flanagan 282]. That can be seen by contrast, for example, with the kind of percentages that turnout among seniors. It will be argued in the following that new technologies have the potential to bring the young voters in. The internet presents a number of opportunities to improve political participation, and recent political transformations in the Middle East and the impact of 'social media' on those revolutionary actions, should be sufficient proof that much of the potential is already being realized. Moreover, the 'world wide web' which was launched in [Lipson and Day 10] 1993 (internet is older) is now eighteen years old or the age in which youth begin to vote. Voters have now had the web at their disposal, for the entirety of their lives and this is actually a demographic watershed of sorts. All voters from this time forward, will have had web-era computer technologies at their disposal, and these technologies hold a number of deposits of hope for attracting participation from precisely the age group with the worst turn-out. Before getting to the potential for increasing participation, some of the positives of current practices will be outlined to demonstrate what can be built on.

Political transparency is one of the areas that the world wide web has been very good thus far at improving. For instance, the compiling and making search-able, the political contributions to politicians or political candidates, <https://assignbuster.com/political-participation-and-how-it-works-in-different-forms-of-government/>

the public is easily able to scrutinize where the potential interests of the politician in question might lie. For instance, one might scrutinize the political contributions of their local congressman on any number of database web sites, and decide whether they want to support them or not. This is already a form of participation, as it is an engagement with 'affect' or outcomes measurable in whether or not an individual chooses a candidate. For myself, I might be, for example, wary of a candidate who took too much money from gun lobbies, oil lobbyists and multinationals, and so forth. If it can be said that the intersection of web technologies and political transparency, does have a positive impact, it might be that similar projects might likewise have good outcomes. In this vein, one of the potential avenues connected with transparency, is directly voting on legislation or bills before congress. A simple database and form to enter data is straight forward, and there is no reason why congressmen or senators or the President, shouldn't know how constituents or voters stand on particular legislation. While it is the case that we have a representative democracy and not a fully participatory one, it is being argued that fusing a good transparency agenda with web technologies stands to create an avenue for greater political participation. If the technology is so simple, why is it that congress members don't spend more time consulting with the people they represent about actual legislation. Works Cited: Lipson, Carol and Day, Michael. 2005. Technical Communication and the World Wide Web. Mahwah N. J.: Lawrence Erlbaum. Sherrod, Lonnie R., Torney-Purta, Judith and Flanagan, Constance A. (Ed.). 2010. Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth. Hobokon: John Wiley & Sons. Voter Participation: Technology and the Youth Vote  
<https://assignbuster.com/political-participation-and-how-it-works-in-different-forms-of-government/>