eVoting could increase youth voter turnout in local elections
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Introducing eVoting could have a positive effect on increasing voter turnout among young people, a University of Otago study suggests.

Study participants say an app that listed candidate information and allowed eVoting directly may not only increase the convenience of voting but potentially increase youth voting numbers.

For the study, Dr. Whitfield investigated whether young people would be more encouraged to vote if eVoting was available, voting was compulsory, or if there was a reduction in the voting age.

He found eVoting appeals to young people and could increase their turnout; that youth felt divided about compulsory voting; and that they were opposed to reducing the voting age to 16 based on the belief that this age is too young.

Other research insights revealed youth felt they were not receiving enough information to make knowledgeable decisions; more than 90 percent of participants felt they should have been better educated on the importance of their civic rights; and 17 of the contributors mentioned they knew nothing about politics, voting or government operations.


Provided by University of Otago

New Zealand's low youth voter turn-out numbers aren't unlike other countries, this issue does hinder having a healthy democracy and needs to be resolved, Dr. Whitfield believes "Low voter turnout amongst 18 to 24-year-olds can undermine the political process," he says.

"Lack of information, the feeling that local elections are 'second order' elections and the feeling that youths have no actual influence over the political process, ultimately produces these low turn-outs."