



## Case Study - Opt2Vote Secure Phone Voting and Voter Registration

# Enhanced Voting Flexibility



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### Case Study - Opt2Vote

#### Secure Phone Voting and Voter Registration



#### Requirement

Voting apathy in the UK has stimulated a number of pilots to be run to evaluate alternative voting methods. These have particularly targeted younger demographics where surveys show that people are more than 40% likely to vote via Internet, phone or text if the technologies were made easily available to them.

Opt2Vote were commissioned to provide a number of these methods during the registration for council elections in June 2006 and then for pilots for the action voting during the elections of May 2007.

Opt2Vote approached a number of hosted telephony providers to provide dial in numbers and integrated IVR solutions. X-on was chosen based on cost and a flexible approach to the technical integration requirements.

#### Solution

X-on's solution integrated IVR with the back-end databases to allow voters to complete registration for voting from information on forms mailed to them. They dialled 080 freephone numbers and were invited to enter certain pieces of secure information using their keypads. During the actual voting process, votes were recorded in real time and immediately updated on the central database to avoid duplicate voting through alternative methods.

As part of the voting itself, X-on underwent a stringent security audit by the Department of Constitutional Affairs (this is now handled by the Ministry of Justice). This involved checking personnel, software and hardware for data security and a total lockdown of systems in London Docklands for the period of voting.

Although some types of e-voting came in for public criticism during the 2007 elections over technical problems, the telephone voting which Opt2Vote and X-on were responsible for piloting was a success and experienced no problems at all. The Electoral Modernisation Minister, Michael Wills, said:

"These evaluations point to instances where e-counting and e-voting have worked well, and where electors choose to vote remotely by internet or telephone they often had favourable responses to these innovations. The purpose of pilots is to learn lessons for the future and we will do so."

"We are pleased that the evaluations point to a high level of system security and user confidence in e-voting systems tested and that the security and integrity of the polls was not compromised."

As a result, X-on has again worked with Opt2Vote for the registration of electors by phone for a number of councils in 2008. In this instance, the accessibility of the service has been significantly extended by making it available in no less than 10 languages.

#### Future

Telephone and mobile voting are set to become part of the democratic landscape. It is expected that these will be widely deployed in forthcoming European and General Elections. X-on will be working with Opt2Vote to provide a secure and robust IVR platform which will assist in maximizing turnout and accessibility to all members of the community.



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### Quick Facts

- Interactive Voice Response system securely hosted to enable voting and voter registration in local elections.
- Features and Technologies employed:
  - Hosted IVR on dedicated 080 UK Freephone numbers
  - Highly robust dedicated infrastructure with zero SPF
  - Voice XML and database access integration
  - Real time integration with electoral data
  - Voter Registration in 2006 and 2008
  - Part of e-voting pilot in 2007 elections
  - Secure VPN and other encryption technologies
  - Security audit by DCA
  - 10 Languages
  - Transfer to live helpdesk for callers with difficulties
- Clients with similar secure IVR services run by X-on:
  - Cash Management - retail ordering of cash requirements
- Peak simultaneous calls: Dedicated capacity for 350.
- Inbound numbers: Up to 10.
- Target numbers: Approximately 70.
- Primary site termination with failover to two alternative sites.



...because voting matters.