



# **Voter Information Campaign for the 45th General Election: Qualitative Pre-Event Communications Testing with Youth**

## **Final Report**

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**Canada**

## **GE45 Voter Information Campaign: Qualitative Pre-Event Communications Testing with Youth**

**Prepared for Elections Canada by Environics Research**

Supplier name: Environics Research

November 2023

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## Executive summary

### Background and objectives

Elections Canada (EC) is an independent, non-partisan agency that exercises general direction and supervision over the conduct of elections and referendums at the federal level. One key undertaking toward delivering on EC's mandate is the Voter Information Campaign, a multi-media communications and information campaign, implemented before and during a federal general election. EC develops advertising and communications campaigns to provide Canadian electors with key information on when, where and the ways to register and vote, including eligibility criteria and identification requirements. The campaign is comprised of several communications tactics, including direct mail products, an advertising campaign, national and local outreach initiatives, a dedicated general election website, social media initiatives, media relations, and a public enquiries service.

There is a need to pilot EC's new digital campaign, specifically targeting youth, as a complement to the established Voter Information Campaign. This research is intended to test the effectiveness of several potential improvements to the current campaign among young Canadian electors, ages 18 to 24, as well as to help develop future Campaigns. This research project was completed in the form of focus groups representing young electors across Canada, assessing the following areas:

- Comprehension and impression of the messages
- Perceived strengths and weaknesses of visual components of the campaign aimed at youth, specifically related to whether the content is engaging and attention-grabbing
- Usefulness of the information provided

This research aims to verify that the proposed concepts meet communications objectives, that the selected messages resonate with young electors, and that the visuals are clear and engaging and meet electors' information needs about where, when and the ways to vote. Out of the two concepts presented to participants, concept A will be used as part of the Voter Information Campaign for the next general election (GE45); Concept B is meant to validate if other types of messaging resonate with young electors, which will help EC develop engaging campaigns for future elections.

### Methodology

A total of nine focus groups (eight in-person and one virtual) were conducted in October 2023, with young electors aged 18–24. Two in-person sessions were conducted from each of the following regions: Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, and Halifax, at dedicated focus group facilities. In Montréal, focus groups were held in French with French-speaking participants to ensure representation from both official languages.

The virtual group was conducted using the Zoom platform with participants mainly from rural communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. To further represent the diversity of Canada's young electors, each group included a mix of different genders, students/non-students, and those who previously voted/did not vote in a federal election. Each in-person session consisted of 10 to 12 participants, while the virtual session had seven participants. Each group lasted about 90 minutes.

Environics Research recruited participants via industry-standard methods to ensure participation in all regions. People with experience working for EC or as an election officer in the September 20, 2021, federal election were excluded from the study. More details on methodology can be found in Appendix A.

In the focus groups, participants were shown two concepts: A (voting is easy) and B (every small X has a huge impact). The objective was to gather feedback on the concepts to determine their efficacy and suitability for the intended audience (electors aged 18–24). All formats, i.e. video, radio spot, web banner, and social media post were presented to gather feedback on the intended target audience, tone, message clarity, interest level, likes and dislikes, and format-specific design elements. The participants were then asked to assess and compare the effectiveness of the concepts at informing young Canadians about voting. Throughout the discussions, the participants' broad perceptions on voting-related issues such as eligibility, likelihood of voting, perceived challenges, and preferences for voting on election day vs. advance polls were also discussed. The focus groups were concluded with final comments on reaching and engaging youth about voting.

**Statement of limitations:** Qualitative research provides insight into the range of opinions held within a population rather than the weights of the opinions held as measured in a quantitative study. The results of this type of research should be viewed as indicative rather than projectable to the population.

## Contract value

The contract value was \$108,576.00 (including HST).

## Key findings

### General perceptions on voting

#### Positive reactions/Reasons to vote

- To begin each group session, participants were asked about their eligibility during the 2021 federal election. Most of those who were eligible voted, while most of the newly eligible participants were excited to vote for the first time in the upcoming elections.
- A vast majority of participants saw voting as important, including those who did not vote or were ambivalent about voting.

#### Negative reactions/Reasons not to vote

- Carving time out of a busy day and not believing their vote matters were two of the main barriers which prevented young Canadians from voting. This was especially true for the Prairies group due to the longer travel distances common in rural ridings and the perception that election outcomes are extremely predictable: participants stated that in many areas, particular political parties and candidates tend to dominate the political landscape and are widely expected to win regardless of what happens during campaigning.
- Furthermore, lack of knowledge about political parties and platforms and uncertainty about voting while living away from home also held back some participants from voting.

## Reactions to Concept A, Voting Is Easy

### Video

- **Positive:** Some participants, particularly those who had cats, tended to enjoy the comparison between “bathing a cat is hard” vs. “voting is easy.” The idea of funny comparisons was generally seen as intriguing, and some found the colours and graphics to be appealing.
- **Neutral/Indifferent:** The comparison was unrelatable to those who were not cat owners and those who do not perceive voting to be hard. These participants often felt it would be better to get straight to the point with details about voting.
- **Negative:** Some participants found the video too text-heavy to maintain their attention. A few indicated that even for a young audience, the bright colour and light-hearted tone were not serious enough for the subject matter of voting.

### Radio spot

- **Positive:** Most participants praised the radio spot for being more straightforward and conveying voting information more clearly compared to the video. This was true for both English and French groups.
- **Negative:** The participants often found the glitches at the beginning confusing and annoying. They didn’t understand that it was meant to be like that on purpose. The idea of waiting for audio ads to finish being something hard didn’t resonate well because many participants have premium subscriptions to music platforms. Participants frequently mentioned that their first reaction to this ad would be to check for a problem with the sound on their phone or headphones/earbuds.

### Web banner

- **Positive:** The moving couch comparison landed better than bathing a cat for many participants. Many found the couch comparison more relatable and attention-grabbing. The design is simple and will require less bandwidth, which can be a positive in rural areas.
- **Neutral/Indifferent:** The moving couch comparison was confusing and unrelatable to voting for some; often, participants did not immediately realize the graphic was a couch.
- **Negative:** Some participants thought the banner was visually unappealing and text-heavy, and often noted that they would just scroll over or not read all the way through. It was also mentioned that youth often use ad-blocking software, which would prevent them from seeing a web banner while browsing.

### Social media post

- **Positive:** Many found the comparison between writing a paper last-minute and voting more relatable than the comparisons used in the other formats. Several participants thought this social ad felt authentic and similar to other social media content they interacted with as opposed to a paid social media ad/post.

- **Negative:** Some participants said writing a paper last-minute and voting is unrelatable. Moreover, many found the social ad amateurish and lacking credibility, mainly due to the coffee animation and font choices.

### Overall impression

- The participants often found the comparisons interesting and attention-grabbing, and generally liked the concept of comparing difficult tasks with the voting process but had mixed reactions to the specific comparisons in the ad executions. For urban voters, it was felt to be self-evident that voting is easy while, for rural voters and voters who live away from home, voting really is hard due to accessibility issues and other barriers.
- From a design perspective, the “x” element tying different formats together usually went unnoticed. Moreover, the animations and bright colours were attention-grabbing for some but were also seen as lacking authenticity or trying too hard to be youthful.

### Reactions to Concept B, Every Small X Has a Huge Impact

#### Video

- **Positive:** The participants often found the video to be motivating and informative. Many also liked the colour and the turning windmill effect for being visually captivating and in keeping with the seriousness of the subject matter.
- **Neutral/Indifferent:** The “x” did not immediately connect with voting for some, especially those who had never voted before. The “x” could also be easily mistaken as something else, such as recent rebranding of the Twitter platform.
- **Negative:** Some participants thought the text was too wordy and moved too quickly, and some did not like the fonts.

#### Radio spot

- **Positive:** Many found the radio spot clear, direct, and informative. The tone was also serious enough for voting for many participants. Including the election date was seen as an important element.
- **Negative:** Many participants found the phrase “all the official information” ambiguous and did not really help them prepare to vote. Some also felt the tone of the ad was somewhat daunting because it implied a complicated registration process. One interesting point raised by a participant was that the hook for the spot does not signal the importance of the subject matter.

#### Web banner

- **Positive:** The participants often found the design attention-grabbing and intriguing. Both the turning windmill and the bright green were seen as captivating by some.
- **Negative:** The use of bright green was controversial, as many strongly disliked it, though others found it appealing. Several participants thought the last message was too wordy and did not like how it appeared

twice on the screen. Some francophone participants in the Montréal groups felt that relatability of some terms may have been lost in translation.

### Social media post

- **Positive:** Many participants thought the structure and design of the Concept B post worked better than Concept A. They appreciated that the main message and election date were stated clearly while the windmill tied all formats together cohesively.
- **Neutral/Indifferent:** The use of pink was controversial because many participants said it is inconsistent with the other Concept B ads, and they often associated this ad with breast cancer awareness campaigns.
- **Negative:** Some participants did not like the font of the sentence announcing the election date. “It’s our vote” looked ill-fitted on the post for some. Moreover, many thought the post might not be taken seriously because of the light-hearted tone.

### Overall impression

- Overall, Concept B was seen as motivating, direct, cohesive, visually appealing and tone-appropriate. The message of “your vote matters” came across as inspiring to the audience. The “x” element in Concept B ads received positive feedback in general, as it drew attention effectively and tied all formats together. Lastly, many participants found the colours and fonts appealing and felt the concept conveyed a duly respectful tone toward the topic of voting.

### Overall findings across concepts

- While Concept B was the preferred concept between the two, reactions to both were generally positive or neutral. The participants tended to see the messages as more effective when they were direct with clear facts regardless of their concept preference.
- There was a consensus that both concepts could be improved by unifying elements like colour and imagery. Many felt that overtly bright colours were not serious enough for voting. Lastly, the text being wordy was often mentioned across concepts and formats.



**Political neutrality statement and contact information**

I hereby certify, as Senior Officer of Environics Research, that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements that are outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

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## Introduction

### Background

Elections Canada (EC) is an independent, non-partisan agency exercising general direction and supervision over federal-level elections and referenda. One key undertaking toward delivering on its mandate is the Voter Information Campaign, a multi-media communications and information strategy, implemented before and during a federal general election. EC develops advertising and communications campaigns to inform electors about where and when to register to vote as well as ways to do so. This includes information regarding eligibility criteria and required identification. The campaign is comprised of several communications tactics, including direct mail products, an advertising campaign, national and local outreach initiatives, a dedicated general election website, social media initiatives, media relations, and a public enquiries service.

There is a need to pilot EC's new digital campaign, specifically targeting youth, as a complement to the established Voter Information Campaign. EC is testing a limited number of newly developed messages and creative concepts with an aim to ensure that the campaign is engaging and attention-grabbing, that the information on the electoral process is clear and easy to understand, and that the campaign better reflects evolving communications trends and consumption habits of young electors, particularly those aged 18–24.

### Objectives

This research is intended to test the effectiveness of several potential improvements to the current campaign among young Canadian electors, ages 18 to 24 as well as to help develop future Campaigns. It was completed in the form of focus groups representing young electors across Canada, assessing the following areas:

- Comprehension and impression of the messages
- Perceived strengths and weaknesses of visual components of the campaign aimed at youth, specifically related to whether the content is engaging and attention-grabbing
- Usefulness of the information provided

The desired outcome of this research is to verify that the proposed concepts meet communications objectives, resonate with young electors, are clear and engaging, and meet electors' information needs about where, when and the ways to vote. Out of the two concepts presented to participants, concept A will be used as part of the Voter Information Campaign for the next general election (GE45), while concept B is meant to validate if other types of messaging resonate with young electors to help EC develop engaging campaigns for future elections.

### Methodology

A total of nine focus groups (eight in-person and one virtual) were conducted from October 3 to 11, 2023, with young electors aged 18–24. Two in-person sessions were conducted from each of the following regions: Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, and Halifax, at dedicated focus group facilities. In Montréal, focus groups were held in French with French speaking participants to ensure representation from both official languages. EC translated both the recruitment screener and discussion guide into French for the Montréal focus groups.

The virtual group was conducted using the Zoom platform with participants living in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba; additionally, most of these participants were from rural communities. Conducting this group virtually

allowed participation of youth who lived in remote areas. To further represent the diversity of Canada's young electors, we ensured that each group had a good mix of different genders, students/non-students, and those who voted/did not vote previously in a federal election. For Toronto, one group consisted entirely of participants who self-identified as white/of European descent and the other group comprised non-white/of non-European descent. Additionally, in the event an elector had a disability that could prevent them from participating, we offered an option of doing individual interviews. However, none of the candidates screened met this criterion. Each in-person session consisted of 10–12 participants while the virtual session had seven participants, and each group lasted about 90 minutes.

Focus groups allowed a group of diverse young Canadian electors to openly share their perceptions and opinions about the campaign with one another in a semi-structured, conversational-style setting. The natural flow of information and ideas helped us to better assess whether the proposed campaign concepts tend to meet communications objectives, resonate with young electors, are clear and engaging, and meet electors' information needs.

Different moderators were used for the English and French groups and, to get access to desired locations, one additional English moderator was used. Stephanie Coulter, Senior Research Associate, Public Affairs, at Environics Research moderated five English-language sessions (October 3, 5 and 11). Derek Leebosh, Vice-President, Public Affairs, at Environics Research moderated two English-language sessions (October 10). Anouk Flambert moderated the two French sessions on October 4. Each focus group session was conducted according to a discussion guide developed in consultation with EC. The focus groups were semi-structured, and moderators included additional probes as needed during the discussions. Moderators shared notes and themes emerging from their respective sessions with one another to ensure everyone remained equally up to date on the trends and procedures.

Environics Research worked with CRC Research Inc. to recruit the focus group participants, and all recruiting was done by telephone. Environics Research recruited participants via industry-standard methods to ensure participation in all regions. In-person participants were offered a \$135 incentive while virtual participants were offered a \$120 incentive to thank them for their time. People with experience working for EC or as an election officer in the September 20, 2021, federal election were excluded from the study.

All research work was conducted in accordance with professional standards and applicable government legislation (e.g. PIPEDA). Industry and Government of Canada standards for qualitative research were followed. All groups were video- and audio-recorded for use in subsequent analysis by the Environics Research team. During the recruitment process and in the introductory portion of each session, participants provided consent to such recording and were given assurances of anonymity. All recordings and transcripts were stored in a secured SharePoint drive that was managed by the Environics Research team. All recordings and transcripts will be deleted upon the final approval of this report. More details on methodology can be found in Appendix A.

**Statement of limitations:** Qualitative research provides insight into the range of opinions held within a population, rather than the weights of the opinions held as measured in a quantitative study. The results of this type of research should be viewed as indicative rather than projectable to the population.

### About this report

This report begins with an executive summary outlining key findings, followed by a detailed analysis of the focus group findings, supported by quotations from the participants. Provided under the appendix are details on methodology, the research instruments used in this project, i.e. screener and discussion guide, and the creative stills as well as text transcription of audio ads.

**Use of findings of the research**

With the information provided by this public opinion research program, it will be possible to develop and implement a public awareness campaign in an effective and efficient manner. Information obtained through public opinion research will allow EC to optimize the impact of its marketing initiatives.

## Detailed findings

### A. General perceptions on voting

#### Positive reactions/Reasons to vote

**Most of those who were eligible to vote in the 2021 federal election voted, while most of the newly eligible electorss were excited to vote for the first time in the upcoming elections.**

To begin each group session, participants were asked about their eligibility during the 2021 federal election and whether they voted or not if eligible. The vast majority of those who were eligible in the 2021 federal election voted. A handful were newly 18 since the election, and most of them intended to vote in the upcoming federal election. When asked about their feelings about being newly eligible, some of them expressed their excitement to vote for the first time. A vast majority of participants saw voting as important, including those who did not vote or were ambivalent about voting.

*“[Voting] is definitely something I have been excited about my entire life. As far as I can remember, I wanted to go. It's been a huge part of my upbringing. My parents have always impressed upon me that it's important. So yeah, very much so.”*

*“I think [voting] is exciting because if enough people vote, they have the power to choose who best represents their beliefs and values, and, ideally, that person is going to make a change for the better.”*

*“I'm excited to vote in the way that I'm excited to go to the registry to renew my ID or go grocery shopping. It's something I'm glad I'm able to do, and I treat it just like it's a fact of life. You go to the grocery store, you pay your bills, and you vote, because that's what you do in a civilized democratic society.”*

*“I think I do it because it's my duty but also to have my say because everyone has a voice.”*

#### Negative reactions/Reasons not to vote

**Carving time out of a busy day, believing their vote does not matter, lacking information about political parties and platforms, and voting while living away from home are the main barriers which prevented young Canadians from voting.**

For those who were indifferent about voting, they did not see voting as important enough to carve time out of their day, i.e. finding and commuting to the polling station, the hassle of leaving early from work/school, etc. A handful said they felt a sense of powerlessness about voting because they did not think their vote would make an impact. This was especially true within the Prairies group due to the nature of rural ridings, and the perception that election outcomes are extremely predictable and, therefore, voting does not matter as much.

*“For [people who live in] rural areas like me, although we have towns nearby that have all these [polling] stations, it's still like a 15-minute drive either way. And if we have work, we are not just going to stop and go voting.”*

*“I think for me, the lines are too long. I remembered last time going and the lines outside the community centre were just so long. I had to wait. I felt like that might turn [voters away].”*

*“In my voting area, everybody knows who's going to win, both provincially and federally. And it's been the same for so many years. [It makes me feel that] your actual vote doesn't really seem to matter... It's very well known that in rural Alberta and [other similar areas], voting isn't as [impactful] as other city centres where it's a closer race.”*

Feelings of inadequacy or being ill-prepared also held back some participants from voting. These participants said they lacked the knowledge about political parties and platforms to make an informed decision. A desire to get such information in a more accessible and digestible way was often brought up during the discussions, and a few indicated a sense that candidates had not tried to reach out to them. Among young voters who are also students, voting while living away from home was commonly seen to be confusing or difficult. Those in this situation were often uncertain about their eligibility to vote where they go to school and how or where to vote.

*“I just feel like I should follow what's happening more in politics so I can voice my opinion better. I don't know much about politics so I don't know who I would support, but I feel like I want to get into it, to voice [my opinion].”*

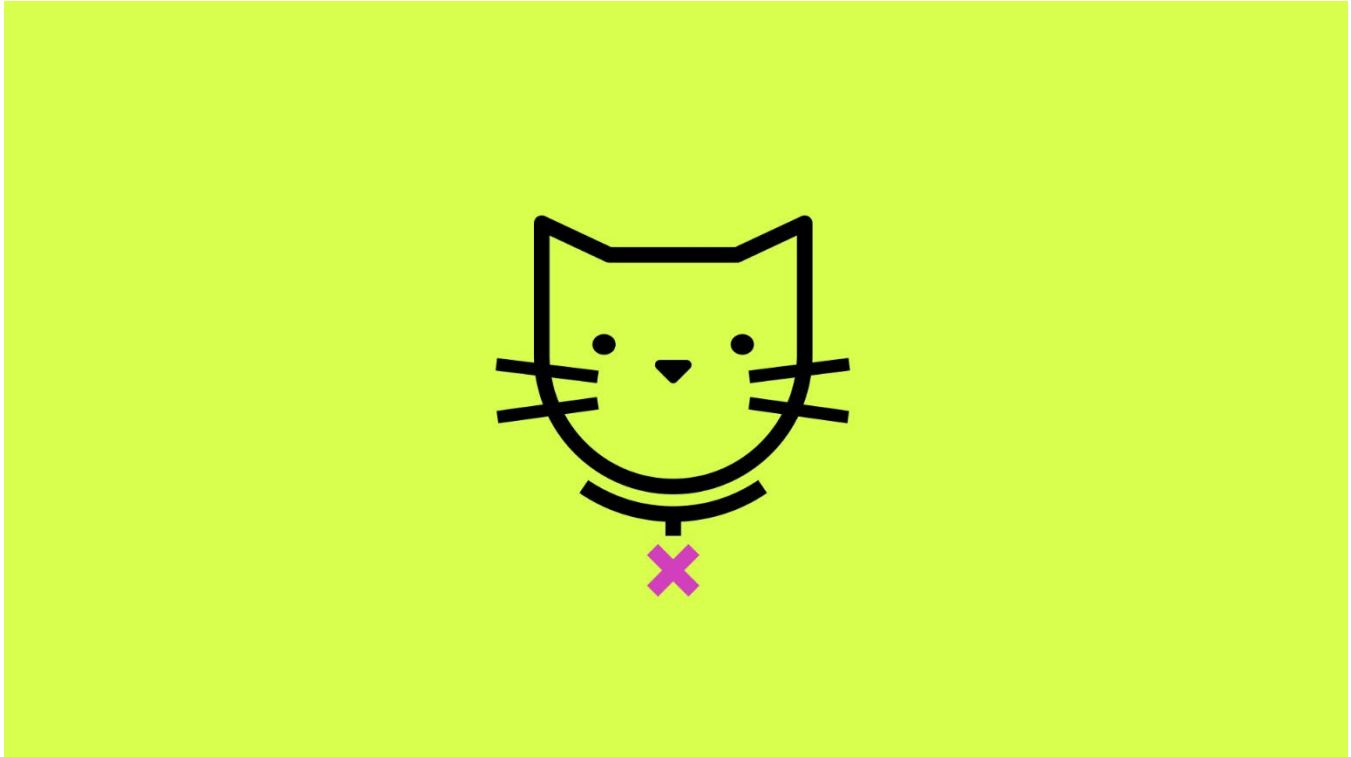
*“I would go and vote if I was in the area [where I grew up]. But if I'm in Saskatoon attending school, I probably wouldn't waste the half hour to figure [the voting process] out.”*

*“For me it was just too much of a hassle actually as a student. I was registered to vote in Scarborough, but I go to Brock University, which is in Niagara Falls in Saint Catherine's. Figuring [the voting process] out was just too much of a hassle. I was also preparing for mid-terms at the same time. I honestly just forgot about [voting]. I felt like it was too much work to do.”*

*“I was moving around a lot growing up. [When] I finally had a stable place to live and registered on the voting list, I still couldn't vote because I didn't have access to the list. I was required to provide a proof of address, which I didn't have.”*

## B. Reactions to Concept A, Voting Is Easy

### 1. Video



#### Positive reactions

The comparison between “bathing a cat is hard” vs. “voting is easy” resonated best among those who own or like cats. The idea of comparisons was generally seen as intriguing.

When asked about their initial feelings toward the video ad for Concept A, the participants often said it was funny and made them curious. The participants who had cats connected more with the comparison between bathing a cat and voting, and they were more likely to find the animation appealing than those who do not own or like cats.

Some participants suggested having several different comparisons between something perceived as hard vs. voting to appeal to different audiences, but the idea of comparisons was generally seen as intriguing and appealing. Furthermore, the idea that voting is easy confronted the participants with an idea that many felt to be a truth, urging them to feel like there is no excuse not to vote. Lastly, the bright colours and cute graphics were popular with some participants.

*“I really like the humour of the opening line. I thought that was funny and a little witty. And then I like the cat graphic, which I thought was really cute.”*

*“I think the video is very short and to the point. The video is also very eye catching, especially with the cat graphic and the colour. I think if I'm scrolling through YouTube [and see the ad], I would at least stop.”*

*“For me, it's less about young people. I think it speaks really to anyone, not just to those who have a cat. I love the comparison to everyday tasks as opposed to just asking people to register to vote. If there were a bunch of comparisons for different everyday chores, I think that'd be kind of cute.”*

*“I like the bright colours. I think they are eye-catching.”*

*“I enjoyed the visuals. The [colour] is bright but I think it matches the music. I thought it was kind of fun and the visuals didn't bombard you with information. It's simple and doesn't overwhelm.”*

### **Neutral/Indifferent reactions**

**The comparison was sometimes unrelatable to those who were not cat owners or did not think voting is hard. These participants thought it was better to get straight to the point.**

Often, non-cat owners did not find the comparison between bathing a cat and voting to be motivating or relatable. Others did not like the concept because they did not think that the difficulty of voting was a major barrier. Several participants found that the humour was not enough of a hook to keep them watching. In general, the participants felt it would be better to get straight to the point with details about voting instead of trying to be funny or persuasive.

*“I think the problem is that voting is something you do have to carve out a more meaningful time of your day for as opposed to something where more effort is required, like cramming for your paper or giving your cat a bath.”*

*“I don't feel it speaks to my demographic because I've never given a cat a bath. So, I don't know how easy that is.”*

*“I can't relate because I don't have a cat. But I also can't relate because I haven't voted yet.”*

*“I found it not relatable because I personally don't have a pet. Washing a cat being hard isn't that relatable to me.”*

### **Negative reactions**

**Some participants found the video too text-heavy, while others felt the bright colours and light-hearted tone were not serious enough for the subject matter of voting.**

When asked about the design, some participants found the last two frames too text-heavy, with not enough time to read through all the text in a single viewing. Some participants found the colours off-putting and not serious enough for the subject matter. The colours, combined with the light-hearted tone, made some participants feel the ad was made by people from an older generation, trying to appeal to a younger audience.

*“I thought the text itself went by a little fast. I tried reading it the first time and I couldn't exactly get it all down, but the second time I got more of it.”*

*“If they change the colour to correspond more with Elections Canada. Maybe incorporate more purple or stuff like that. It would be better.”*

*“I don't like the colour and I think it tried a little too hard to reach to a younger population because it was just so bright.”*



## 2. Radio spot

### Positive reactions

**Most participants praised the radio spot for being more straightforward compared to the video.**

Most participants found the message in the radio spot more straightforward than the video ad. Some also praised the fact that key information such as the election date, website, and slogan are easier to notice than they are in the video ad.

*“The second half of [the audio] is very informative.”*

*“The message in the latter half is very clear. This is the voting date. This is the website, and you can go there to learn more information about [voting].”*

*“I would get what [the audio] means right away. And it's not like there's a bunch of filler stuff in it.”*

### Negative reactions

**The participants often found the glitches at the beginning confusing and annoying. The idea of skipping audio ads being hard did not resonate well either because many participants pay for premium music services and thus do not experience ads.**

The noises at the beginning of the ad were frequently brought up as a flaw, as many participants would assume it to be a technical issue with their phone or headphones the first time they listened to the ad. Although there were also participants who found the noises attention-grabbing, they widely felt they would get annoyed after hearing it repeatedly. Overall, the idea that it is difficult to wait for ads to finish did not resonate well with the participants as many of them have premium subscriptions to services like Spotify or simply do not find it all that difficult to put up with ads. Others did not appreciate the irony of an ad talking about waiting for ads and did not find it to be funny.

*“I thought [my audio] glitched at first. That's why I don't really like it. The glitch was kind of disturbing.”*

*“The first part caught me off guard. If I was only listening to that once, I might not have processed the whole ad because I was a bit confused.”*

*“The glitchy thing in the beginning is not being very cool. But also, the slogan in the beginning about waiting for ads to finish being hard is weird to me because there's nothing hard about waiting for ads to finish. It's annoying and I don't like ads, but it's not very difficult to sit on my hands and do nothing. So, it just seemed weird to me as a phrase.”*

*“I agree that it's not difficult to wait for an ad to finish and I was also a little confused in the beginning. The audio clip says that waiting for ads to finish is difficult, but the clip itself is an ad. So, it's kind of weird.”*

From an execution perspective, some participants said the pauses between sentences were too long. “It's our vote” also seemed out of context for some, and some suggested that a call to action, such as register to vote or visit the website, would make more sense at the end.

### 3. Web banner



#### Positive reactions

**The moving-a-couch comparison landed better than bathing a cat for many participants. Many found the couch comparison more relatable and attention-grabbing.**

The participants generally found comparing voting to moving a couch more relatable than the video ad about bathing a cat. The humour of moving a couch was felt to be more universal. In addition, in the context of seeing this as a web ad, the couch animation was noted by some participants to be attention-grabbing rather than disruptive.

*"I think the couch is a really clever way to catch my attention and then I get to see the message at the end. So overall I liked it."*

*"I think the couch reference represents at least in a more symbolic, solid way that you will carry the heavy burden of regret if you don't vote."*

*"I guess the purple would catch my eye and so does the animation."*

*"It reminds me of that episode of Friends where they move the couch."*

#### Neutral/Indifferent reactions

**For a few participants, the moving couch comparison was confusing and did not seem connected to voting.**

While most participants viewed this ad positively, some had difficulty making the connection between moving a couch and voting. Additionally, some did not see the couch in the graphic right away.

*"I couldn't tell what [the moving couch joke] meant until you actually said [the couch] just lifted."*

#### Negative reactions

**Some participants thought the banner was visually unappealing and text-heavy.**

When asked about the design, some found the banner to be visually boring or unremarkable, and said they would probably scroll past or ignore it when browsing a website. The sentences on the banner were seen by some to be too long and fast-moving to read all the way through. Similarly, several participants thought the final screen had too much going on and did not visually align with the rest of the banner.

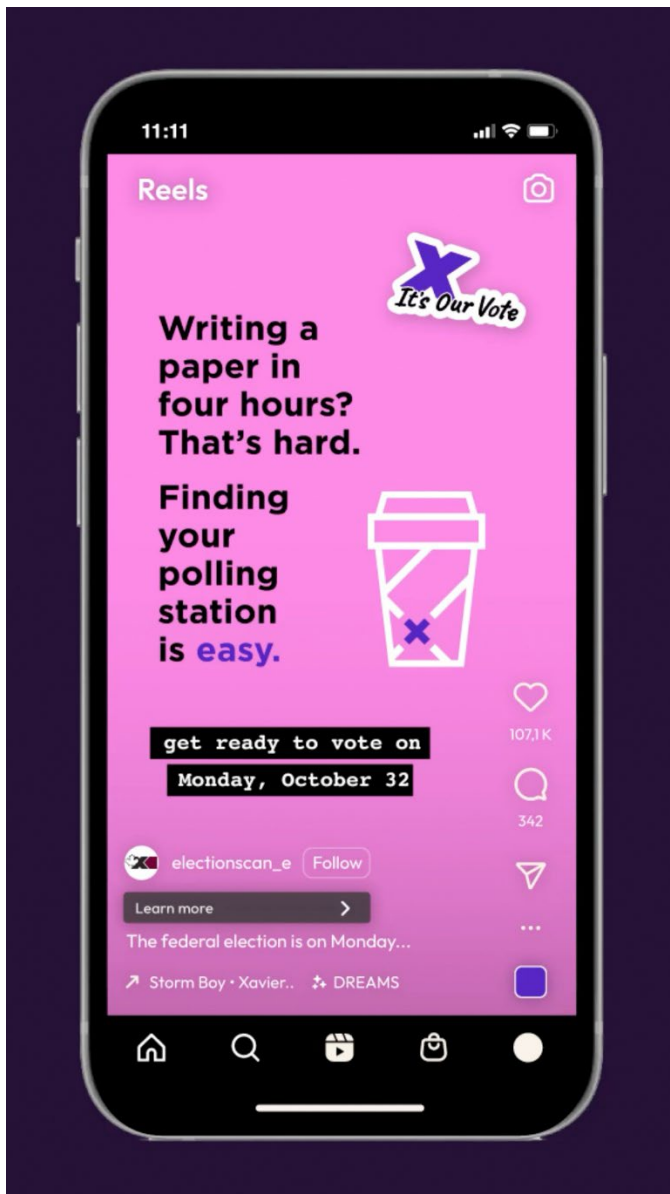
*"I found the banner too simple, which looks like a low budget ad. I guess it has to do with the way the couch is drawn. The couch is almost indistinguishable from the text because of the size, font, and colour. It's neither appealing nor eye-catching and it doesn't draw my attention to anything. It's also going by so quickly."*

*"I would notice the banner, but I wouldn't catch the message because the main message is after the whole couch skit. I would immediately ignore it and go on to whatever I'm looking at the website. I would never see the back part of the message."*

*"I wouldn't click on it. I think the text seems a little bit fast."*

*"I feel like there were too many words. It would be clearer to just [include] the election date."*

#### 4. Social media post



### Positive reactions

**Many found the comparison between writing a paper at the last minute and voting to be more relatable than the comparisons used in the other formats.**

For some participants, the idea that it is difficult to write a paper at the last minute was more relatable than the other ads from Concept A. A few participants liked the pink and thought the ad resembled an organic social media post that they might encounter on a platform like Instagram.

*“I find the little coffee cup and writing a paper in four hours relatable because who writes a paper in four hours? Students. Who drinks coffee? Students. Who’s going to vote? Quite a large demographics is going to be students.”*

*“[This ad] definitely [resembles] something you see on TikTok. I don’t mind the colour. It’s popping and might make you pause while scrolling for a second longer to read what it actually says. This is something different that you wouldn’t normally see in a government or election post.”*

### Negative reactions

**Some participants did not relate to the comparison and found that it did not apply to their own experiences. Moreover, many found the social ad to be amateurish and lacking in credibility.**

Several participants struggled to make the connection between writing a paper last minute and voting. Some found the connection unrelatable, because they did not think it was actually difficult to write a paper in a short period of time, or, conversely, they did not think it was possible to write a paper so quickly. Others could not relate to the experience or felt that voting is a task that takes more effort and should be treated more seriously.

*“What I do not particularly like about this ad is, I don’t see a correlation between writing a paper and finding a polling booth. I would have preferred maybe something like finding parking at university is hard.”*

*“I don’t find it relatable because I could never write a paper in four hours.”*

*“The comparison between rushing a paper in the last couple of hours and voting is demoralizing for me. Voting takes a long time and that’s not the issue I have with it.”*

From a design aspect, many participants found that this social media post looked amateurish and that it lacked credibility because it does not feel like official EC material. The coffee animation and font choices were mentioned often as contributors to this feeling. Some participants did not feel the coffee cup was the best choice of icon to illustrate the idea of writing a paper, and they suggested that using other elements, such as a laptop, might create a clearer association. Critical information, such as the election date and call to action, i.e. get ready to vote, were hard to read because of the font choice. Lastly, “it’s our vote” also seemed out of context for some participants, and some disliked the pink.

*“The social media post just looks amateurish, especially with the stickers and the highlighted text. It gives off the vibe of student clubs making their own ads.”*

*“The coffee cup doesn’t really seem to fit with the whole ad. I would have preferred a computer or a little laptop animation, because that connects writing the paper and finding your polling station.”*

*“I’m also not too sure what the relevance of the coffee cup is.”*

*“I would associate [the cup] with a Starbucks barista spelling out your name, which is hard. I think that would be catchier and even more relatable.”*

*“There’s a lot of text. I don’t like the lower case. I also don’t like the ‘get ready to vote’ [call to action].”*

## 5. Concept A: Overall impression

**The participants liked the concept of the comparisons more than the actual executions. The animations and bright colours are attention-grabbing for some but are also seen as lacking authenticity for trying too hard to be youthful for others.**

In general, the participants liked the concept of comparing a hard task to voting. However, they felt that the execution of the ads was not relatable. The humorous scenarios resonated with some youth, but often fell flat or need to be explained.

In general, urban youth tended to agree that voting is easy, but often felt that this point was self-evident and did not need to be explained to them in ads. Voting was seen as especially easy for Toronto participants due to the accessibility of polling stations, so this message was not as intriguing to them. The Prairies group did not see voting as something that is easy for everyone because of the longer travel distances often present for voters in rural ridings. Both finding and commuting to a polling station can be challenging and time-consuming, especially in more remote areas. In addition to accessing a polling station, those with more awareness of other voting barriers, i.e. students living away from home and voters who move constantly, did not always agree that voting is easy either.

*“[The comment about] it’s easy to find voting stations, I don’t think it really had rural areas in mind.”*

*“We do have lots of reserves where there usually isn’t a voting station, and the residents do have to come to town, so it is not easy for everyone. But I guess it is easy for those who live in a more populated area.”*

*“For me the ads are just very forgettable. I would see them in two seconds and skip and not think about them. I think maybe focusing on the fact that voting is easy is not very effective. But one thing that has stood out to me is that it’s our vote thing. I think if that was more of the focus point, it would not be as forgettable.”*

In terms of the visual aspects of the ads, the “x” element tying images in different formats together was usually unnoticed by participants, which broke the overall cohesiveness of Concept A.

*“Now that I’m seeing [Concept A ads] side by side, I [notice] and appreciate how the “x” is integrated into other things like the cat’s collar or in the middle of the couch as opposed to just being a Twitter ad.”*

*“I think all these ads are meant for people who don’t vote. So, the “x” on the couch [for instance], I feel like most people wouldn’t even notice if they never voted before. They might not make the connection that it’s like checking the box.”*

Regarding colour and design, some participants found the animations and bright colours to be attention-grabbing and appealing; but others felt that these elements were trying too hard to be youthful and lacked authenticity. Several participants were a bit cynical about the appeal to youth and believed that a topic like voting deserved a more serious tone.

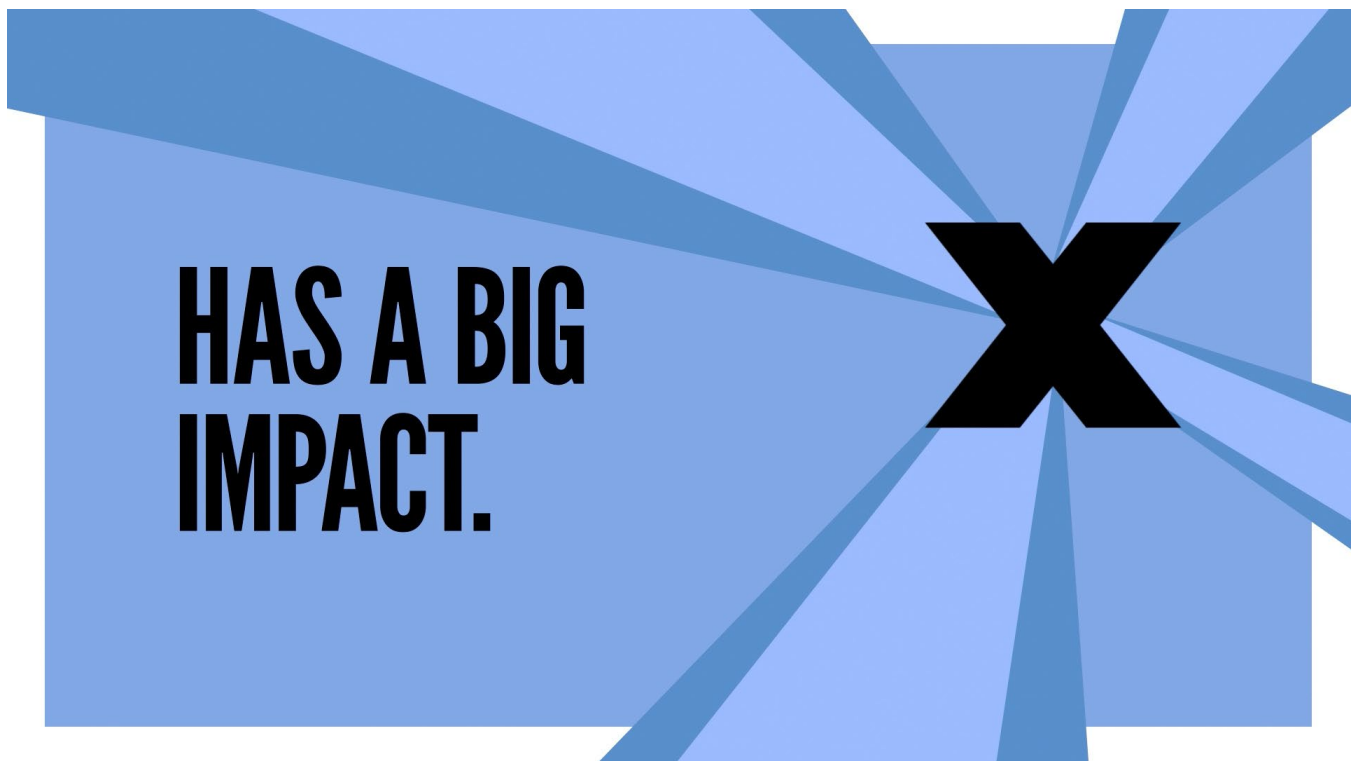
*“The ad is taking voting very lightly, and it's very obviously geared towards the younger voters... I don't have a firm opinion, but I wonder if voting should be made to look really easy... I think that maybe voting should be taken more seriously.”*

*“It feels like they're trying too hard [at grabbing my attention]. I don't need my attention pulled so just tell me what to do.”*

*“[The social media post] would be extremely unmemorable because the only ads I ever bothered to give a second of attention are the ones that are more official looking... Anything that looks like it's trying to market something such as this ad, I would immediately assume it's for retail or something that I don't care about.”*

## C. Reactions to Concept B, Every Small X Has a Huge Impact

### 1. Video



#### Positive reactions

**The participants often found the video motivating and informative. Many also liked the colour and the turning windmill effect.**

When asked about their initial reactions to the video ad, several participants said the main message was direct and motivating. They also praised the ad for conveying facts clearly, with text that was easy to read and understand. Overall, many participants thought the video was informative and effective.

*“This ad makes me feel more interested in getting to know what I can do to register for my vote and how to change my address. I like the concept, which is telling me that my vote matters and it can change the society.”*

*“I like [the message] in this one better because it tells me to just do it and I am important.”*

*“I think it got straight to the point. It tells people where to vote and it highlights the importance of the urgency to vote. Hence why they used the upbeat music. They also used a really good colour.”*

*“I think this one speaks more to me than [Concept A] because it talks about shaping the future as a young person. I think telling people their vote could make a difference is compelling or motivating.”*

From a design perspective, many said that the colour used in the video is appealing and still in keeping with the seriousness of the subject matter. Several participants even suggested using the video colour as a uniform colour scheme across all executions, to better tie Concept B together. Participants generally found the turning windmill effect in the video to be visually captivating.

### Neutral/Indifferent reactions

**The “x” did not immediately connect with voting for some, especially those who had never voted in a federal election before.**

The “x” as a symbol of voting was not readily understood by all participants. Some, particularly those without voting experience, did not understand what it signified. Some of the confusion was due to differences in voting procedures at different levels (i.e. federal, provincial, municipal): for example, some elections use scannable ballots where voters fill in a circle to cast their vote.

*“To someone who’s not familiar with voting, the ‘x’ might be a foreign concept. I don’t immediately relate that to voting.”*

*“I didn’t correlate initially the ‘x’ with voting because I’ve never voted before.”*

With these focus groups being held shortly after a major rebranding of the Twitter social media platform, now called “X,” many participants noted that the video ad reminded them of this.

*“If I hear the [slogan] ‘every x matters’ when I’m online, my first thought would be that every tweet matters.”*

### Negative reactions

**Some participants thought the text was a bit wordy and moved too quickly, and some did not like the fonts.**

The most common negative feedback about the video had to do with the text shown on screen. Some felt that the frame that says “... to register to vote or update your address” was just too wordy and quick for the message to sink in the first time they saw it. Some participants also criticized the font; with probing, this seemed to be a matter of personal preference from person to person.

*“I feel like it’s so quick. I didn’t get the message at first.”*

*“I think the last bit especially was pretty rushed with the amount of text. You can’t read every word. You just have to infer.”*

*“It took too long to communicate this. You could communicate the message much quicker, like within five seconds. Just say the election is on what day and go to the website for more information.”*

*“I don’t like the font they use. I think it is very basic like the fonts used in a PowerPoint.”*

## 2. Radio spot

### Positive reactions

**Many found the radio spot to be clear, direct, and informative.**

Like the video ad, most participants felt the audio messaging was clear, direct, and informative. Additionally, many found the tone to be appropriate for the subject matter because it treated the issue of voting seriously and in a direct way.

*“I like the audio because I got the message and everything’s at a good pace.”*

*“I think it speaks to the fact that there’s a responsibility I have coming up, and I should think about it. The ad guides me to where I can find more information. I think it’s very informative in that sense.”*

*“I definitely like the audio ad. They got to the point right away about the federal election, which is a lot more attention-grabbing to me. Immediately I know it’s something I’m interested in rather than some cutesy slogan.”*

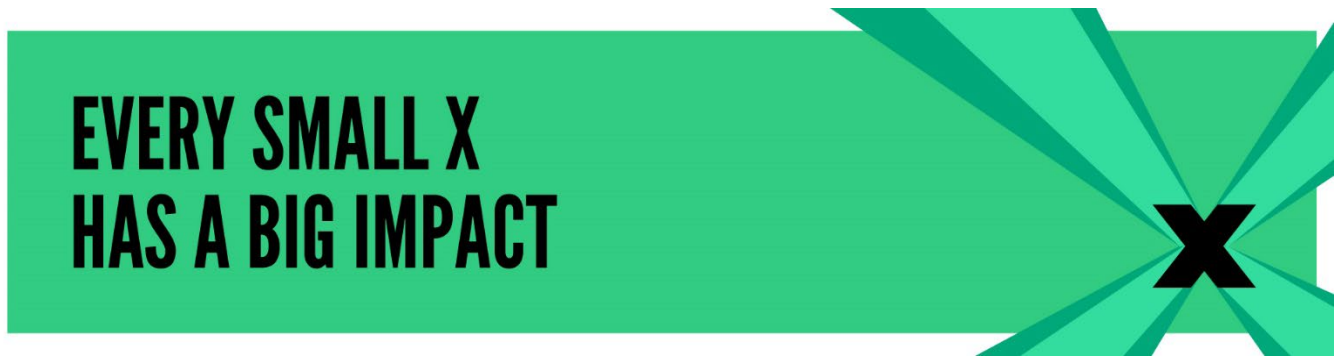
### Negative reactions

**Many participants found the phrase “all the official information” ambiguous. For some, it also implied a complicated registration process.**

The biggest issue that participants raised with the radio spot was in the way certain sentences were framed. The fourth sentence “Elections Canada has all the official information for voters” was noted by some to be long and a bit vague, leaving them with questions about what specific information was being referred to. Was it information about how to register to vote? How to find polling stations? Or about the political parties? These questions left some suggesting that the ad did not adequately prepare them to register or to vote. Likewise, “prepare to vote” felt daunting to some participants as they thought the phrase implied a complicated registration process.



### 3. Web banner



#### Positive reactions

The participants often found the design attention-grabbing and intriguing. The turning windmill and the bright green colour choice were captivating for some participants but disliked by others.

Many participants liked the design of the web banner ad for Concept B. Those who liked this execution found that the first frame quickly grabbed their attention and made them curious to find out what would come next. Participants often liked the transition effect of the turning windmill and said it was visually captivating, and somewhat unique as a design. The bright green was perceived by many participants to be a unique and eye-catching colour.

*"I like the little transitions [of the windmill] because I feel like if I'm on my laptop and doing something else, and then I see something that is flipping through, even if it's slightly fast, it's going to draw my attention."*

*"If I was in need of information, I would easily just watch the entire banner to find it out, like the website, phone number, and the registration [process]."*

*"I like how everything ties back to the "x" in the windmill effect because it kind of puts everything together, and it connects everything nicely. Although the windmill covered over some words and I didn't have time to fully read it before it came back again, that just encouraged me to watch it again."*

*"I like the green. I think it stands out."*

#### Negative reactions

While many liked the bright green colour, it was somewhat controversial as several others pointedly disliked it. Some participants found the last message to be a little too wordy.

In many groups, green was a controversial colour choice; some participants strongly disliked it, even as others found it to be quite appealing. Those who disliked the green in the banner ad generally felt it would be better to unify the colours across Concept B, preferring the same blue from the video ad.

From a messaging perspective, many participants found that some of the frames were wordy and hard to read through on a first pass, and making the ad move a bit more slowly might help them to absorb the information more readily.

Participants frequently noticed that the last message stayed on for two turns of the windmill and generally did not like this, because they expected a different text on the second turn, due to the pattern of the preceding text. Several suggested that it would be better to split the message up over two frames, solving both issues with one change.

*“The [bright green] immediately made my eyes sore. It made me want to look away.”*

*“It doesn’t look like it’s about elections. I want to take it more seriously but the [green and “x”] reminds me of [a pop music album cover].”*

*“I found it bit weird that the very last text box reappeared after the “x” swooped by. I was expecting a new text to appear, but it was the same as the previous one.”*

*“I thought it was kind of fast, but I like that at the end it stops, and you can see all the contact information on one.”*

#### 4. Social media post



#### Positive reactions

Participants generally found that the social media post for Concept B worked well because the main message and election date were stated clearly, and the windmill theme connected it to the other formats.

Participants felt that the social media post for Concept B effectively drew attention to the right places in proportion to their perceived importance, i.e. the main message was centred and undistracted, and the election date was clearly stated at the top. The participants often liked the windmill animation in the social ad, and appreciated the unity of this theme across the different executions in Concept B. Though they were directed to

wait until later to compare the ads across concepts, those who saw Concept B after Concept A were often tempted to point out that they thought it was better than the social media post for Concept A.

*“I like the animation. It’s attractive because it reminds me of Instagram stories or TikTok videos. That’s the first thing I’m going to notice. It’s going to attract me to want to read the prompt over there. It’s straight to the point too.”*

*“I think this is actually a pretty good ad that would make people stop and read. The lines would rotate around, and people would stop and then read whatever text is on there. In this case, the ad stresses the importance to a vote.”*

### Neutral/Indifferent reactions

**The use of pink was controversial because many participants found it to be inconsistent with the other Concept B ads and frequently associated it with breast cancer awareness campaigns.**

The biggest change recommended by the participants was the colour. Participants frequently felt that pink was not consistent with the other formats under Concept B or that it did not look like official EC communication. The colour, in combination with the graphic elements, reminded many participants of breast cancer awareness campaigns.

*“I don’t like the pink and I would like to have some consistency in colour between the web banner and social ad... If I ran into the social ad and have also seen the web banner, I might not even connect them.”*

*“The pink reminds me of breast cancer awareness posts.”*

*“The pink might catch my attention, but it doesn’t really tell me anything. I’m ok with most of the colour choices but I feel like they need to include the Elections Canada logo maybe on the top corner.”*

### Negative reactions

**Some participants had issues with the font choices, the “It’s our vote” icon, and the generally youthful tone of the post as a whole.**

Although participants generally appreciated that the election date was right at the top of the post, as with Concept A, some found the white-on-black font to be unprofessional or unpolished. Others noted that the sentence was too wordy. Some felt that “it’s our vote” was a better fit with Concept B, as it conveys a similar message to “your vote matters.” However, a few did not like how the slogan was positioned on the Concept B post, when compared to the positioning of the slogan on the Concept A social media post. When asked about the overall tone, participants often said the post did not look like official EC material, which means it could be mistaken as a post from a less legitimate source, and the information in it may not be taken seriously.

*“Having one font for the election date and a bigger font for [the main message] feels very weird.”*

*“If I’m just scrolling past the ad, I wouldn’t be able to tell it’s for Elections Canada because the ‘x’ and [‘it’s our vote’] are so small.”*

*“Having that white border [on ‘it’s our vote’] and that little moving sticker is very unnecessary. Obviously, it’s catering to the youth, but it really doesn’t need to be there.”*

*“I’ll just ignore it. The sticker in the bottom corner, the text at the top, and the way that the ‘x’ is moving together makes the ad look like a junior high project.”*

*“There’s a level of professionalism you expect from something supposed to be so important but it is just not being delivered in this [social media post].”*

## 5. Concept B: Overall impression

**Overall, Concept B received positive feedback across all groups because of its directness, cohesiveness, and appealing visuals.**

Considering Concept B as a whole, participants generally found it to be appealing because it was direct and cohesive, and conveyed a tone that was seen to be appropriate to the subject matter. The participants often felt that the directness of Concept B made it relevant for a broad audience, although they recognized that the ads were mainly aimed at young voters.

*“I think when it comes to official stuff, it doesn’t need to have a weird slogan. It can just say something like “your vote matters” and be straight and to the point. That’s a lot more generic for the whole population.”*

*“I pick Concept B because it’s simple and straight to the point.”*

*“I think Concept B is trying to reach the 100% of the population [by telling people] that you can vote, and something might change.”*

The “x” element in Concept B ads drew positive feedback in general. Many participants felt the movement in the different executions was effective at drawing attention to the text. They also found that the windmill motif tied the different formats together cohesively. However, not all youth recognized the significance of the “x” in the context of voting, and some related to other brands that use X prominently in their branding. For instance, one participant was concerned about people mistaking the “x” as the rebranding of Twitter and didn’t think they would recognize the ad as EC, even with voting experience.

*“The ‘x’ confuses me a bit and I think it would have been clearer if they say every ballot or vote matters. That’s more straightforward than trying to figure out what they’re talking about when they say ‘x.’ ”*

*“I feel like I’m going to see a concert or something like X Factor because it looks flashy and performative.”*

*“My main issue right now is just with the ‘x’ because it’s really ambiguous. Everyone gets reminded of different things when they see the ‘x’, like X Factor and Twitter. It doesn’t stand out.”*

The colours and fonts were usually seen to be appealing, while still conveying a respectful tone toward the subject matter of voting. Nonetheless, some participants specifically did not like the green colour and a few criticized the heavy fonts. Additionally, there was a consensus across groups that unifying the colours in the three visual ads would make them more recognizable across executions.

*“Change the colour. The bright green doesn’t scream professional.”*

*“The colours don’t seem cohesive at all.”*

*“I don't mind that they're different colours because they all have a cohesive theme. But I do think the colour could be worked on a bit. They don't connect very well.”*

## D. Overall findings across concepts

**While Concept B was the concept most preferred by participants, reactions to both were generally positive or neutral. Regardless of their preference, participants tended to see messages as more effective when they were direct with clear facts.**

After reviewing both concepts in detail, groups were guided to consider the two concepts side by side. Concept B was the more preferred concept, with a majority of participants in each group choosing it as the most effective over Concept A.

The participants tended to see the messages as more effective when they were direct with clear facts, such as the election date, information on how to register, where to vote, etc. This was one of the key reasons why Concept B was preferred over Concept A across the groups. In particular, reiterating the website was something that stuck out among the participants as an important detail.

*“Although I like the animations in Concept A more than Concept B, I think Concept B is better. It is direct. It tells me when the election is, what I need, my vote matters and I could do it.”*

*“I chose Concept B because it has that consistency of [conveying] one message – **your** vote has a big impact – compared to Concept A where it's having all these different messages.”*

*“I feel I'm more informed from Concept B. I see the website link more. I'm getting a little bit more of what I need to do next to find my polling station.”*

*“I personally chose Concept B despite disliking it quite a bit. I recognize that Concept A resonated a lot with me as part of a larger demographic, but I can see Concept B being a lot more effective and to the point compared to Concept A. Even though Concept A has a good execution, it didn't make me feel it was relevant to the election itself a lot of the time until I see all formats collectively.”*

*“Compared to Concept B, I feel [things] like where I can find information is better explained in Concept A, but Concept B is definitely more inspiring for me to go and do things.”*

*“I just like the audio of both concepts for being super direct. You know what you are listening to right away.”*

*“The only one that I liked how quickly it got to the point was the audio from Concept B. You can take that [aspect] and put it on all the formats. Put the date up front and just say that the election is coming up.”*

There was a consensus that both concepts could be improved by unifying elements across executions, like colour and imagery. The participants often understood without being told that EC needs to avoid colours associated with major parties, but many felt that some of the bright colours were too trendy and did not lend sufficient gravity for the subject matter of voting. A frequent suggestion in several groups was to bring back yellow or burgundy, which were familiar colours that participants often recalled from previous EC ads. Criticism of the colours was not unanimous, however; some participants were pleasantly surprised to see a more youthful look in these ads.

*“Implementing the solid colours from Concept A instead of the gradient colours used in Concept B would be better.”*

*“I would remember the colours and the change in style from [what we normally see in] a classic elections campaign to [what we are seeing today]. If I see something a bit more colourful in the future, I’ll think it may be a government ad and not necessarily something else to just skip online.”*

*“I wouldn’t associate these colours, [bright green and pink] with the elections. I would say that’s bad. If it was the burgundy that Elections Canada has maybe that would be more recognizable.”*

The issue of wordiness was mentioned repeatedly in response to the visual executions (i.e. video, Web, social media) for both concepts. Across groups, it was common for some individual participants to note that the text was hard to read when it moved by quickly and that some of the individual screens just had too many words on them. With the video and web banner ads from both concepts, participants often felt that they would need to see them multiple times to catch the information contained within, but this seemed at odds with the fleeting attention participants expected to give these sorts of ads in a real-life context.

In conclusion, though Concept B emerged as the preferred concept in the direct comparison, it is worth noting that reactions to both concepts were generally positive or neutral; negative reactions were largely limited to feedback about specific elements, with very few participants indicating deep negativity to either concept.

## Appendix A: Methodology

### 1. Introduction

A total of nine focus groups (eight in-person and one virtual) were conducted in October 2023, with young electors aged 18–24. Two in-person sessions were conducted from each of the following regions: Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, and Halifax, at dedicated focus group facilities. For Toronto, one group consisted entirely of participants who self-identified as white/of European descent and the other group comprised non-white/of non-European descent. In Montréal, focus groups were held in French with French-speaking participants to ensure representation from both official languages. EC translated both the recruitment screener and discussion guide into French for the Montréal focus groups.

The virtual group was conducted using the Zoom platform with participants living in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba; additionally, most of these participants were from rural communities. Conducting this group virtually allowed for the participation of youth who lived in remote areas.

To further represent the diversity of Canada’s young electors, Environics Research ensured that each group had a good mix of different genders, students/non-students, and those who voted/did not vote previously in a federal election. Additionally, in the event an elector had a disability that could prevent them from participating, participants were offered the option of doing individual interviews. However, none of the candidates screened met this criterion. Each in-person session consisted of 10–12 participants, while the virtual session had seven participants, and each group lasted about 90 minutes.

### 2. Recruitment

Environics Research worked with CRC Research Inc. to recruit the focus group participants. All recruiting was done by telephone by CRC Research’s professional team of experienced and trained qualitative research recruiters. In total, there were 104 (96 in-person and 8 virtual) participants recruited to take part in the 9 focus group sessions, 94 (87 in-person and 7 virtual) of whom attended. Participants of in-person groups were paid a \$135 honorarium, and participants of the online group were paid a \$120 honorarium to thank them for their commitment. People with experience working for EC or as an election officer in the September 20, 2021, federal election were excluded from the study.

### 3. Moderation, session details, and conduct

Stephanie Coulter, Senior Research Associate, Public Affairs, at Environics Research, moderated five English-language sessions (on October 3, 5 and 11). Derek Leebosh, Vice President, Public Affairs, at Environics Research, moderated two English-language sessions (October 10). Anouk Flambert moderated the two French sessions on October 4. Each focus group session was conducted according to a discussion guide developed in consultation with EC. The focus groups were semi-structured, and moderators included additional probes as needed during the discussions. Moderators shared notes and themes emerging from their respective sessions with one another



to ensure everyone remained equally up to date on the trends and procedures. The sessions were distributed as follows:

Location (Language of groups)	Dates	Time
Toronto, ON (English)	Tuesday, October 3	5:30 p.m. EST – Group #1 7:30 p.m. EST – Group #2
Montréal, QC (French)	Wednesday, October 4	5:30 p.m. EST – Group #1 7:30 p.m. EST – Group #2
Vancouver, BC (English)	Thursday, October 5	5:30 p.m. PST – Group #1 7:30 pm PST – Group #2
Halifax, NS (English)	Tuesday, October 10	5:30 p.m. AST – Group #1 7:30 p.m. AST – Group #2
Rural AB/SK/MB, online (English)	Wednesday, October 11	7:30 p.m. EST – Group #1

In the focus groups, participants were shown two concepts: A (voting is easy) and B (every small X has a huge impact). These two concepts were being tested for future advertising that is designed to inform young Canadians about where, when and the ways they can register and vote in the next federal election. The objective was to gather feedback on the concepts to determine their efficacy and suitability for the intended audience (electors aged 18–24).

Video ads for each concept were shown to gather initial impressions on the main message. All formats, i.e. video, radio spot, web banner and social media posts were then presented to gather feedback on the target audience, tone, message clarity, interest level, likes and dislikes and format-specific design elements and actions (click, share, etc.). The participants were then asked to assess and compare the effectiveness of the concepts at informing young Canadians about voting.

Throughout the discussions, the participants' broad perceptions on voting-related issues—such as eligibility, likelihood of voting, perceived challenges and preferences for voting on election day vs. advance polls—were also discussed. Near the end of each session, the participants discussed ways that youth engage with media and information overall. The focus groups were concluded with final comments on reaching and engaging youth about voting.

Focus groups allowed a group of diverse young Canadian electors to openly share their perceptions and opinions about the campaign with one another in a semi-structured conversational style setting. The natural flow of information and ideas helped us to better verify that the proposed campaign concepts meet communications objectives, resonate with young electors, are clear and engaging and meet electors' information needs.

All research work was conducted in accordance with professional standards and applicable government legislation (e.g. PIPEDA). All groups were video- and audio-recorded for subsequent analysis by the research team. During the recruitment process and in the introductory portion of each session, participants provided consent to such recording and were given assurances of anonymity. Industry and Government of Canada standards for qualitative research were followed.

**Statement of limitations:** Qualitative research provides insight into the range of opinions held within a population rather than the weights of the opinions held as measured in a quantitative study. The results of this type of research should be viewed as indicative rather than projectable to the population.

## Appendix B: Research instruments

August 9, 2023

**Environics Research Group Limited**  
**Youth Focus Groups – Voter Information Campaign GE45**  
**Elections Canada**  
**PN 11894**  
**Recruitment for Group Discussions**

Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home #: \_\_\_\_\_

Business #: \_\_\_\_\_

Group #: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter: \_\_\_\_\_

### In-Person Groups October 3–10, 2023

<p><b>GROUP 1 (English)</b></p> <p>Toronto, ON</p> <p>Youth aged 18–24, NOT visible minority, living in Ontario and eligible to vote in a federal election</p> <p>Tuesday, October 3</p> <p>5:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p><b>GROUP 3 (French)</b></p> <p>Montréal, QC</p> <p>Youth aged 18–24, living in Quebec and eligible to vote in a federal election</p> <p>Wednesday, October 4</p> <p>5:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p><b>GROUP 5 (English)</b></p> <p>Vancouver, BC</p> <p>Youth aged 18–24, living in Western Canada and eligible to vote in a federal election</p> <p>Thursday, October 5</p> <p>5:30 p.m. PST</p>	<p><b>GROUP 7 (English)</b></p> <p>Halifax, NS</p> <p>Youth aged 18–24, living in Atlantic Canada and eligible to vote in a federal election</p> <p>Tuesday, October 10</p> <p>5:30 p.m. AST</p>
<p><b>GROUP 2 (English)</b></p> <p>Toronto, ON</p> <p>Youth aged 18–24, identifies as visible minority, living in Ontario and eligible to vote in a federal election</p> <p>Tuesday, October 3</p> <p>7:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p><b>GROUP 4 (French)</b></p> <p>Montréal, QC</p> <p>Youth aged 18–24, living in Quebec and eligible to vote in an election</p> <p>Wednesday, October 4</p> <p>7:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p><b>GROUP 6 (English)</b></p> <p>Vancouver, BC</p> <p>Youth aged 18–24, living in Western Canada and eligible to vote in a federal election</p> <p>Thursday, October 5</p> <p>7:30 p.m. PST</p>	<p><b>GROUP 8 (English)</b></p> <p>Halifax, NS</p> <p>Youth aged 18–24, living in Atlantic Canada and eligible to vote in a federal election</p> <p>Tuesday, October 10</p> <p>7:30 p.m. AST</p>

Online Group October 11, 2023

**GROUP 9 (English)**

Online (Zoom)

Youth aged 18–24, living in rural AB/SK/MB and eligible to vote in a federal election

Wednesday, October 11

5:30 p.m. MST

**1. GENERAL RECRUITMENT NOTES:**

Six (6) in-person groups in English – two (2) in each of Atlantic Canada (Halifax, NS); Ontario (Toronto); Western Canada (Vancouver, BC), and two (2) in-person groups in Quebec (Montréal).

One (1) online (Zoom) group in English in rural Alberta/Saskatchewan/Manitoba.

Up to five (5) one-on-one in-depth interviews (IDIs) to be conducted online (via Zoom) with participants who qualify for the study and are official language minorities and/or have disabilities preventing them from being able to fully participate in a focus group. Note that everyone recruited for an IDI will be “subtracted” from the group they would have otherwise participated in. For example, if an individual interview is arranged for a potential participant located in Ontario, then only 11 participants will be recruited for the Ontario group, instead of 12.

All must be aged 18–24 and Canadian citizens, making them currently eligible to vote in a Canadian federal election, including those who were eligible to vote in a previous election and those who have since become eligible.

Need representation of the diversity of Canada’s youth, with:

- Mix of gender
- Mix of urban/rural residents
- Mix of identities, including those who identify as Indigenous, immigrants and visible minorities
- Mix of students and non-students
- French and English speakers (with each focus group being unilingual)
- Incentive: \$135 per in-person participant, \$120 per online participant
- Twelve (12) recruited per in-person group, eight (8) recruited per online group (if IDI participants are recruited, subtract from group totals where applicable)
- Group discussions will last up to 90 minutes

## 2. INTRODUCTION:

Hello/Bonjour, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ from Environics Research. We are calling today to invite participants to attend an (CHOOSE) \*in-person OR online\* focus group discussion we are conducting on behalf of Elections Canada about the voter information campaign for the next federal election. The session will last a maximum of 90 minutes and you will receive a cash gift as a thank you for attending the session. Would you like to continue this discussion in English or French? / Voulez-vous continuer cette conversation en français ou en anglais?

**[NB: Anglophones from Quebec and Francophones from outside Quebec may be offered an IDI to a maximum of five IDIs.]**

This study is a research project, not an attempt to sell or market anything. Your participation in the research is completely voluntary and confidential. Any personal information collected is subject to the federal *Privacy Act* and will be held in strict confidence. All information collected, used and/or disclosed will be made anonymous and used for research purposes only. May I have your permission to ask you or someone else in your household some further questions to see if you/they fit in our study? This will take about five minutes.

NB: If a participant asks for information about Elections Canada, you can say: Elections Canada, headed by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, an agent of Parliament, is an independent, non-partisan agency with unique organizational features that reports directly to Parliament. Elections Canada exercises general direction and supervision over the conduct of elections and referendums at the federal level.

NB: If a participant asks for information on the voter information campaign, you can say: Elections Canada's Voter Information Campaign is a multi-media communications and information campaign implemented during a federal election to provide Canadian electors with key information on when, where and ways to register and vote. The campaign includes direct mail products, an advertising campaign, national and local outreach campaigns, a dedicated general election website, social media posts, media relations and a public enquiries service.

NB: If a participant asks for information on the research company conducting the research they can be told: Environics Research is located at 366 Adelaide Street West, Suite 101, Toronto, Ontario, and can be reached at 416-920-9010.

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

## 3. AGE AND CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS:

AGE

1. We have been asked to speak to participants in a particular age range. So that we may do this accurately, may I have your exact age please? \_\_\_\_\_. WRITE IN

Under 18 1 - ASK Q4

18–24 years of age 2 - RECRUIT FOR GROUP

25 years or more 3 - ASK Q4

2. IF UNDER 18 OR OVER 25 YEARS OR MORE: Is there someone else in the household who is aged between 18 and 24 years of age?

Yes 1 – ASK TO SPEAK WITH THEM; GO BACK TO INTRODUCTION

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE: TERMINATION MESSAGE 1

[TERMINATION MESSAGE 1]: Thank you for your interest. In order to participate you must be between 18 and 24 years of age.

#### CITIZENSHIP

3. Are you a Canadian citizen?

Yes 1 CONTINUE

No 2 THANK AND TERMINATE

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

4. Are you or is any member of your household or your immediate family employed in:

	No	Yes
A market research, communications or public relations firm, or an advertising agency	___	___
Media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines, etc.)	___	___
A federal or provincial government department or agency	___	___
A political party	___	___

Yes TO ANY OF THE ABOVE 1 – THANK AND TERMINATE

No 2 – CONTINUE

5. Did you work for Elections Canada at a polling station during the federal election held on September 20, 2021?

Yes 1 - THANK AND TERMINATE

No 2 - CONTINUE

#### 4. DEMOGRAPHICS/CHARACTERISTICS:

##### GENDER [RECRUIT 50/50 SPLIT]

6. Could you please provide your gender?

##### DO NOT READ THESE OPTIONS

Male 1

Female 2

Other 3

##### VOTED-NOT VOTED [RECRUIT MIX]

7. Have you ever voted in a Canadian federal election?

Yes 1

No/Don't know 2

8. Are you First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?

First Nations 1

Métis 2  
 Inuit 3  
 No 4

#### ETHNICITY/BACKGROUND

9. SKIP IF INDIGENOUS: What is your ethnic background?

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- **[NOTES ABOUT GROUP COMPOSITION: For Vancouver: Recruit at least three who are non-white/of non-European descent (e.g. South Asian, Chinese, Black, etc.) OR who are Indigenous (First Nations, Inuk or Métis).**
- **For Toronto, recruit 7:30 p.m. group entirely non-white or Indigenous (i.e. as described above) and 5:30 p.m. group white/European descent.**
- **For online group, recruit two non-white or Indigenous as above.]**

PROVINCE – Recruit participants close to the focus group’s location for in-person groups (i.e. Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, Halifax). For online group, recruit from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

10. Please tell me where you live. I am looking for the community or city name and the province.

---

**[NOTE ABOUT GROUP COMPOSITION: For Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, aim for 7 to 9 recruited participants that live in a rural area.]**

11. FOR AB/SK/MB ONLY] Would you describe the area in which you live as urban, suburban or rural?

Urban 1  
 Suburban 2  
 Rural 3

#### LANGUAGE

12. What language do you speak most often at home? If not English or French, are you comfortable in speaking English or French?

---

**[NOTE: If the participant speaks English for the Montréal group or French for the other groups, ask if they feel comfortable participating in the other language. If not, continue the questions and offer them an individual interview. See IDI screening at bottom of screener. Note there is an upper limit of 5 IDIs for those who cannot participate due to language minority, disability, or impairment.]**

#### STUDENT/NON-STUDENT [RECRUIT MIX]

13. Are you currently attending secondary or post-secondary studies full-time or part-time?

Yes 1  
 No 2

#### 5. PAST FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION:

##### NATURE OF FOCUS GROUPS

14. Have you ever participated in a focus group or a one-to-one discussion for which you have received a sum of money?

Yes 1 MAXIMUM 4 PER GROUP

No 2 ---> [SKIP TO Q17]

**IF YES IN Q14, ASK:**

15. When did you last participate in one of these discussions?

\_\_\_\_\_  
[IF IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS, THANK AND TERMINATE]

16. How many focus groups or one-to-one discussions have you participated in during the past 5 years?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SPECIFY)

[IF 5 OR MORE, THANK AND TERMINATE]

## 6. ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE:

17. Participants in group discussions are asked to voice their opinions and thoughts. How comfortable are you in voicing your opinions in English/French in front of other people? Are you... (read list)

Very comfortable 1 - MIN 4 PER GROUP

Fairly comfortable 2

Not very comfortable 3 - THANK AND TERMINATE

Very uncomfortable 4 - THANK AND TERMINATE

- 18.

**For in person groups:** The in-person focus groups will require visiting at an in-person focus group facility, participating in a group discussion with 10 to 12 people, viewing and listening to materials on a screen, and possibly writing responses on a piece of paper. The facilities are all equipped with wheelchair accessible entrances, elevators and washrooms. Participants may bring their own devices to type if they are unable to write on paper due to a disability or impairment. With this in mind, do you have any disability or impairment that would prevent you from being able to fully participate in an in-person focus group setting? **For online group:** Participants in the online group will be asked to participate in group discussions using a video-conferencing platform. Discussions will take place both orally and using the chat function. They will also be asked to listen to and view materials on their screens. Do you have any disability or impairment that would prevent you from being able to participate in an online focus group setting?

**IF condition for individual interview in Q12 is met, proceed to screener for IDIs.**

Yes 1 – CONSIDER FOR AN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – SEE SCREENING FOR IDIS AT END OF SCREENER

No 2 – SKIP TO GROUP INVITATION (OR Q19)



**7. IN-PERSON GROUPS ONLY:**

I would like to invite you to attend the focus group session on \_\_\_\_\_ (TIME, DATE) at \_\_\_\_\_ (LOCATION) where you will exchange your opinions in a moderated discussion with other people from your community. The session will last 90 minutes in total and you will receive \$135 to thank you for your participation.

19. The session will be recorded and observed but your participation will be confidential. Do you consent to take part in the focus group? By agreeing to participate you are giving your consent to these procedures. You will be asked to sign a release to this effect when you arrive at the session.

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

20. We will contact you again before the date of the session to confirm your attendance. Do you consent to this?

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

21. Please bring along some form of identification as you will be asked to show it. Only you may attend, you cannot send a substitute. The session is 90 minutes in length, but we are asking that all participants arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time of the session. Are you able to be at the research facility 15 minutes prior to the session time?

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

**ONLINE GROUP ONLY:**

22. I would like to invite you to attend the focus group session where you will exchange your opinions in a moderated discussion with other people from your community. The group will take place on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. People who attend will receive \$120 to thank them for their time. Would you be willing to participate?

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

23. The focus group will require participants to go online using a desktop or laptop computer. You will need Internet access in a private and quiet location to take part in the study. You will have the option of using your computer's microphone and speaker, or you will be able to call in with a phone number while using your computer. We cannot provide this technology for you. Will you be able to access the Internet for a 90-minute discussion using a desktop or laptop computer?

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

NOTE: PARTICIPANTS CANNOT USE A TABLET OR MOBILE PHONE FOR THIS TASK.

24. Are you able to use a high-speed Internet connection and a working speaker on your computer to take part in the session? We require this because you will be asked to look at advertising, including photos, audio and video, that is shared through a website.

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

25. The session is 90 minutes in length. We are asking participants to log in and join the conference call (via Zoom) 10 minutes prior to the start time of the session. Are you able to do this 10 minutes prior to the session?

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

26. The session will be recorded and some other members of the research team may also listen in on the session, but your participation will be anonymous. Do you consent to this?

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

27. We will contact you again before the date of the session to confirm your attendance. Note that this invitation is to you personally, and you cannot have anyone else substitute for you. Do you consent to this?

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

28. Could you please provide me with your email address so I can send you login details for the Zoom session?

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RE-READ THE FULL ADDRESS BACK TO CONFIRM CORRECT SPELLING.

[NB: We will send the links to you early next week]

### **BOTH ONLINE/IN-PERSON GROUPS**

INTERVIEWERS: This is a small group and anyone who does not show or cancels at the last minute will compromise the project. Your opinions are valuable and we are serious about finding out what you have to offer.

NOTE: YOU WILL RECEIVE A CONFIRMATION CALL THE DAY PRIOR TO THE SESSION. IF FOR SOME REASON YOU HAVE NOT HEARD FROM US YOU SHOULD CONTACT US AT \_\_\_\_\_. IF YOUR NAME IS NOT ON THE ATTENDANCE FORM YOU WILL NOT BE ADMITTED TO THE GROUP.

### **8. SCREENING FOR IDIs:**

*[NB, DO NOT READ: A maximum of 5 IDIs may be offered for members of official language minorities or persons with disabilities for whom focus group participation is not possible. Where IDI participants are scheduled, relevant group size will be adjusted accordingly.]*

[IF YES TO DISABILITY OR IMPAIRMENT] Environics Research is offering online individual interviews to those who qualify to participate in this study but who cannot participate in a focus group setting. The interview will be conducted with an experienced facilitator from Environics Research, and it will be confidential. After you complete the interview you will be paid \$120 to thank you for your time. Are you willing to participate in an interview?

Yes 1 – CONTINUE

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

29. Do you have a vision, hearing or speech impairment that may prevent you from being able to participate in an online interview?

Yes, Visual 1 – ASK Q30

Yes, Auditory/Speech 2 – ASK Q31

No 3 – INVITE TO INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

IF PARTICIPANT HAS A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN Q29

30. Do you have software installed on your computer that allows you to read and/or process visual materials provided on the screen?

Yes 1 – INVITE TO INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW Q33

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

IF PARTICIPANT HAS A HEARING/SPEECH IMPAIRMENT IN Q29

31. Do you have an assistive device or technology that allows you to take part in a discussion over the telephone or Internet?

Yes 1 – INVITE TO INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW Q32

No 2 – THANK AND TERMINATE

32. Could you please provide me with your email address so someone from Environics Research can contact you to schedule an interview at a time that is convenient for you? They will only contact you about this project.

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RE-READ THE FULL ADDRESS BACK TO CONFIRM CORRECT SPELLING.

[NB: We will send the links to you early next week.]

## Elections Canada GE45 Voter Information Campaign (18–24 years) In-Person Focus Group Discussion Guide

### Introduction to Procedures (five minutes)

Welcome to the focus group. My name is [...]. I work for Environics, a public opinion research company. We are conducting this research on behalf of Elections Canada, the independent, non-partisan government agency that supervises the conduct of elections at the federal level. This research is about a voter information campaign for the next federal election, which will take place no later than October 2025.

- If asked about the election date: By law, the next federal general election must be held by October 20, 2025, but it could be held on any earlier date.

We want to hear your opinions. Not what you think other people think, but what you think!

Feel free to agree or disagree. Even if you are just one person here who holds a certain point of view, you could represent thousands of people who feel the same way as you do.

I am here to moderate the discussion and to make sure everyone's opinions are heard. I am not an Elections Canada employee, and I did not create the ad concepts you will be seeing today. I want to make sure you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts openly and honestly.

You don't have to direct all your comments to me; you can exchange your ideas and point of view with each other too. Please be respectful while doing so. One more note about this: we will not be asking you to disclose who you have voted for in the past or may vote for in the future. This group is about the process of voting, not the political parties or candidates running in an election.

There are some people from Elections Canada observing the session.

- If asked why: to oversee the research and see your reactions first-hand.

We are also recording this session to help me write my report. The recording will only be used internally to analyze the research and will not be released or shared with anyone else. I may take some notes during the group to remind myself of things. Anything you say here will remain anonymous and any comments you make will not be linked to you by name in any reporting we do on this project.

It's important for you to be present and engaged in the conversation for the next 90 minutes or so. To prevent distractions, please turn off your cell phones.

Let's go around and introduce ourselves. Please tell us your first name and a bit about yourself, such as where you live, who lives with you, and what you do.

### Concept testing (50 minutes/25 minutes per concept, i.e. 5 minutes per product + 5 minutes for concept overall)

[DON'T READ OUT TO GROUP] Concept A: Voting is easy

- Product 1: 15-second video (pre-roll YouTube ad)
- Product 2: 30-second radio spot
- Product 3: Animate web banner
- Product 4: Static social media post OR Instagram Reel (tbc shortly)

[DON'T READ OUT TO GROUP] Concept B: Every small X has a huge impact

- Product 1: 15-second video (pre-roll YouTube ad)
- Product 2: 30-second radio spot
- Product 3: Animated web banner
- Product 4: Static image social media post OR Instagram reel (tbc shortly)

We are going to begin by looking at two ideas, or “concepts,” for future advertising that is designed to inform young Canadians about where, when, and the ways they can vote in the next federal election.

We ask that you do not share or discuss this content outside of today’s discussion.

There are different ways of presenting advertisements—in videos or images, on the radio, on social media or the Internet—we are going to be looking at ads in different formats for each concept.

I want to stress that all ads you see are in development, so you may notice some details that seem unpolished. The purpose of today’s group is to gather your feedback on the concepts for the ads to help determine which ideas will become the finished ads that are shared with the public.

You will note that the date you see in the ads is October 32. This is meant to be a placeholder.

I am going to show you the first concept and then ask you some questions about it.

*Moderator note: Show concept A, ask the questions; then show concept B and ask the questions. Rotate concepts from session to session.*

*Provide each participant with a sheet of paper to jot down their initial impressions.*

**Initial Impressions of Concept****Product 1: Video Ad**

On your sheet of paper, I’d like you to jot down some quick responses to a couple of questions:

- How did this ad make you feel?
- What is the main message of this ad?

I will now replay the ad and ask you some more detailed questions about it.

**Replay video.****Detailed Impressions of ad(s)**

- Who do you think these ads are aimed at?
- Do you see yourself and your peers reflected in this ad? If not, who do you see?
- Was there any specific image or message that caught your attention?
- Did the ad hold your interest? Is it memorable? Why/Why not?
- Is anything unclear or confusing? If so, what?
- What do you think about the visuals/colours in this ad?
- If not already mentioned: What do you think about the (sound/narration/other design aspects)?
- What do you like most about this ad? What do you like the least? Why?

Now I will present you with (another ad/some ads) that are part of the same concept but in a different format.

**Product 2: Radio Spot**

Next I'm going to play an audio ad that you might hear on the radio. Remember that this is a concept, so the final ad would use a real voice actor and would sound more finished.

*Note: Moderator to play radio ad.*

- Was there any specific element that caught your attention?
- Did the ad hold your interest? Is it memorable? Why/Why not?
- Is anything unclear or confusing? If so, what?
- If not already mentioned: What do you think about the (sound/narration/other design aspects)?
- What do you like most about this ad? What do you like the least? Why?
- If you heard this ad on the radio, would you do anything? If yes, what would you do?

### **Product 3: Web banner ad**

*Note: Moderator to show web banner ad on screen for duration of discussion about the ad.*

This is a web banner ad that you might see while browsing the Internet.

- Did the ad hold your interest? Is it memorable? Why/Why not?
- Is anything unclear or confusing? If so, what?
- What do you think about the visuals/colours in this ad?
- What do you like most about this ad? What do you like the least? Why?
- If you saw this ad while browsing the Internet, would you click on it? Why/Why not?

### **Product 4: Social media post**

*Note: Moderator to show social media post on-screen. For multiple images, scroll through and then share summary slide.*

This is a social ad that you might see online.

- Was there any specific image or message that caught your attention?
- Did the ad hold your interest? Is it memorable? Why/Why not?
- Is anything unclear or confusing? If so, what?
- What do you think about the visuals/colours in this ad?
- What do you like most about this ad? What do you like the least? Why?
- If you saw this ad on social media, would you take time to look at it? Would you share it? Why/Why not?

### **Concept wrap-up**

*Moderator to present summary slide of concept elements/products.*

Impressions of concept/general reactions

- Thinking about the four ads we just went through, what are your overall impressions of this concept?
- How would you describe the “tone” of these ads? Can you elaborate on why you think so?
  - [IF NOT RAISED BY PARTICIPANTS] Probe: If you saw or heard any of these ads, would you think they were official Elections Canada ads? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about the message that these ads are communicating?
  - Do you care about this?
  - Do you think it's important?
- Do these ads resonate with you? Are they memorable?

## Effectiveness/Call to action

- What do you think about how much information was in these ads? (e.g. a good amount, too much, not enough?)
- Do these ads work well together? Was there an ad you liked the best or the least?
- Do you think the information in these ads is useful for you?
  - What did you learn from these ads?
  - Was anything unclear?
  - Is there any information that you think is missing?
- What, if anything, would you do if you came across these ads?
  - Potential probe: Do they make you want to:
    - Get informed about the election?
    - Make sure you are registered to vote?
    - Vote in the federal election?
    - Talk about voting with people you know?
- Is there something you would change to make these ads better for you?
  - More engaging?
  - More useful?
  - Help you want to get informed about voting?

Now we will move on to the second concept.

***Moderator will loop back to testing initial and detailed impressions of Concept B in the same manner as Concept A, then proceed to concept comparison.***

**Concept comparison (10 minutes)**

Now that we have reviewed both concepts, I would like you to help us decide which of the two concepts does a better job of informing young Canadians about voting.

*Moderator to present concepts again/together as needed.*

- The main purpose of these ads is to give people the information they need to register and vote in a federal election. For you personally, which one of these ads is most effective at communicating this information? Why?
- Of the two concepts, which one do you prefer? Why?
- Are there things you like in one ad/concept that could be added to the other to make it better? Which specific elements would you put together?
- When you go home tonight, what are you going to remember most about these ads?

**Discussion questions (as time permits)****Attitudes toward voting and perceptions of the voting process (10–13 minutes)**

I would like to turn now to discussing your perceptions about the process of voting in a federal election.

Reminder: We are not going to discuss who you might choose to vote for or your opinions of specific parties or politicians. Please don't state your voting intention or ask others about theirs.

- First, were any of you eligible to vote in the last federal election, or were you not eligible yet?

- If asked: The last federal election was in September 2021. You had to be 18 or older to be eligible to vote.
- If any were eligible: Many people don't or can't vote for a variety of reasons. Did you vote in the last federal election?
- If eligible but did not vote: Is there any reason why you didn't vote—if so, could you share what this was?
- Do you have any thoughts or feelings about being eligible to vote in the next federal election?
  - Potential probes:
    - Are you excited to vote? Uninterested, unsure?
    - Do you think it is important for you to go vote? Why or why not?
    - Is it likely or unlikely that you will vote in the next election? Why or why not?
    - Are you registered to vote? If not, why not?
- Do you think that voting will be somewhat difficult or somewhat easy for you?
- What about voting do you think might be difficult? What would be easy?
  - e.g. getting to the voting place, knowing what to do, finding information about voting, deciding who to vote for, finding the time, having proof of identity and address, accessibility of the voting place/process
- In addition to voting at a polling place on election day, there are ways to vote early in the weeks before, such as at advance polls or at an Elections Canada Office. If you do vote, do you think you would want to vote early? Or would you prefer to wait until election day? Why?

### Reaching youth (5–7 minutes max)

To finish off, I would like to discuss how you engage with media and information.

- What media platforms or apps do you spend most of your time on? (e.g. social media, television, streaming services, websites)
- What kinds of ads do you see on them? (e.g. format, subject, audience)
- What do you think is the ideal format/length for an ad?
- What makes you pay attention to an ad, instead of skipping it?
- What sources, if any, do you get information about news and current events from?
- Which platforms do you think have the most trustworthy information? Which platforms are the least trustworthy?

### Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Finally, what advice, if any, would you have for Elections Canada on how to reach and engage young Canadians so they are informed about registering and voting in a federal election?

Does anyone have any final thoughts on what we saw and talked about tonight?

This concludes the discussion group. Thank you for your participation.



## Elections Canada GE45 Voter Information Campaign (18–24 years) Virtual Focus Group Discussion Guide

### Introduction to procedures (5 minutes)

Welcome to the focus group. My name is [...]. I work for Environics, a public opinion research company. We are conducting this research on behalf of Elections Canada, the independent, non-partisan government agency that supervises the conduct of elections at the federal level. This research is about a voter information campaign for the next federal election, which will take place no later than October 2025.

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Feel free to agree or disagree. Even if you are just one person here who holds a certain point of view, you could represent thousands of people who feel the same way as you do.

I am here to moderate the discussion and to make sure everyone's opinions are heard. I am not an Elections Canada employee, and I did not create the ad concepts you will be seeing today. I want to make sure you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts openly and honestly.

You don't have to direct all your comments to me; you can exchange your ideas and point of view with each other too. Please be respectful while doing so. One more note about this: we will not be asking you to disclose who you have voted for in the past or may vote for in the future. This group is about the process of voting, not the political parties or candidates running in an election.

There are some people from Elections Canada observing the session.

- If asked why: to oversee the research and see your reactions first-hand.

### **HIT RECORD BUTTON NOW**

We are also recording this session to help me write my report. The recording will only be used internally to analyze the research and will not be released or shared with anyone else. I may take some notes during the group to remind myself of things. Anything you say here will remain anonymous and any comments you make will not be linked to you by name in any reporting we do on this project.

It's important for you to be present and engaged in the conversation for the next 90 minutes or so. To prevent distractions, please turn off your cell phones.

Let's go around and introduce ourselves. Please tell us your first name and a bit about yourself, such as where you live, who lives with you, and what you do.

### **Concept testing (50 minutes/25 minutes per concept, i.e. 5 minutes per product + 5 minutes for concept overall)**

[DON'T READ OUT TO GROUP] Concept A: Voting is easy

- Product 1: 15-second video (pre-roll YouTube ad)
- Product 2: 30-second radio spot

- Product 3: Animate web banner
- Product 4: Static social media post OR Instagram reel (tbc shortly)

[DON'T READ OUT TO GROUP] Concept B: Every small X has a huge impact

- Product 1: 15-second video (pre-roll YouTube ad)
- Product 2: 30-second radio spot
- Product 3: Animated web banner
- Product 4: Static image Social media post OR Instagram Reel (tbc shortly)

We are going to begin by looking at two ideas, or “concepts,” for future advertising that is designed to inform young Canadians about where, when, and the ways they can vote in the next federal election.

We ask that you do not share or discuss this content outside of today’s discussion.

There are different ways of presenting advertisements—in videos or images, on the radio, on social media or the Internet—we are going to be looking at ads in different formats for each concept.

I want to stress that all ads you see are in development, so you may notice some details that seem unpolished. The purpose of today’s group is to gather your feedback on the concepts for the ad to help determine which ideas will become the finished ads that are shared with the public.

You will note that the date you see in the ads is October 32. This is meant to be a placeholder.

I am going to show you the first concept and then ask you some questions about it.

*Moderator note: Show concept A, ask the questions; then show concept B and ask the questions. Rotate concepts from session to session.*

*Provide each participant with a sheet of paper to jot down their initial impressions.*

### **Initial impressions of concept**

#### **Product 1: Video ad**

In the chat window, I’d like you to jot down some quick responses to a couple of questions:

- How did this ad make you feel?
- What is the main message of this ad?

I will now replay the ad and ask you some more detailed questions about it.

#### **Replay video.**

#### **Detailed impressions of ad(s)**

- Who do you think these ads are aimed at?
- Do you see yourself and your peers reflected in this ad? If not, who do you see?
- Was there any specific image or message that caught your attention?
- Did the ad hold your interest? Is it memorable? Why/Why not?
- Is anything unclear or confusing? If so, what?
- What do you think about the visuals/colours in this ad?
- If not already mentioned: What do you think about the (sound/narration/other design aspects)?
- What do you like most about this ad? What do you like the least? Why?

Now I will present you with (another ad/some ads) that are part of the same concept but in a different format.

### Product 2: Radio spot

Next I'm going to play an audio ad that you might hear on the radio. Remember that this is a concept, so the final ad would use a real voice actor and would sound more finished.

*Note: Moderator to play radio ad.*

- Was there any specific element that caught your attention?
- Did the ad hold your interest? Is it memorable? Why/Why not?
- Is anything unclear or confusing? If so, what?
- If not already mentioned: What do you think about the (sound/narration/other design aspects)?
- What do you like most about this ad? What do you like the least? Why?
- If you heard this ad on the radio, would you do anything? If yes, what would you do?

### Product 3: Web banner ad

*Note: Moderator to show web banner ad on screen for duration of discussion about the ad.*

This is a web banner ad that you might see while browsing the internet.

- Did the ad hold your interest? Is it memorable? Why/why not?
- Is anything unclear or confusing? If so, what?
- What do you think about the visuals/colours in this ad?
- What do you like most about this ad? What do you like the least? Why?
- If you saw this ad while browsing the internet, would you click on it? Why/why not?

### Product 4: Social media post

*Note: Moderator to show social media post on-screen. For multiple images, scroll through and then share summary slide.*

This is a social ad that you might see online.

- Was there any specific image or message that caught your attention?
- Did the ad hold your interest? Is it memorable? Why/Why not?
- Is anything unclear or confusing? If so, what?
- What do you think about the visuals/colours in this ad?
- What do you like most about this ad? What do you like the least? Why?
- If you saw this ad on social media, would you take time to look at it? Would you share it? Why/Why not?

### Concept wrap-up

*Moderator to present summary slide of concept elements/products.*

Impressions of concept/general reactions

- Thinking about the four ads we just went through, what are your overall impressions of this concept?
- How would you describe the “tone” of these ads? Can you elaborate on why you think so?
  - [IF NOT RAISED BY PARTICIPANTS] Probe: If you saw or heard any of these ads, would you think they were official Elections Canada ads? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about the message that these ads are communicating?

- Do you care about this?
- Do you think it's important?
- Do these ads resonate with you? Are they memorable?

#### Effectiveness/Call to action

- What do you think about how much information was in these ads? (e.g. a good amount, too much, not enough?)
- Do these ads work well together? Was there an ad you liked the best or the least?
- Do you think the information in these ads is useful for you?
  - What did you learn from these ads?
  - Was anything unclear?
  - Is there any information that you think is missing?
- What, if anything, would you do if you came across these ads?
  - Potential probe: Do they make you want to:
    - Get informed about the election?
    - Make sure you are registered to vote?
    - Vote in the federal election?
    - Talk about voting with people you know?
- Is there something you would change to make these ads better for you?
  - More engaging?
  - More useful?
  - Help you want to get informed about voting?

Now we will move on to the second concept.

***Moderator will loop back to testing initial and detailed impressions of Concept B in the same manner as Concept A, then proceed to concept comparison.***

#### **Concept comparison (10 minutes)**

Now that we have reviewed both concepts, I would like you to help us decide which of the two concepts does a better job of informing young Canadians about voting.

*Moderator to present concepts again/together as needed.*

- The main purpose of these ads is to give people the information they need to register and vote in a federal election. For you personally, which one of these ads is most effective at communicating this information? Why?
- Of the two concepts, which one do you prefer? Why?
- Are there things you like in one ad/concept that could be added to the other to make it better? Which specific elements would you put together?
- When you go home tonight, what are you going to remember most about these ads?

#### **Discussion questions (as time permits)**

#### **Attitudes toward voting and perceptions of the voting process (10–13 minutes)**

I would like to turn now to discussing your perceptions about the process of voting in a federal election.

Reminder: We are not going to discuss who you might choose to vote for or your opinions of specific parties or politicians. Please don't state your voting intention or ask others about theirs.

- First, were any of you eligible to vote in the last federal election, or were you not eligible yet?
  - If asked: The last federal election was in September 2021. You had to be 18 or older to be eligible to vote.
  - If any were eligible: Many people don't or can't vote for a variety of reasons. Did you vote in the last federal election?
  - If eligible but did not vote: Is there any reason why you didn't vote—if so, could you share what this was?
- Do you have any thoughts or feelings about being eligible to vote in the next federal election?
  - Potential probes:
    - Are you excited to vote? Uninterested, unsure?
    - Do you think it is important for you to go vote? Why or why not?
    - Is it likely or unlikely that you will vote in the next election? Why or why not?
    - Are you registered to vote? If not, why not?
- Do you think that voting will be somewhat difficult or somewhat easy for you?
- What about voting do you think might be difficult? What would be easy?
  - e.g. getting to the voting place, knowing what to do, finding information about voting, deciding who to vote for, finding the time, having proof of identity and address, accessibility of the voting place/process
- In addition to voting at a polling place on election day, there are ways to vote early in the weeks before, such as at advance polls or at an Elections Canada Office. If you do vote, do you think you would want to vote early? Or would you prefer to wait until election day? Why?

### Reaching youth (5–7 minutes max)

To finish off, I would like to discuss how you engage with media and information.

- What media platforms or apps do you spend most of your time on? (e.g. social media, television, streaming services, websites)
- What kinds of ads do you see on them? (e.g. format, subject, audience)
- What do you think is the ideal format/length for an ad?
- What makes you pay attention to an ad, instead of skipping it?
- What sources, if any, do you get information about news and current events from?
- Which platforms do you think have the most trustworthy information? Which platforms are the least trustworthy?

### Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Finally, what advice, if any, would you have for Elections Canada on how to reach and engage young Canadians so they are informed about registering and voting in a federal election?

Does anyone have any final thoughts on what we saw and talked about tonight?

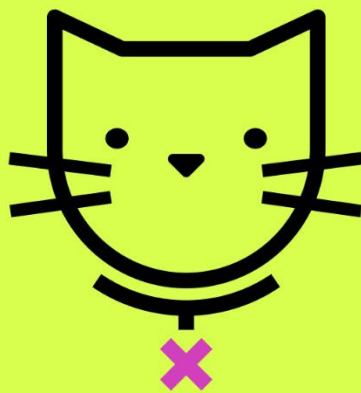
This concludes the discussion group. Thank you for your participation.

## Appendix C: Ad creatives

### Concept A: Voting Is Easy

Video

**Giving a cat a bath?  
That's hard.**



**Registering  
to vote is **easy.**** 

**The federal election is on  
Monday, October 32.**

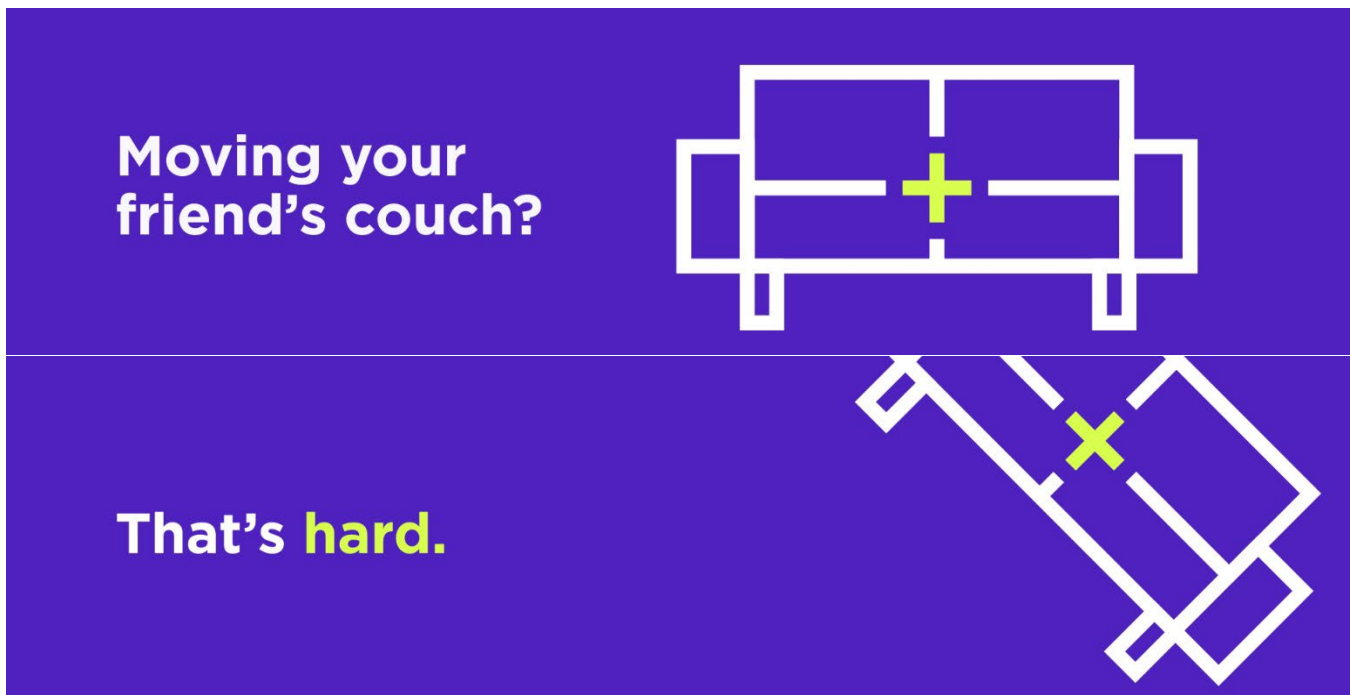
**Check or update your voter  
registration at [elections.ca](http://elections.ca)**



**Audio transcript**

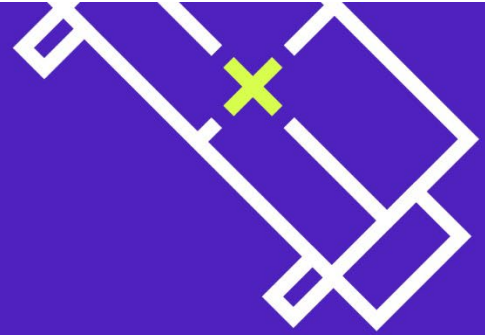
Waiting for ads to finish? Now that's hard. But getting ready to vote is easy. The federal election is on Monday, October 32. Visit [elections.ca](http://elections.ca) to find all the official information you need to vote. It's our vote.

**Web banner**

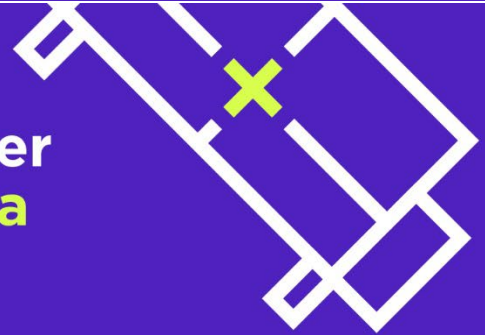




Registering to vote  
is **easy**.



Check or update your voter  
registration at **elections.ca**



**elections.ca**  
1-800-463-6868



Social media post



Concept B: Every small x has a huge impact

Video

**EVERY SMALL X**



**HAS A BIG  
IMPACT.**



How will you shape  
your future?

The federal election is  
on **Monday, October 32.**

Visit **elections.ca**  
to register to vote or  
update your address.



**elections.ca**  
**1-800-463-6868**

#### Audio transcript

The federal election is on Monday, October 32. Every small X has a big impact. What will you do with yours? Elections Canada has all the official information for voters. Visit [elections.ca](http://elections.ca) to get ready to vote. It's our vote.

Web banner

**EVERY SMALL X  
HAS A BIG IMPACT**



**HOW WILL YOU MAKE  
YOUR VOTE COUNT?**



**THE FEDERAL ELECTION IS  
ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 32.**



Visit [elections.ca](http://elections.ca) to register  
to vote or update your address.



**[elections.ca](http://elections.ca)**  
1-800-463-6868



Social media post

