Providing Voters with Election Information

• Many states require election offices to provide election notifications to voters.
  • Notifications can include polling place information, sample ballots, or just the election date and time.
  • Notifications are sometimes mailed, printed in newspapers, emailed, or provided online.
• NCSL research shows 16 states are required to provide sample ballot information to voters.
  • Pew research also shows voters want to find this information online.
The Voting Information Project

- The Voting Information Project was created in 2008 by Pew and Google to help voters easily find their official election information online.
- Voters enter their address and are provided with official election data from their state showing their nearest voting location.
- The project started with just a handful of states participating and has grown to 44 states and DC sharing official polling location information with the project for the 2016 General Election.
2008 General Election Participation (9 States plus Los Angeles County)
2012 General Election Participation
(36 States)
The Voting Information Project

• In 2016, there were more than **123 million impressions** of VIP data online.
• Impressions come through a variety of sources, but are all powered by the Google Civic Information API.
  • The API (Application Programming Interface) takes VIP state data feeds, performs additional quality control testing, and returns election information when an address is entered.
Impressions of VIP data come from many sources including:

- **Google search results**
- **Integrations directly from the Google Civic Information API**
- **GetToThePolls.com** - Pew managed website where websites and social media platforms can direct users
- **Embeddable widget** – Pew managed widget that can be customized and embedded on any webpage.
- **Texting/SMS tool** - Pew managed tool
GetToThePolls.com

- GetToThePolls.com had over 10 million visitors in 2016
- More than 80% users visited on mobile devices
- Facebook is the largest driver of traffic to the site
- Others who pointed users at the site included: Instagram, Etsy, WeatherUnderground, and many more
GetToThePolls.com and Facebook

Make sure you're ready to go on Election Day

Vote Early and Skip the Lines

Find Early Voting Location

Get Directions
Find out how to get to your polling place.

Find Polling Place

Find your polling location
Voting Information Tool (VIT)

- Customizable, embeddable tool for websites
- Embedders can change logos, photos, and text
- Keeps users native to a website
- Available in 16 languages
- Used by 10 states as their official lookup tool for voters
- More than 2 million users for the 2016 General Election
Voting Information Tool (VIT) Embeds 2016

Find Your Polling Place

- Vote California
  - California Secretary of State
  - Voter Information Tool

- Voto Latino
  - Voting Information Project

www.pewtrusts.org/elections
Short Messaging Service (SMS)/texting tool

- Users text “Vote” or “Voto” to the short code “GoVote” (468-683)
- More than 200k users for the 2016 General Election
- Featured on the cover of the official election guide for the State of California
Google Civic Information API

- Allows an organization to integrate VIP’s data into their web and mobile products
VIP data feeds will universally include voting location information, but can also include:

- **Early vote information** – where available.
- **Contact info for an election official** – universal with varying degrees of depth.
- **Ballot information** – vast majority of states, to varying degrees of depth.
- **Ballot Drop Off Information** – in states where a voter is able to drop off a vote by mail ballot.
Taking data live

• Data go live from states on a rolling basis, depending on a state’s laws, Secretary of State and Board of Elections deadlines, relationship with Pew and Democracy Works, and other factors.
• Data only go live when a state has reviewed their feed on a private, staging website and have confirmed that they are okay with publishing the data.
• The state is always in control of the data publication process.
VIP in 2017 and Beyond

- VIP continues to support elections in 2017 ranging from local municipal contests to highly contested statewide contests.
  - So far, we’ve supported more than 30 elections.
  - Will support approximately 40 more elections this year.
- Throughout 2017, we are working with all states to improve their feeds and where we can to add official ballot data for elections.
Pew VIP Spinoff

• Pew model is to bring a project to a point of success and then step away as other entities take the lead.
• Pew engaged a group of key stakeholders, moderated by Doug Chapin, to establish key principles to guide the future of VIP.
• Pew recently issued a “Request for Application” as the next step toward transitioning the Voting Information Project. More information can be found on our website at www.votinginfoproject.org/blog.
Email: lbird@pewtrusts.org
Website: www.votinginfoproject.org
Twitter: @votinginfo, @pewtrusts