



Participatory Voting:

**How do you create a compelling incentive
to improve young voter engagement in
local elections?**

Lexi Neibart

NYU Wagner

Government 3.0

Fall 2013

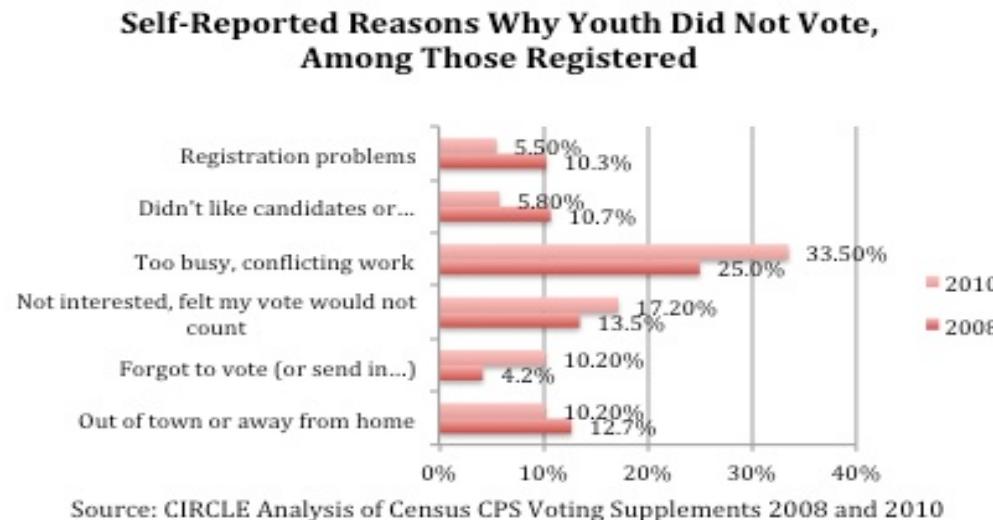
Participatory Voting

"Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting."

- Franklin D. Roosevelt (32nd U.S. President)

NYC Voter Turnout

According to the NYC Campaign Finance Board (NYCCFB), 29% of the 4.1 million registered voters cast ballots in the 2009 general election for Mayor. That number drops to **4% of eligible voters for those under the age of 30.**



Over 50% of voters (under 30) self-reported that they did not vote in the 2010 midterm elections because they were “too busy/conflicting work” and/or “not interested/felt my vote would not count.”

Local Vs. National Election Turnout

2013 mayoral general election
Voter turnout by block

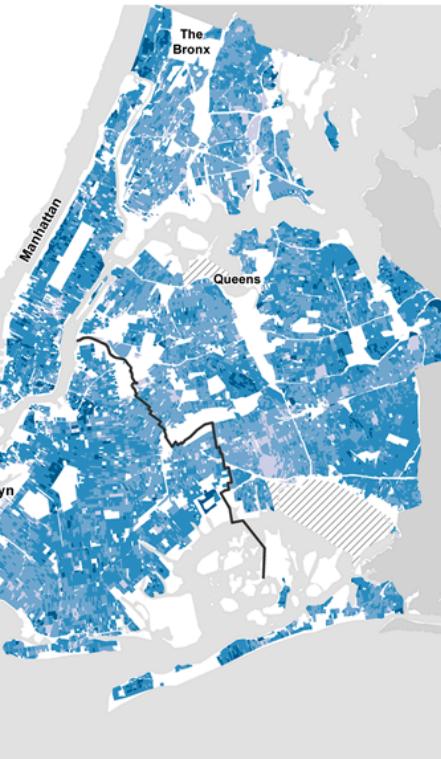
**Percent of registered Democrats
voting in 2013 mayoral primary**



Blank areas: no votes
and/or no population

Brooklyn-Queens border
Airports

Staten
Island



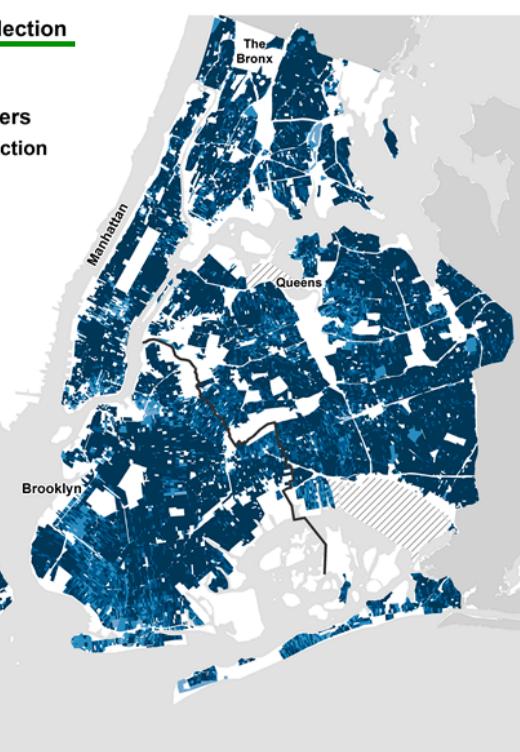
2012 Presidential general election
Voter turnout by block

**Percent of all registered voters
voting in 2012 presidential election**



Blank areas: no votes
and/or no population

Brooklyn-Queens border
Airports



Source: The NYC Election Atlas, created by the Center for Urban Research at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York

NYC Voter Turnout

Why is this a compelling problem?

According to CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement), there are three main reasons why the youth vote is important.

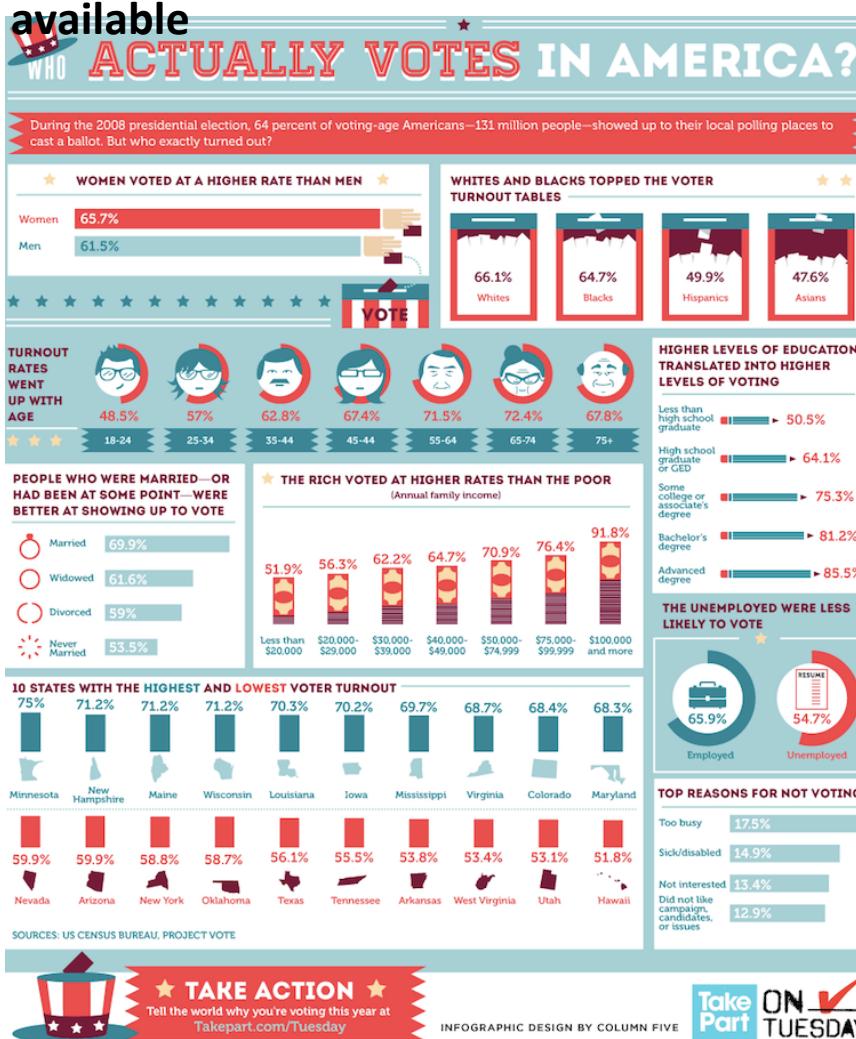
- **Voting is habit-forming** – When young people vote, they are more likely to vote as they get older.
- Young people (18-29) are a major subset of the electorate, making up 21% of the voting age population.
- Involving a young person in voter-related activities, inspires the entire household to vote.

Additionally, voting is particularly important at the local level because:

- Each vote matters more because there is no electoral collage at the local level.

Voter Engagement: Data

Voter Turnout – Public and available



Source: <http://www.infographicsarchive.com/politics/infographic-who-actually-votes-in-america/>

How to Understand Youth Voting Data:

2008 Youth Share of the Electorate



% of people who voted who are 18-29 years old

★ The sheer # of youth & the youth share of the electorate can change because of factors unrelated to youth engagement. This number does not indicate how many young people voted or whether there was a rise in youth turnout.

★ Two big factors that influence the youth share of all voters: relative population size of each age group & turnout rate of other age groups.

2008 Youth Voter Turnout*



% of all eligible youth who voted

★ Youth voter turnout is the only statistic that directly reflects the rate of youth participation.

★ Youth turnout has been on the rise in every Presidential Election since 1996.

*52% was CIRCLE's turnout estimate the morning after Election Day, 2008

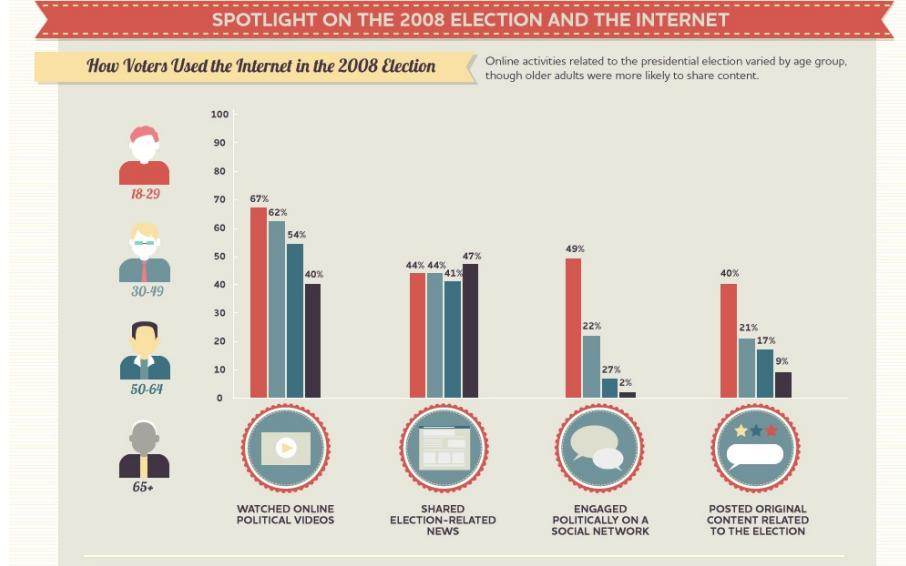
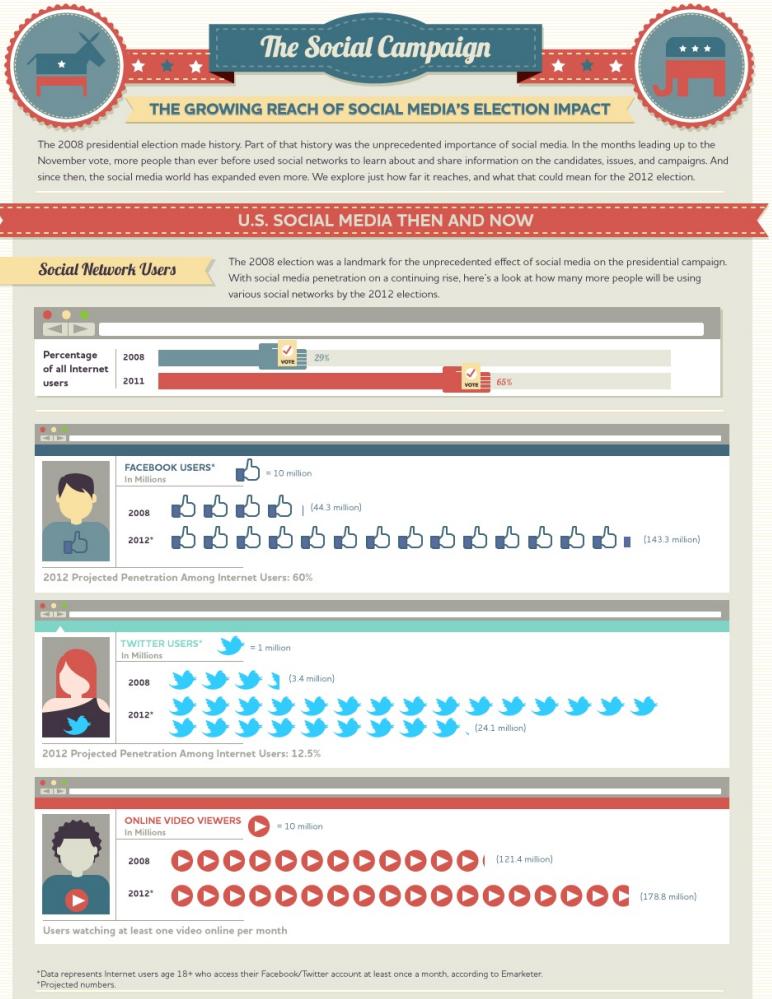


#YouthTruth | More Info at www.civicyouth.org

Voter Engagement: Data

Elections and the Internet - Public and available

by: @MDGadvertising 



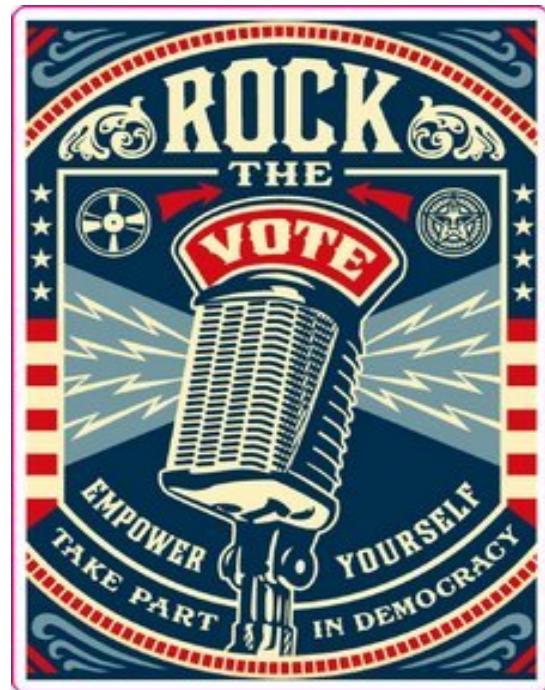
Voter Engagement: Tools

Rock the Vote:

Non-Partisan organization engage and build political power for young people in the United States.

Features:

- (i.) Registration Assistance.
- (ii.) Engages young people in the political process through grassroots programs.
- (iii.) Utilizes popular culture and technology to reach young voters.



Source: <http://www.rockthevote.com/>

Rock the Vote is the first organization to enlist the “coolness factor” for voting

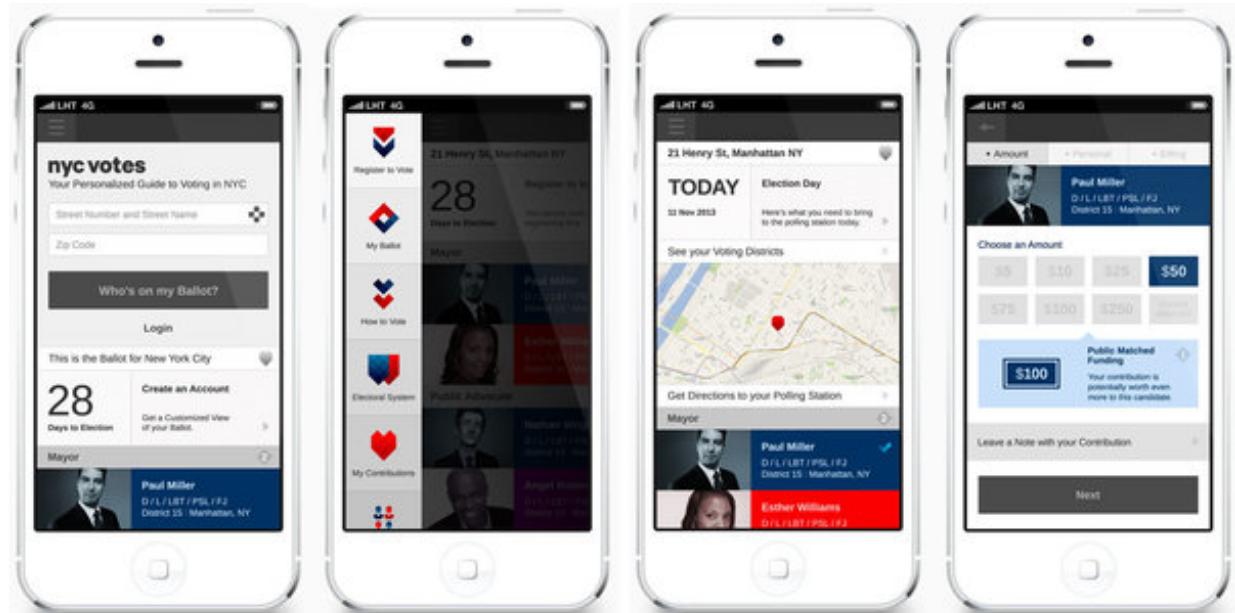
Voter Engagement: Tools

NYC Votes:

Voter Guide and App for NYC elections

Features:

- (i.) An easy-to-use app with basic info about elected offices and candidates.
- (ii.) Provides voting logistics.
- (iii.) Allows for direct campaign contributions.



Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/07/nyregion/registration-as-a-voter-to-be-easier-via-phone.html>

Voter Engagement: Tools

TurboVote:

Voter Registration and Election Day Assistance

Features:

- (i.) Registration Assistance.
- (ii.) Follow-up email and text reminders.
- (iii.) Help to get absentee ballots and vote by mail.



We make voting easy.

We also send text and email reminders so you won't miss elections. So what are you waiting for?



we ❤️ democracy

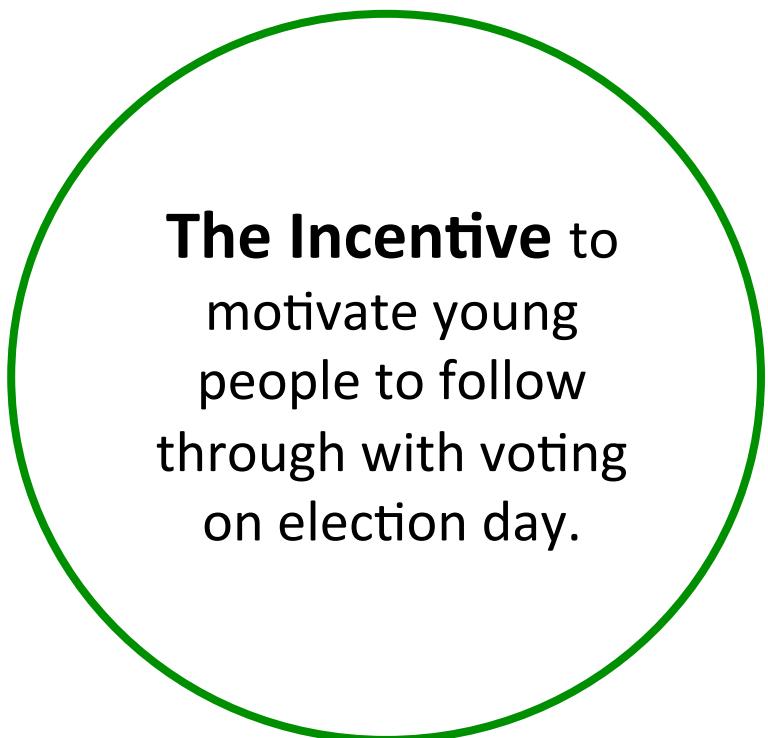
Source: <https://turbovote.org/register>

What is the Opportunity?

Current Landscape (Tools and Data)

- ✓ Candidate Information
- ✓ Election-Day Instructions
- ✓ Voter Motivation and Turnout Data
- ✓ Registration Assistance
- ✓ Direct Campaign Contribution tool
- ✓ Technology and Elections Data

What's Missing??



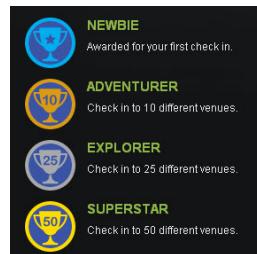
Opportunity: Participatory Voting

A successful tool motivates its audience with a clearly defined incentive.

Here are some examples of innovative incentive structures:

Badges/Recognition

Fourquare



Peer Recognition and Cash Prizes

Challenge.gov



Cycle for Survival

Giving Back



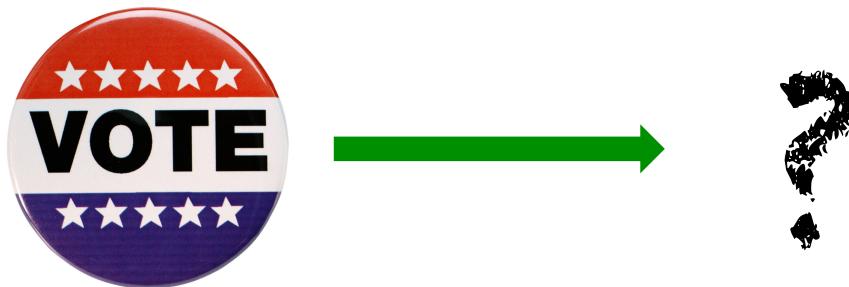
OKCupid

Love



Opportunity: Participatory Voting

What is an incentive to motivate young people to vote?



Rock the Vote's Mission Statement gets to the core of how to engage young voters in the electoral process. It States:

"We use music, popular culture, new technologies and grassroots organizing to motivate and mobilize young people in our country to participate in every election, with the goal of seizing the power of the youth vote to create political and social change." - Rock the Vote

Opportunity: Participatory Voting

Why not build on Rock the Vote's success at the national level and use music, pop culture, new technologies and grassroots organizing to create the incentives for voting at the local level?

Pilot Program



Community
Incentive

\$

Individual
Incentive

Pilot Program

Engage young voters in a specific neighborhood in NYC between the ages of 18-29.

- The Pilot would be sponsored by **Rock the Vote**, utilizing its infrastructure, name recognition, proven success at the national level and access to musicians and other celebrities to launch the program.

Pilot Program

Build a social campaign to increase voter engagement through team competition.

- Engage young voters to mobilize teams of their neighbors and peers to **compete for the highest % of voters** for their group through an interactive mobile application that allows teams to pledge money, recruit friends and engage with sites like instagram, facebook, twitter and tumbler.

Pilot Program

Develop a web-based platform and mobile app with the following attributes:

- Ability to Create Teams (ie. Cycle for Survival, ZogSports)
- Capability to sort information (ie. Okcupid, Kayak)
- Online Fundraising Tools (ie. gofundme.com)
- Ability to Track Progress/Results (ie. Myfitnesspal)

Pilot Program

Create a compelling incentive structure

Each team member will pledge \$10 of dollars to participate. The team who registers the most VOTES, is the winning team. There are TWO DISTINCT prizes for the winning team:

Community Incentive: The winning team will have the opportunity to decide how the money raised is spent on their local community. Some ideas are: cleaning up a local park, repainting a community center, buying new supplies for an elementary school.



Personal Incentive: The winning team will receive tickets to a concert in NYC for a Rock the Vote musician. (Some artists include, The Black Keys, Christina Aguilera, N*E*R*D and Sheryl Crow.)



Next Steps

Research:

- Neighborhoods that have a high population of registered voters between 18-29
- Upcoming local elections (Ideally a run-off election)
- Website and App Developers that have been successful in this space

Contact:

- Rock the Vote
- NYCCFB to be a program supporter

Produce:

- Action Plan for recruiting team leaders
- Team leader handbook
- Start-up and Operating Budget
- Mock-ups: (1.) The landing page and team pages (on the Rock the Vote website),
(2.) Mobile App

Why this will work...

Young people have proven that they enjoy participating in team activities, especially when it's for a cause (cycle for survival, trivia nights, city year charity days, etc.).

Building on this knowledge, why can't this work for voting?

