

Was GE2011 an 'Internet election'? Not really, a survey finds Only 30% of respondents turned to Web, social media for political coverage, according to IPS

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SINGAPORE - Was this year's General Election indeed an "Internet election" - strongly influenced by the online community - as some have asserted?

A new survey by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) attempted to answer this assertion, by polling 2,000 Singaporean voters aged above 21 years old, from various backgrounds.

The findings, unveiled this morning, found that only 30 per cent of the respondents got their information fix from Facebook and blogs. Even so, virtually everyone in this group visited mainstream media websites as well.

This group of Web-influenced Singaporeans, the survey found, is younger, better educated, and predominantly male.

They are also more politically knowledgeable, less politically cynical, and seem to understand politics better, according to the IPS.

This group rated the Internet as a more important source of election information than did the other 70 per cent of survey respondents. However, they still rated mainstream media as a more important source of election news than the Internet.

This 30 per cent of Singaporeans is also less likely to think that new media is fair in reporting elections - although to a smaller extent than how unfair they thought the elections coverage of the mainstream media was.

Based on the results, IPS concluded that the Internet did not play such a decisive role as to warrant the term "an Internet election", although it conceded that some would argue that as long as it plays a significant role, this term is warranted.