

From: [Natasha \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [OIA Enquiries](#)
Subject: RE: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting
Date: Tuesday, 25 June 2024 9:38:00 am

Hi

I think we do need to wrap both Natalie and Legal team in. it might be more IT security around C&A that answers the questions more than Mark's security oversight cap. Maybe... let me think on it...

T

-----Original Message-----

From: OIA Enquiries <ويا@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, June 24, 2024 3:44 PM
To: Natasha [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@elections.govt.nz](mailto:[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz)>
Subject: FW: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting

Hi Tash

We received this new OIA over the weekend.

Could you think about who is best to respond to this?
Not sure what documentation exists from 1 January 2017 onwards.

I assume this would involve you and your team, IT too, would this also include Mark with his security cap?

Happy to chat this out with you on Wednesday if possible.

Ngā mihi,

Tim [REDACTED] | Coordinator, Legal and Policy | Electoral Commission | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34 – 42 Manners Street | Wellington | 6140 Phone +[REDACTED] | vote.nz | elections.nz

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 22, 2024 2:22 PM
To: OIA Enquiries <ويا@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

EXTERNAL EMAIL WARNING: Do not open any attachments or links until you are certain they are safe. Beware of phishing attacks, check the sender address. Always report emails you are not certain are safe.

Kia ora,

I'm writing to request any studies or advice the Electoral Commission has either received or generated for others since 2017 with regard to the security and/or compromisability of online voting as implemented for overseas voters.

Nga mihi nui,
[REDACTED]

From: [Natasha](#) [REDACTED]
To: [Ian](#) [REDACTED]; [Aaron Tasker](#)
Subject: FW: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting
Date: Tuesday, 25 June 2024 9:43:00 am

Just chatting with Ian - just trying to confirm who needs to be part of a chat tomorrow

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Sent: Monday, June 24, 2024 3:44 PM
To: Natasha [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@elections.govt.nz](mailto:[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz)>
Subject: FW: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting

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Level 10, 34 – 42 Manners Street | Wellington | 6140 Phone + [REDACTED] | vote.nz | elections.nz

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Nga mihi nui,
[REDACTED]

From: [Natasha \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [OIA Enquiries](#)
Cc: [Aaron Tasker](#); [Martin Rodgers](#); [Ian \[REDACTED\]](#)
Subject: RE: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting
Date: Tuesday, 25 June 2024 9:56:00 am

Hi Hi

Just had a quick chat with Ian ([REDACTED]) and think a quick chat tomorrow would be good. This is probably more reflective of IT security - so not too sure about Mark's involvement but he is the top of the "security" chain so maybe we can confirm that tomorrow.

We think that we probably need to define that we don't have online voting in the first instance - we have electronic transmission (electronic postal vote) and then IT would fill in a generic statement on IT security.

Can we book a quick 1/2 hr chat tomorrow to confirm approach and who is doing what (tim / me / ian [REDACTED]). And then we can forward for to others in team if needing to be there. Ian is booked from 11am, I have a meeting 10 - 10.30, so how about 10.30 if that works for you Tim?

Thanks

Tash

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Kia ora,

I'm writing to request any studies or advice the Electoral Commission has either received or generated for others since 2017 with regard to the security and/or compromisability of online voting as implemented for overseas voters.

Nga mihi nui,



From: [Aaron Tasker](#)
To: [Natasha \[REDACTED\]](#), [OIA Enquiries](#); [Tim \[REDACTED\]](#)
Cc: [Martin Rodgers](#); [Ian \[REDACTED\]](#)
Subject: RE: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting
Date: Tuesday, 25 June 2024 10:47:20 am

Hi Team,

Into the specifics of the question, as Tash has pointed out we don't have online voting but can respond with an assumption that they're referring to the digital solutions that support voting from overseas.

Then they specifically ask;

"studies or advice the Electoral Commission has either received or generated for others"

To me this wouldn't extend to the Security Risk Assessments we would have undertaken from an IT Security perspective, as these do not form studies or advice - rather content we have generated for ourselves (not for others). We also would not distribute such assessments as these hold sensitive information regarding the configuration of our security controls and risks.

I would recommend we determine;

1. Whether the Commission has produced any official advice for other parties (e.g. Cabinet, Minister, Other electoral agencies, other government departments)
2. Whether the Commission has received any official advice on online voting. (e.g. Other electoral agencies sharing advice/guidance, research papers we have received/commissioned)

Tim - I'm assuming you and the team would have a good understanding of the first section, and as for the 2nd we would like understand this from Mark himself and Leigh's team?

Ngā Mihi,
Aaron

-----Original Message-----

From: Natasha [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 9:57 AM
To: OIA Enquiries <oia@elections.govt.nz>
Cc: Aaron Tasker <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Martin Rodgers <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Ian [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting

Hi Hi

Just had a quick chat with Ian ([REDACTED]) and think a quick chat tomorrow would be good. This is probably more reflective of IT security - so not too sure about Mark's involvement but he is the top of the "security" chain so maybe we can confirm that tomorrow.

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Tash

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Nga mihi nui,
[REDACTED]

From: [Natasha \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [Aaron Tasker](#); [Ian \[REDACTED\]](#)
Cc: [Martin Rodgers](#); [OIA Enquiries](#); [Tim \[REDACTED\]](#); [Leigh Deuchars](#); [Mark Lawson](#)
Subject: RE: OIA: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting
Date: Monday, 1 July 2024 2:50:00 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Thanks Aaron, I've accepted the changes and made a couple more minor tweaks. Also answered the comment in the doc.

Tash

From: Aaron Tasker <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2024 2:38 PM
To: Natasha [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Ian [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Cc: Martin Rodgers <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; OIA Enquiries <oia@elections.govt.nz>; Tim [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Leigh Deuchars <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Mark Lawson <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: OIA: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting

Kia Ora Tash,

I've had a review of the document and tracked my recommended changes.

Please let me know if you'd like to discuss further.

Cheers,
Aaron

From: Natasha [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2024 11:34 AM
To: Aaron Tasker <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Ian [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Cc: Martin Rodgers <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; OIA Enquiries <oia@elections.govt.nz>; Tim [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Leigh Deuchars <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Mark Lawson <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: OIA: Studies/considerations relating to the securitisation of online voting

Afternoon

Yesterday Ian and I managed to chat with Leigh in regard to the OIA asking about online voting.

Key points from that chat were:

- Other than initial advice prior to development of both systems (which were before my time - DVP ~2004 and UVP ~2012/2013), I am not aware of any other 'studies / guidance' we have taken on the systems.
- We undertake the C&A process; I know that part of this is external auditing / pen testing which we receive guidance on
- Leigh's advice was to confirm what external contractors we have had auditing / checking the two systems (DVP / UVP) and that this would be in scope of the OIA if they have provided guidance. Action: Ian / Tash to confirm what these are.

- Noted any reference to these reviews will be a general mention that they happened, but not being able to share outcomes as this could potentially jeopardise the security of the system
- Once confirmed, put this to Managers to review and confirm what is included – ACTION: Tash draft response for Aaron and Ian for further input / review and then final sent to Mark / Martin / KT for final sign off.

From my knowledge since 2014 the only external review that takes place regularly are the C&A reviews and I have drafted a response for Aaron and Ian - [Draft response - Online Voting.docx](#). My changes are in red, the rest are the standard OIA letter content draft attached to cover permissions...

Happy to chat further – please let me know.

Tash

Natasha (Tash) [REDACTED] | Senior Project Leader Voting Services | **Electoral Commission** | **Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri**
PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34-42 Manners Street | Wellington | +[REDACTED] | vote.nz | elections.nz



From: [Natasha](#) [REDACTED]
To: [Adele](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: OIA Online Voting Security
Date: Friday, 12 July 2024 11:48:00 am
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Next week.

All good to wait

From: Adele [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 11:28 AM
To: Natasha [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: OIA Online Voting Security

Hey – what’s the timeframe for signing this out? Happy to discuss with Anusha who it should be...

From: Mark Lawson <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 8:28 AM
To: Adele [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: Fwd: OIA Online Voting Security

Just FYI...Presumably it can wait until Martin is back... m

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From: Mark Lawson <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, July 11, 2024 19:17
To: Natasha [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: OIA Online Voting Security

Hi Tash. This is really an operational thing. If it can't wait for one more day for Martin then I think you should be going to either Anusha or else Adele. Cheers M

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From: Natasha [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, July 11, 2024 3:58:59 PM
To: Mark Lawson <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Cc: Martin Rodgers <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Tim [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; OIA Enquiries <ويا@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: OIA Online Voting Security

Hi Mark

Are you able to please review and sign this off as Martin is away this week.

Are you also happy for you to be the respondent or would you prefer Martin?

Thanks

Tash

From: Natasha [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 2, 2024 1:50 PM
To: Martin Rodgers <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Mark Lawson <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Cc: Aaron Tasker <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Ian [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; OIA Enquiries <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: OIA Online Voting Security

Hi Mark and Martin

Please see linked a draft OIA for you to review / sign off.

 [Draft OIA response 2024 45 - \[REDACTED\].docx](#)

Aaron has provided input into the draft document and there is one comment for L&P to confirm the grounds are correct. We also need to confirm will be signing the OIA out – not too sure if this should be from a security perspective or voting.

If you can please review and let me know where to from here that would be awesome

Thanks

T

Natasha (Tash) [REDACTED] | Senior Project Leader Voting Services | **Electoral Commission** | **Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri**
PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34-42 Manners Street | Wellington | +[REDACTED] | [vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)



From: [Natasha \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [Mark Lawson](#)
Subject: RE: OIA Online Voting Security
Date: Friday, 12 July 2024 11:49:00 am
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Thanks Mark – happy to wait until next week, we still have time, and you answered the question round you vs Martin too. So all sorted.

Thanks again

Tash

From: Mark Lawson <[\[REDACTED\]@elections.govt.nz](#)>
Sent: Thursday, July 11, 2024 7:17 PM
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Subject: Re: OIA Online Voting Security

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Cc: Aaron Tasker <[\[REDACTED\]@elections.govt.nz](#)>; Ian [\[REDACTED\]](#) <[\[REDACTED\]@elections.govt.nz](#)>; OIA Enquiries <[oia@elections.govt.nz](#)>
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From: [OIA Enquiries](#)
To: [Natasha \[REDACTED\]](#)
Cc: [Tim \[REDACTED\]](#); [Ella \[REDACTED\]](#)
Subject: RE: ACTION: OIA Online Voting Security
Date: Thursday, 18 July 2024 10:01:09 am
Attachments: [image003.jpg](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

Morning Tash

Thanks for your work on this OIA.

Tim and Ella are on leave today so we will review and send this out when they are back tomorrow.

Thanks

Ngā mihi
Zara

Zara [REDACTED] | Advisor Legal
Electoral Commission – Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri
PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34-42 Manners Street, Wellington
[vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)



From: Natasha [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 9:39 AM
To: Tim [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; OIA Enquiries <oia@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: ACTION: OIA Online Voting Security

Morning Morning

Just checking this is nicely handed back to you and that you've seen Martin's sign off below.

Thanks

Tash

From: Martin Rodgers <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 4:41 PM
To: Natasha [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Cc: Tim [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; OIA Enquiries <oia@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: ACTION: OIA Online Voting Security

Kia ora

I have reviewed and added my signature to this response.

I note that there is a comment from Ella to be resolved.

Happy to discuss.

Martin

From: Natasha [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 5:47 AM
To: Martin Rodgers <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
Cc: Tim [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; OIA Enquiries <oia@elections.govt.nz>
Subject: ACTION: OIA Online Voting Security

Hi Martin

As noted, not too sure if Ella managed to confirm comment re grounds, but other than that, Mark had noted this an operational OIA and should be you to sign off. So now ready for you to approve / sign off – amend etc

T

From: Natasha [REDACTED]
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To: Martin Rodgers <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>; Mark Lawson <[REDACTED]@elections.govt.nz>
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Tuesday, 25 June

 **Natasha**  9:40 am

Morning Aaron - are you free for a 5 mins chat - re OIA that has come in over the weekend?

 **Aaron Tasker** 9:42 am

Morning - would later this afternoon be ok? Will hopefully have some of my voice back by then. 😊

 **Natasha**  9:42 am

no worries. just chatting with Ian and will copy you into emails.



Natasha [redacted] 26/06 9:53 am



hi hi - the meeting this morning is really only for Mark and Leigh to give us directions. so if they can't make it, i'll cancel meeting and look to reschedule. i've only just emailed them as well so they may not have had time to think on it.



FYI

Tim [redacted] 26/06 10:13 am



Mark went into a meeting room on level 10 with Adele 10 minutes ago, let us know if and when this kicks off. Ella and I won't be available from 11-12 approx.



Natasha [redacted] 26/06 10:13 am



looks like we missed the timing, i'll look to reschedule

Leigh has joined

Natasha [redacted] 26/06 10:28 am



all sorted - plan for me to work though, i'll have a first crack at it and then send to Aaron / Ian for further drafting input and then send to bosses Martin / Mark and probably leave for you to run past KT. would likely give a generic response regarding system certification and external auditing from that process but wouldn't be able to define the results from a systems security perspective



Monday, 1 July

Natasha [redacted] 1/07 11:19 am



Hi Hi - Tim / Ella do we have a folder for this OIA?

1/07 11:21 am

Hi - [45](#) [redacted] here is the folder!

Natasha [redacted] 1/07 11:21 am



thanks Ella 😊



Natasha [redacted] 2/07 10:51 am



Hi Hi - i'm in the meeting room in level 10, kanuka are you free for a quik chat?

2/07 11:01 am

Hi, sure! Where are you now?



Natasha [redacted] 2/07 11:01 am



sorry - i just left and am on level 9. 2 secs and i'll call

[Draft response - Online Voting.docx](#)

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2024/XX

On **FULL DATE** you made a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) for the following information:

COPIED VERBATIM FROM REQUEST IN ITALICS

I would like to clarify that New Zealand does not have an online voting system. While overseas voters can use electronic systems to access and return their voting papers, they are required to manually complete them. This can be done either by printing the papers and marking them by hand or using an electronic device to manually mark them. Once the voting papers are completed, voters can scan or photograph them or, if completed using an electronic device, save the file which is then returned. These votes are then printed on receipt and are processed and counted manually.

Regarding advice and studies on the security of the two voting systems – the download voting paper application and the upload voting paper application – we have not received or generated any specific studies about the security of online voting, as we do not provide online voting.

The only advice we receive related to the security of these two systems is during our certification and accreditation programme reviews, which are conducted prior to each general election. These reviews involve external contractors who are engaged to test the systems and identify any security risks. However, we are not able to share the results or outcomes of these reviews as doing so may compromise the security of the systems. Additionally, we ensure that our practices are in line with government security standards.

We also advise voters uploading their voting papers to be aware of the machines and networks they are using, as we are not able to confirm those are secure, and to ensure that they remove any copies of the voting paper images. We also inform them of alternative means should they not wish to use these electronic systems

In the interests of transparency, we release responses to Official Information Act requests every 3 months. We will publish this response with your personal details redacted.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2024/XX

On **FULL DATE** you made a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) for the following information:

COPIED VERBATIM FROM REQUEST IN ITALICS

New Zealand does not have an online voting system, and we have not received or generated any specific studies about the security of online voting.

For the purposes of this Official Information Act Request, we have assumed your enquiry relates to the digital systems that support overseas voters in casting a vote in New Zealand parliamentary electoral events.

Overseas voters can use electronic systems to access and return their voting papers, after manually completing them. Voters are able to download their voting papers and can either print and mark them by hand or by mark them using an electronic device. Once the voting papers are completed, voters can then scan or photograph them to create an image file or, if completed using an electronic device, save the file which is then uploaded. These votes are then printed on receipt and are processed and counted manually.

The software applications are used to support overseas voting are specifically the download and upload voting papers applications. The Commission has not produced or received specific advice regarding the security of systems that support overseas voting in this way.

We have conducted information security certification and accreditation reviews of these applications prior to the 2023 general election. These risk assessments can involve external contractors who support with specific skills or testing capabilities, however, would not constitute formal advice from these parties

We are not able to share the results or outcomes of these reviews as disclosure of this information would prejudice the Electoral Commission's ability to prevent and detect cyber security threats and may also result in exposure of the information to those who may use this information for improper gain. This gain or advantage could damage trust and confidence in the electoral system.

Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 6(c) of the Act on the ground that making this information available would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, and

under section 9(2)(k) of the Act on the ground that withholding this information is necessary to prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage.

We advise voters uploading their voting papers to be aware of the machines and networks they are using, as we are not able to confirm those are secure, and to ensure that they remove any copies of the voting paper images. We also inform them of alternative means should they not wish to use these electronic systems

In the interests of transparency, we release responses to Official Information Act requests every 3 months. We will publish this response with your personal details redacted.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.