

**#BeReady16:  
working together for our  
military and overseas voters  
Federal Voting Assistance Program**

**Election Assistance Commission Standards Board  
15 April 2016**







(U.S. Air Force photo/Airm)

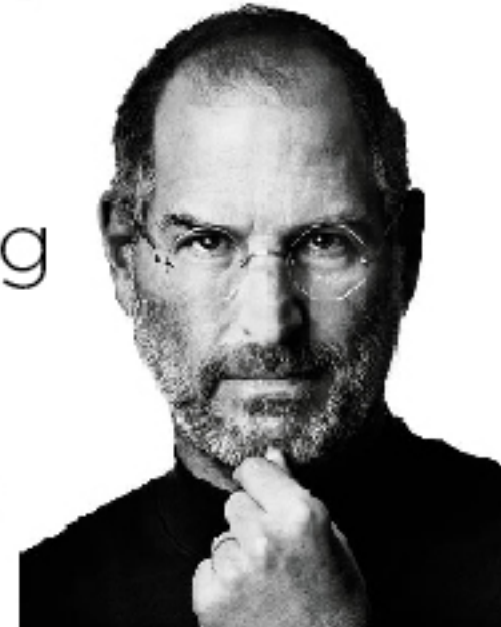
# FVAP's renewed focus



- The electronic voting demonstration project was repealed.

“Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do.”

- Steve Jobs



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Unique characteristics of the 65+/70+ population



# FVAP facing challenges in a new way

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- Look to the Data
- Cooperative Solutions:
  - Council of State Governments
  - EAC/FVAP/MPSA/USPS Mail Emphasis
- New Outreach Efforts



# Look to Data - Personas (Use Cases)

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- **Effective way to translate research data**
- **Based on data analyses using:**
  - **2012 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military (ADM)**
  - **2012 Post-Election Survey of Spouses of ADM**
  - **Survey of Overseas Citizens**
  - **Google Analytics for FVAP.gov**
  - **2014 Status of Forces Survey of ADM (SOFS-A)**

# Persona 1: George, Older Overseas Citizen Voter

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## – Media Use and Behavior:

- Uses email, does some online shopping, not generally tech-savvy, uses personal computer

## – FVAP User Behavior:

- Likely to visit website directly based on voting experience

## – Voting Experience:

- Registration Likelihood: HIGH
- Ballot Return Likelihood: HIGH
- Feels voting is an opportunity to express American pride and maintain connection to U.S.
- Main sources of voting info: State and LEOs, other ex-pats

## – Challenges:

- Assumes FVAP is for military voters and is unaware of services available for overseas civilians
- Sends and receives voting materials in paper form and is not aware of online registration and ballot delivery options

## – Needs:

- A convenient, centralized one-stop shop for current voting information, deadlines, forms
- Timely reminders of registration, ballot request and ballot return deadlines
- Feedback from LEO about the status of his registration, ballot request and returned ballot



## Persona 2: Andrea, Unaware Overseas Citizen Voter

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### – Media Use and Behavior:

- Tech-savvy and heavy social media user; accesses Internet on her cell phone and personal laptop

### – FVAP User Behavior:

- Likely to be referred from another source (Dept of State); likely to use online assistant to complete FPCA

### – Voting Experience:

- Registration Likelihood: LOW
- Ballot Return Likelihood: LOW
- Voted in U.S. no experience with absentee; perceives voting as a way to stay connected
- Main sources of voting info: family and friends, other ex-pats

### – Challenges:

- Unaware of right to vote from overseas; unfamiliar with process; unlikely to seek out information independently
- Confusion about what State she should vote in; might decide not to participate if she feels process is hard or overwhelming

### – Needs:

- Detailed info about right to vote and process
- Information about voting assistance resources
- Help identifying her State and its requirements
- Timely reminders of registration, ballot request and ballot return deadlines

## Persona 3: Johnny, Young ADM Voter

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### – Media Use and Behavior:

- Tech-savvy and heavy social media user; accesses Internet on his cell phone

### – FVAP User Behavior:

- Likely to directly visit FVAP.gov based on word of mouth and VAO outreach

### – Voting Experience:

- Registration Likelihood: MODERATE
- Ballot Return Likelihood: LOW
- First-time voter with no experience or knowledge of absentee process; views voting as important right but ambivalent about participating
- Main sources of voting info: DoD resources, family and friends, VAO

### – Challenges:

- Voting is not a priority, has little motivation to seek out info independently; might decide not to participate if she feels process is hard or overwhelming
- Likely to register but might fail to return ballot without follow-up prompting
- Unstable mailing address due to frequent moves

### – Needs:

- Step-by-step info of the process; assistance filling out FPCA
- Proactive engagement by VAO; support from Commander
- Electronic registration options

## Persona 4: Davis, Senior Enlisted ADM

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### – Media Use and Behavior:

- Internet access mostly limited to time in ship/computer lab; uses Internet and social media regularly to communicate with family while deployed

### – FVAP User Behavior:

- Likely to directly visit FVAP.gov, though referrals are helpful; likely to use paper forms

### – Voting Experience:

- Registration Likelihood: HIGH
- Ballot Return Likelihood: MODERATE
- Has voted in the past and generally understands absentee process; believes if he doesn't vote, can't complain
- Main sources of voting info: DoD resources, spouse, VAO

### – Challenges:

- Has experienced difficulties voting in the past, skeptical his vote will count
- Likely to register but may fail to return ballot without reminders/encouragement
- Speed and quality of mail system, limited time and Internet access; unfamiliar with FWAB

### – Needs:

- Accurate info about voting rights and reassurance vote will be counted; support from Commander
- Timely reminders of registration, ballot request and ballot return deadlines
- Feedback from LEO about the status of his registration, ballot request and returned ballot

# Persona 5: Arlo, Military Officer

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## – Media Use and Behavior:

- Internet access primarily through personal computer; uses email and Facebook to communicate with family/friends

## – FVAP User Behavior:

- Likely to directly visit FVAP.gov without referrals

## – Voting Experience:

- Registration Likelihood: HIGH
- Ballot Return Likelihood: HIGH
- Extensive experience voting absentee; views voting as civic duty and takes it very seriously
- Main sources of voting info: DoD resources, spouse, VAO

## – Challenges:

- Has experienced difficulties voting in the past, including not getting ballot on time; sometimes unsure whether ballot was counted
- Feels unprepared to assist Service members who look to him for guidance about voting; struggles to discuss voting without discussing politics

## – Needs:

- Reliable, up-to-date information about the voting assistance resources available that he can share with subordinates
- Timely reminders of registration, ballot request and ballot return deadlines
- Feedback from LEO about the status of his registration, ballot request and returned ballot

# Persona 6: Hanna, Military Spouse

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## – Media Use and Behavior:

- Uses Internet and social media to communicate with family/friends; use cell phone and personal computer

## – FVAP User Behavior:

- Likely to be referred to FVAP.gov by online sources or through independent search

## – Voting Experience:

- Registration Likelihood: MODERATE
- Ballot Return Likelihood: MODERATE
- Sometimes voted in home jurisdiction but unfamiliar with absentee process; recognizes voting as an important right
- Main sources of voting info: DoD voting assistance resources, spouse and other military families, VAO

## – Challenges:

- Would like to vote but has little knowledge of process; limited time/energy to figure out process
- Often receives inaccurate information through social network of military families and is unsure who can be trusted as a source of reliable information

## – Needs:

- Step-by-step info of the process and available resources
- Timely reminders of registration, ballot request and ballot return deadlines
- Assistance communicating important info to spouse

# Look to Data - FVAP Analysis

The image displays two overlapping screenshots of the FVAP.gov website. The top screenshot shows a news article titled "FVAP Research: FVAP.gov Enhancements Positively Impacted Overseas Military Absentee Voter Behavior". The bottom screenshot shows a news article titled "FVAP Research: Marital Status Contributes to Voting Behavior Especially for Those Stationed Overseas". Both screenshots include the website's navigation menu, search bar, and social media links.

## FVAP Research: FVAP.gov Enhancements Positively Impacted Overseas Military Absentee Voter Behavior

ALEXANDRIA, Va. - A new research note recently released by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) indicates its website redesign had a positive effect on absentee voter registration. FVAP's 2012 Post-Election Report to Congress stated a relationship between the use of the FVAP website and the likelihood of a military member registering and voting absentee. However, because website users may differ from non-users in ways that are relevant to voting - which could not be accounted for given the limited information in the 2012 post-election data - FVAP's 2012 report did not claim that website use actually caused the higher rate of voting.

FVAP has since examined aspects of this relationship in its new research note and discusses the impact that the FVAP website redesign - which occurred between the 2008 and 2012 elections - had on overseas active duty military (ADM) voter participation. During that time, FVAP redesigned its website to make it more informative with respect to State-specific laws and deadlines, and added a new interactive online assistant for completing the registration and absentee ballot request form (Federal Post Card Application, or FPCA) and the backup Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

The note provides a review of the previous research and details the data, methodology and results of the new study.

Key findings from this research:

- The changes to the FVAP website increased the probability that website users requested an absentee ballot or voted, compared with a projected outcome had the changes never been implemented. While other factors do affect voting behavior, the research was specifically isolated to changes based on website usage.
- Website use was associated with a larger increase in the probability of casting a ballot in the 2012 election relative to the 2008 election. This suggests an increase in the effectiveness of the website in facilitating voting between those two elections:

	Website Non-User	Website User
2008	51%	73%
2012	34%	73%

## FVAP Research: Marital Status Contributes to Voting Behavior Especially for Those Stationed Overseas

ALEXANDRIA, Va. - New research recently released by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) validates initial research findings that military members who are married are more likely to vote than those who are unmarried. The differences in voting rates between married and unmarried active duty military (ADM) are positive and larger for ADM who are stationed overseas than for ADM living in the United States.

Previous research concerning marriage and voting propensity attributes the increased participation to the fact that spouses discuss politics with one another and naturally share information about the voting process. FVAP explored this notion and discusses in its research note the importance of family and friends for ADM to obtain voting information. The note provides a review of the previous research and details the data, methodology and results of the new study.

Key findings from this research:

- The gap between married and unmarried ADM is much larger for overseas ADM; in fact, overseas married ADM are only slightly less likely to vote than domestic married ADM.

### AVERAGE PREDICTED VOTING RATES (FOR REGISTERED ADM), BY MARRIAGE AND OVERSEAS STATUS

	Domestic	Overseas
Unmarried ADM	63%	52%
Married ADM	72%	68%

Overseas married ADM were 10.5 percentage points more likely than overseas unmarried ADM to have received voting information from family and friends, which indicates that spouses are the most likely source of this information.

- Although unmarried ADM do not have access to information from a spouse, they likely do obtain information from other social contacts. Gathering more information about their social networks may assist FVAP in marketing its services to all ADM, especially those who are unmarried.
- The data presents little evidence that spouses influence ADM voting through increased utilization of Department of Defense (DoD) FVAP re-

Working  
together  
is success  
Henry Ford

# Working Together for You and Your Voters....

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# Working Together – Policy Working Group



## Voter Communication

- » Use plain language.
- » Make effective use of election websites and social media.
- » Create more user-friendly electronic ballot return envelopes.
- » Communicate to voters when the ballot application is accepted.
- » Provide information to voters about what is on the ballot.

## Federal Post Card Application

- » Treat the FPCA as a permanent request for voter registration.
- » Establish a default validity period for the FPCA mail ballot request.

## Online Voter Registration

- » States that provide online voter registration should incorporate online registration for overseas and military voters.

## Improved Engagement with U.S. Military Community

- » Establish partnerships between state and local election officials and local military installations.



# Working Together – Technology Working Group

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- Ballot Duplication
- Data Standardization
- Use of the DoD Common Access Card
- Ballot Tracking Pilot Project



# Working Together – EAVS Section B Working Group

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- Clarify Language and Instructions for 2016
- Develop Roadmap for the future
- Understand the role of Data Standardization
- Look to transactional election data for voter success metrics





## What can the Standards Board do?

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- ★ - Continue to set the bar high for the work of the EAC
- Challenge the Status Quo and embrace change
- Continue to push the EAC and FVAP to develop technologies and programs/services for our UOCAVA voters

**SERVICE ALL VOTERS  
VOTER EXPERIENCE & SUCCESS BECOMES PRIORITY  
DELIVER "THE WOW" PHILOSOPHY**

# What Can We All Do?

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BE  
IN  
THE  
BUSINESS  
OF  
BEING  
AWESOME.

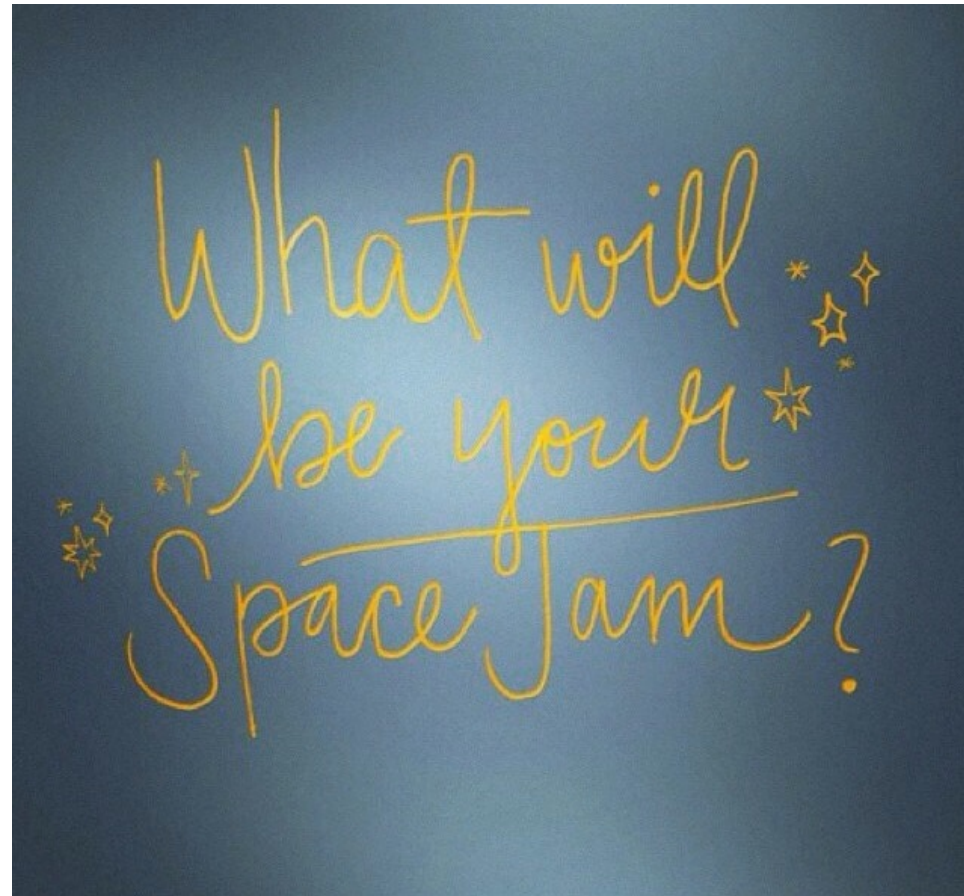


# Let's all do this together

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★ ★ Our military and overseas voters need our very best

**BE  
IN  
THE  
BUSINESS  
OF  
BEING  
AWESOME.**



  
**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
BE  
GOODER**