



DEMOCRACY AND TECHNOLOGY



March 2021

March 2021

Research and Drafting:

Ana Amundaray

Research Analyst, Liberal Studies student

Sara Fadi

Research Analyst, Liberal Studies Licentiate

Editing:

Silvia Solórzano

Design:

Ana Amundaray

Sara Fadi

Executive Summary

Technology is the set of knowledge and tools that has allowed us to simplify a large number of processes and enhance people's capabilities in different ways. In this sense, it has also influenced human relations and the way in which political activities are carried out.

Technological transformation has taken place in different ways around the world, and the time in which these changes are implemented, as well as their possible advantages and disadvantages, also vary according to the context of each country. Technology is a medium, so its effects will depend largely on the objectives of its users.

Among the uses given to technology in politics, there are: the creation of platforms with centralized information on government and citizens, the streamlining and simplification of procedures, citizen mobilization and the articulation of political action, the influence on public opinion and the monitoring of citizens by the State.

Positive aspects of the use of technology for democracy

Virtual Political Campaigns	1
Open Government	2
Increased capacity for citizen organization	4
Political Parties generated online	6

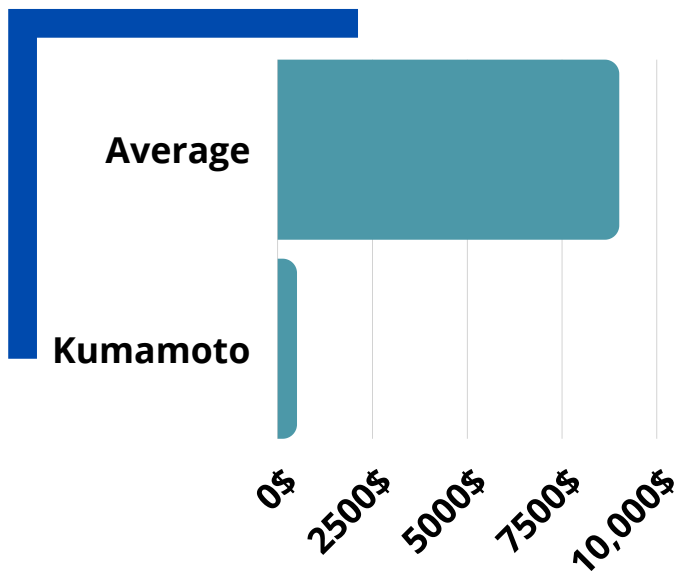
Negative aspects of the use of technology for democracy

Mass surveillance	7
Cambridge analitica	9
Security drawbacks: electronic voting	10
Use of technology in Latin America	12

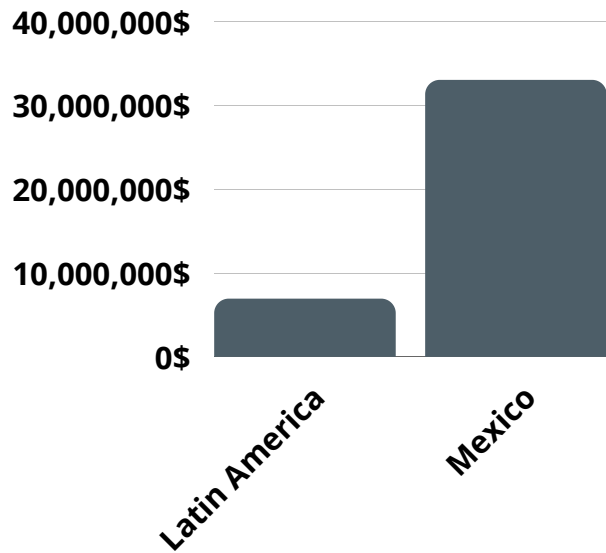
Conclusions	13
-------------	----



POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR DEMOCRACY



Spending on political campaigns for the position of Local Representative in Mexico (1)



Average political campaign spending by Representatives in Latin America (2)

VIRTUAL POLITICAL CAPAIGNS

Virtual campaigns have emerged as an alternative used by politicians to connect with voters and convey ideas.

In Mexico, a country where campaign spending by political parties is one of the highest in Latin America, **Pedro Kumamoto** managed, for the 2015 local deputy elections, **to design a campaign with a powerful virtual strategy that had a total cost of around \$500.**

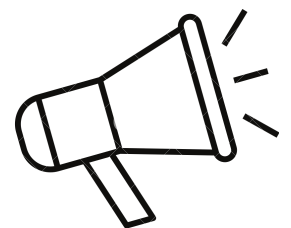
(1) Núñez (2018)

(2) According to the average spending for legislative elections in Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Chile and El Salvador

Kumamoto's Electoral Strategy



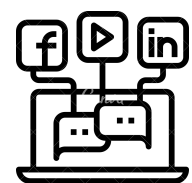
Viral videos and messages of support on Whatsapp



Online promotion kits



Volunteering



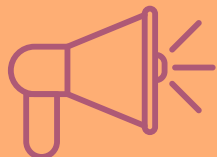
Fast and personalized response on social media

OPEN GOVERNMENT

The concept of Open Government corresponds to the way of relating between authorities and citizens, where transparency, accountability and participation prevail through the support of technological innovation. It also strengthens the feedback of public management, which has two positive effects: improving the quality of life of people and improving public services through the build-up of capacities. This way, citizens have access to important information, including the design and implementation of public policies, so they can make an effective and continuous monitoring of the governments' management. (Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency, 2018).

CHILE: an exponent of open government in Latin America

According to Chile's Fourth Action Plan for Open Government 2018 - 2020, Chile developed projects related to deepening the implementation of an Open Government on a national scale:



Electronic platform for public services management complaints: a web platform was created to allow citizens to file complaints online and request assistance in completing procedures.



Strengthening of Open Data: an online platform was created to enable the efficient use of data collected through public services and Big Data tools are used for the efficient implementation of public policies.



Transparency Bill 2.0 The amendments made to the legislature will consolidate a state policy and will be the key to the creation of a true culture of transparency.



Digital Transformation Bill: The main objectives of this project are in line with increasing the efficiency of administrative procedures.

ESTONIA: successful implementation of the Open Government model

Since 1990 Estonia has experimented with the implementation of technological tools in its government operations. This initiative has evolved into an interconnected network of information between the public and private sector, resulting in significant integration and efficiency in procedures based on 5 essential systems:



X-Road data infrastructure: X-road is an interoperability platform for databases that can be used by public and private sector actors. Due to its independence, it is a secure program for data exchanges and the identification of trusted actors in the provision of digital services.



e-Cabinet: The information necessary for decision-making can be accessed at any time through the e-Cabinet platform. This provides updated information to ministers, which reduces bureaucracy in government decisions, in this sense, weekly Cabinet meetings reduced their duration from 4-5 hours to 30 minutes.



Information system for legislative drafting: Through this portal citizens can see the laws being proposed and express their opinion on them. Every year 100 drafts are submitted to the portal for government approval.



Online petitions: Citizens can submit collective petitions to the Parliament through the Citizen Initiative Portal. Between 2014 and 2018, 19 petitions were submitted.

INCREASED CAPACITY FOR CITIZEN ORGANIZATION

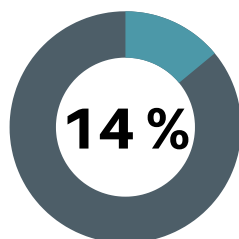
Peaceful protest is a right included among the freedoms of assembly and expression, protected by international regulations, whose function is to publicly express the disagreement of a community with the actions of a State.

Latin America is no stranger to public demonstrations, and with the advent of social media, the organization of these demonstrations has become massive and their images and messages accessible from anywhere in the world.

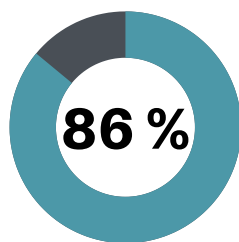
As an example of the massive influence of these tools, social media was key to coordinate the wave of protests that occurred in Latin America in 2019 (Shifter, 2019), where young people were the protagonists of such movements. Sometimes, due to their extent, governments intervened to censor the cyberspace, as a strategy to prevent the movements from gaining traction.

During the 2019 protests:

14
INCIDENTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA CENSORSHIP
(1)



IN ECUADOR



IN VENEZUELA

Countries that presented massive protests in 2019:



Source: own elaboration

(1) Access Now (2020)

INCREASED CAPACITY FOR CITIZEN ORGANIZATION

Action in the most unexpected places: protest in Cuba

In November 2020, after the arrest of rapper Denis Solis, a series of online protests were organized to demand the release of the artist and greater freedoms for musicians living in Cuba. The event that started this series of protests was the indignation generated by the arrest of the rapper, which was transmitted through his account via Facebook Live, something that has been possible only recently on the island, since the government allowed internet access through cell phones only two years ago.

Through Whatsapp and Facebook, several artists from the Cuban music scene (identified under the name Movimiento San Isidro) organized a protest in front of the Ministry of Culture and started a hunger strike.

This was the first demonstration against the military government organized spontaneously in decades, which marks a milestone in Cuban history, and demonstrates the importance of freedom of expression in social media. From these events, conversations about the status of freedoms in the country have begun.

However, after the dialogue between protesters and Ministry officials, the Cuban government proceeded to publicly defame the movement.

Protests in Cuba (1)

7,1
million

Cubans have internet access



Access to websites is monitored by the government



There is only one Internet provider in the country (ETECSA).

+200

Persons present in the protest

(1) Augustin, Kitroeff & Robles (2020)

POLITICAL PARTIES GENERATED ONLINE

Just as protests have been revolutionized by the arrival of social media, political parties have also adapted to the new realities. From the development of marketing strategies and electoral campaigns to launch on the internet, to generating entirely online, the political world has been able to take advantage, in a new way, of the benefits of these tools.

Partido de la Red (Argentina): born on the internet

The Partido de la Red was founded in 2012, with the aim of expanding the political participation of Argentines through an online platform, where affiliates would have the opportunity to express their needs, comments and complaints to party members, in addition to directly influence party decisions.



Democracy OS: The elected deputies of this party will always vote according to what the citizens choose in the OS Democracy platform, where those registered in the electoral roll can vote "Yes", "No" or abstain, as well as discuss among themselves about the proposed policies.



New structures: The party does not believe in vertical structures. It appeals to collective intelligence, incorporating others, creating knots of knowledge and trust, using technology as the link between citizens and the State.



"Liquid Democracy": The party is inspired by the "Swedish Pirate Party" which was a pioneer in spreading the model of the so-called "liquid democracy," which proposes the possibility for anyone to participate with a virtual, direct or delegated vote in the decisions of the parliaments.



NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR DEMOCRACY

MASS SURVEILLANCE

The use of technology to monitor the movements of citizens has been used to improve the safety levels of cities and to ensure that the rules for better coexistence are effectively implemented. However, these tools, which allow control over the population, can be used for coercive purposes and pose a danger to the citizenry.

China: Mass surveillance through technology

Since 2014, the Chinese government has been testing a mass surveillance system on its population. This is based on a score given to each citizen between 350 and 950 points, based on the trust the government has towards this person. Each citizen's score can be lowered due to minor infractions, such as not paying a fine, smoking in a forbidden place or in more extreme cases, possessing personal beliefs contrary to those of the Chinese government.

Among the consequences of having a low score are prohibitions such as: impediments for buying air tickets, applying for certain educational institutions or making it difficult to get a medical appointment.

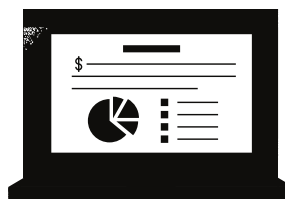
Strategies used by the Chinese government (1)



Usage of security cameras and facial recognition



Records consumption habits in services such as Alibaba and Alipay



Centralized system that analyzes the financial information of each individual



Consideration of fines and judicial record

(1) Rodriguez (2018); Martí (2020)

MASS SURVEILLANCE

How does the Chinese social credit system work?

Low social credit

- Dishonest citizen
- Is indebted
- Has a criminal record
- Supports anti-government ideas

Is forbidden from:

- Buying certain property
- Travelling in high speed trains o airplanes
- Being a public official

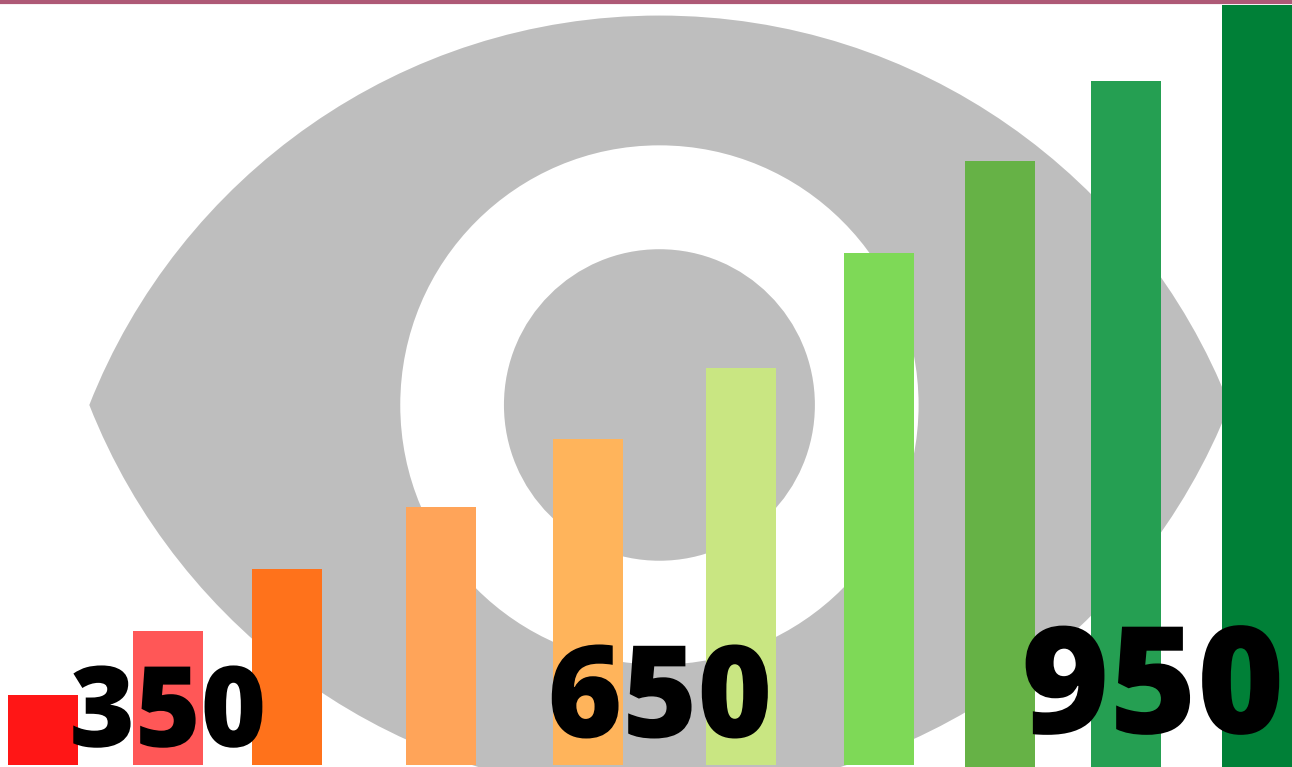
Average social credit

- Average citizen without serious violations.
- Free to buy, sell and travel without restrictions

High social credit

- Outstanding citizen
- Contributes to their community
- Donates to charity

- Has no restrictions
- Gets incentives like credit facilities



The successful implementation of mass surveillance plans by state entities can lead to dangerous consequences for the personal freedom of citizens and democratic well-being.

CAMBRIDGE ANALITICA

The London-based data management company, Cambridge Analytica, was the protagonist in 2018 of a scandal related to the election campaign of former President Donald Trump. Through data obtained from Facebook, without the prior consent of its users, the company managed to design personalized ads for American voters that favored the Republican candidate.

The company, based on the information gathered, not only showed personalized advertising, but developed and promoted fake or misleading news to favor Trump.

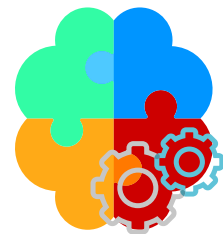
Cambridge Analytica's Strategy:



A Personality test developed in 2013 had access to data of users and their friends on Facebook



Cambridge Analytica purchased the data



The data was used to analyze the profiles of thousands of users and know their preferences



Based on these profiles, advertisements were developed. These were adapted to the interests of each user and even sought to manipulate their perception of a subject.



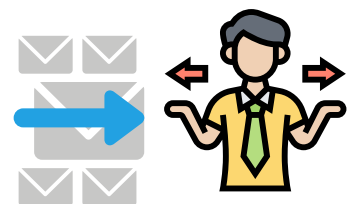
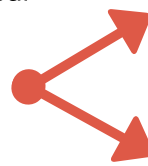
It determined whether the user responds to fear or hope



If it is a decided user, the algorithm ignores it



Or whether it's easy or hard to persuade



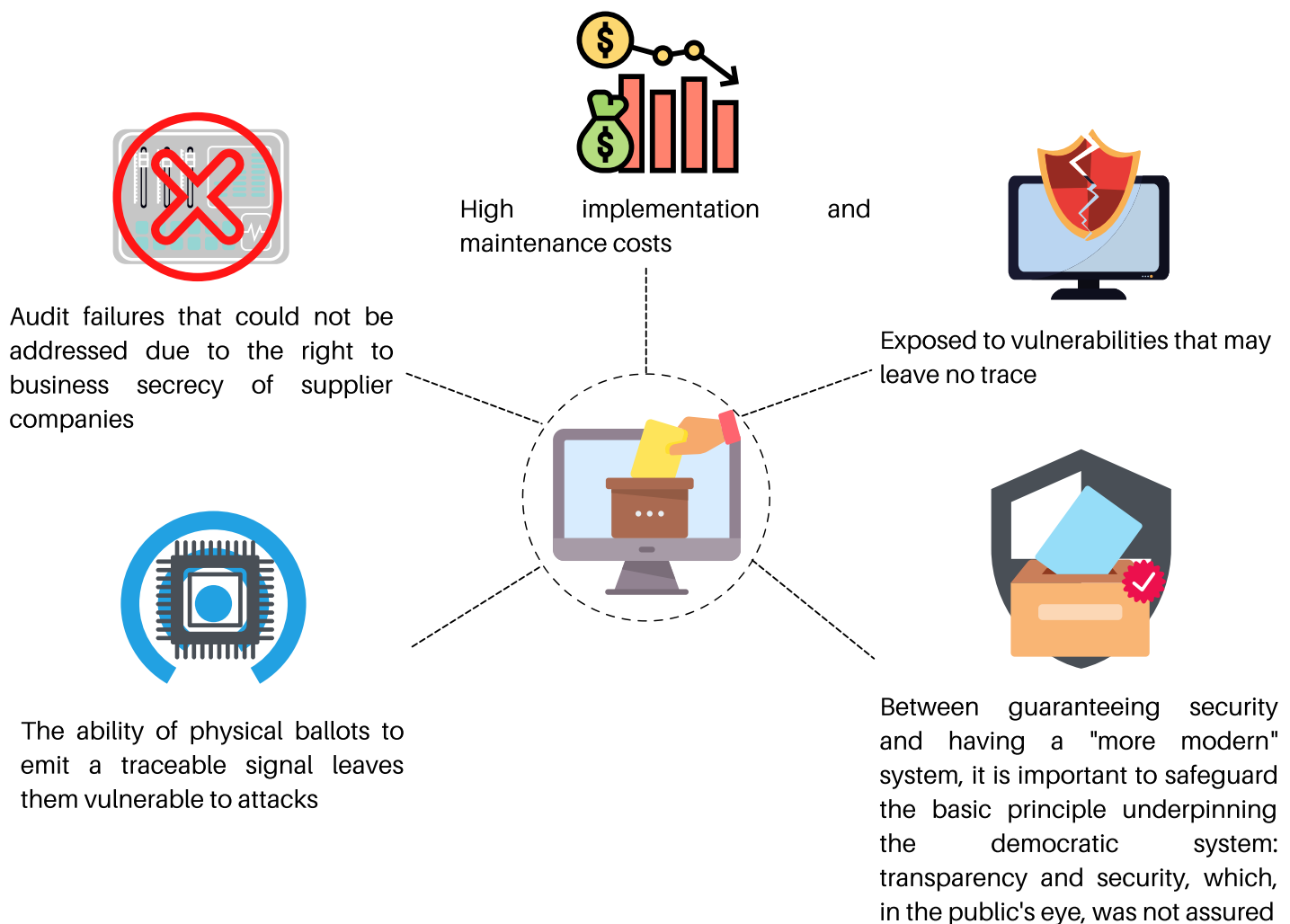
On the contrary, if it is an undecided one, specific persuasion tactics were used.

SECURITY DRAWBACKS: ELECTRONIC VOTING

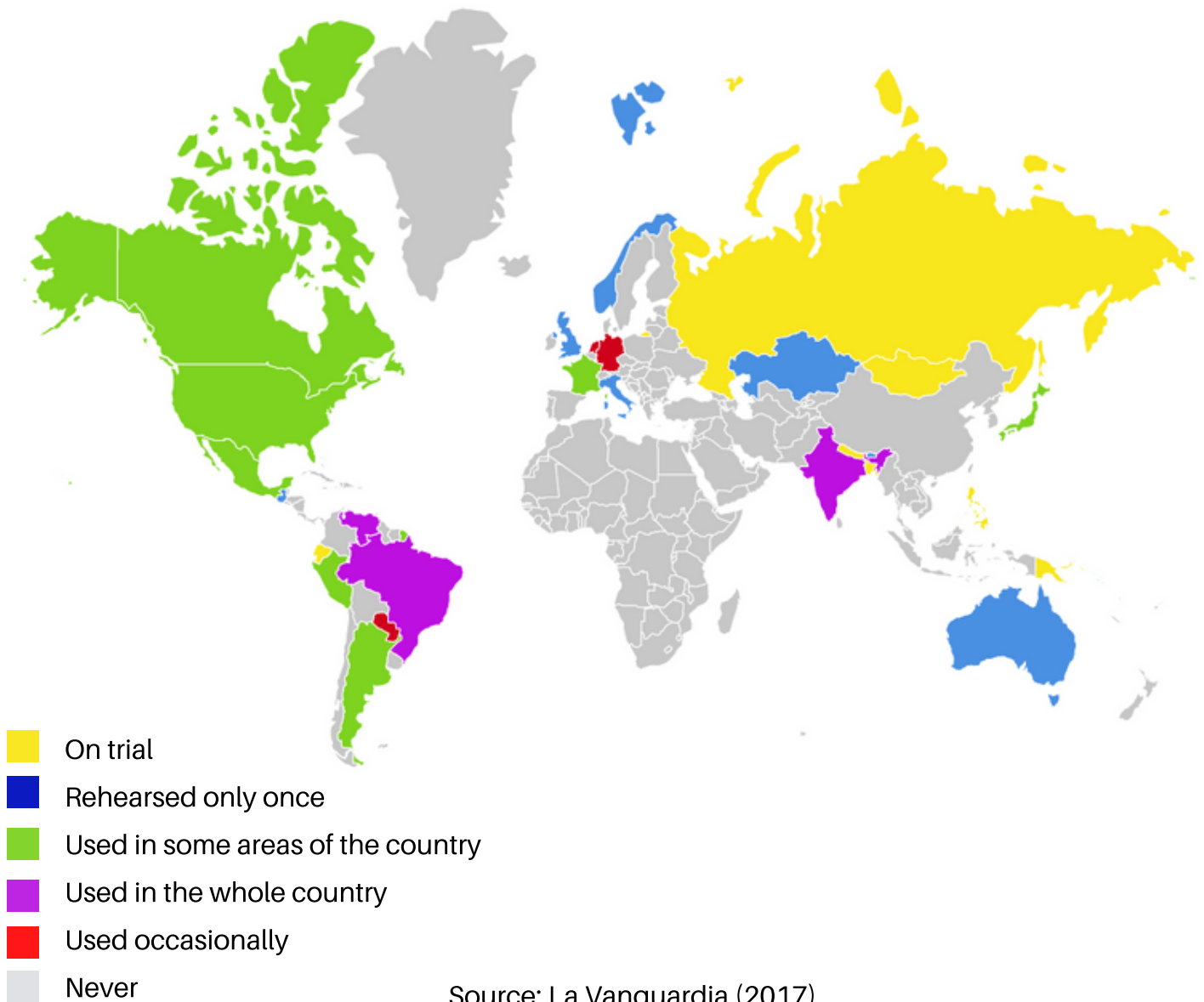
While the use of technology in various aspects of people's daily lives has streamlined certain processes, making them more convenient and effective, there is still controversy as to whether it should be applied to one of the most crucial aspects of the current political processes: the vote. An example of the negative implications of electronic voting is the implementation of this strategy in Argentina.

Electronic voting project in Argentina:

In Argentina, an attempt was made to implement an electronic voting scheme in 2016, however, it was rejected due to several vulnerabilities, according to Aguerre (2017):



Electronic voting in the world



The implementation of electronic voting has been an issue that has generated divided discussions and opinions, due to the possible implications of security, transparency and legitimacy of the elections in which this procedure is applied. Countries like Holland and Germany have abandoned its use and only three countries in the world (Venezuela, India and Brazil) use it for national elections.

However, there are still governments that support its use and believe that, with the right technology, its implementation can positively impact the entire electoral process. For example, in Estonia citizens have the possibility to vote electronically, 44% of voters use this system and according to the Estonian Government (2021) this has saved 844 years of work.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LATIN AMERICA

Disparities in the access to technology



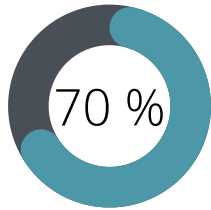
ONLY 38% OF LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS HAVE INTERNET ACCESS (1)



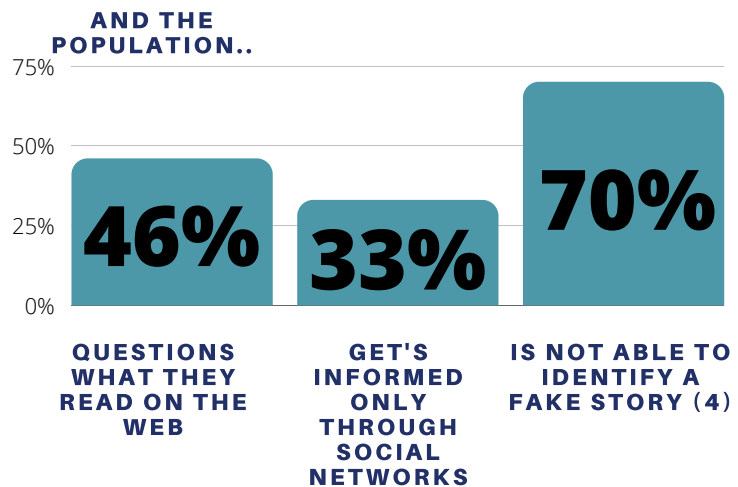
81,7

MILLION PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE INTERNET ACCESS (2)

Effects of fake news



MORE POSSIBILITIES TO BE SHARED VIA TWITTER (3)



Cybersecurity in the region

12/46

COUNTRIES HAVE IMPLEMENTED GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AGAINST CYBERATTACKS (5)



EVERY SECOND 45 CYBER ATTACKS OCCUR IN LATIN AMERICA (6)

In Latin America, a significant proportion of the population still does not have the necessary equipment or a stable internet access to effectively perform in technology-based processes, or does not have enough knowledge to recognize a false story. Therefore, implementing plans for the modernization of democracies based mainly on technology could leave millions out of the most important political processes.

(1) France 24 (2020)

(2) Poverty statistics of BBVA (2020): 215 M- el 62%

(3) BBVA Open Mind (2020)

(4) Kaspersky (2020)

(5) BID (2020)

(6) Kaspersky (2019)



Conclusions

- Technology has facilitated the coordination of citizen participation and the articulation of interests, making certain processes less costly and more transparent compared to traditional forms. In addition, several governments have transformed their platforms and services with technology, examples of this are the "open governments" of Chile and Estonia and the use of electronic voting in countries such as Venezuela and Brazil.
- In addition, through social media, companies have collected important data on citizens, using this information to influence public opinion, whether on a political issue or in elections.
- The capabilities that technology can maximize will have positive or negative effects on society depending on the objectives of the person or group using it. For example, while technology can simplify the processes that must be carried out through government entities, an authoritarian government can also monitor and control through these means, as it happens in China. In addition, while electronic voting seemed like a breakthrough at the start, it is, for now, less secure and can be more easily tapped for fraud.

Bibliographic References

- Access Now (2020). Keep it on 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.accessnow.org/cms/assets/uploads/2020/02/KeepItOn-2019-report-1.pdf>
- Acción Ciudadana. (2018). Propaganda Electoral 2018: El uso del dinero en la política en El Salvador -Julio 2018-. Retrieved from: <https://accionciudadana.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/La-propaganda-electoral-2018.-El-uso-del-dinero-en-la-politica-en-El-Salvador.pdf>
- Aguerre, T. (s/f). Voto electrónico: un debate entre lo seguro y lo moderno. Retrieved from: https://cursos.vialibre.org.ar/pluginfile.php/613/mod_resource/content/0/Un%20debate%20entre%20lo%20seguro%20y%20lo%20moderno%20%28clase%20%29.pdf
- Aguilar, R. & Joyce, P. (2017). Influencia del marketing político digital en campañas electorales: caso Pedro Kumamoto. Retrieved from: <https://repositorioinstitucional.buap.mx/handle/20.500.12371/554>
- Augustin, E. Kitroeff, N. Robles, F. (9 de diciembre 2020). 'En las redes hay miles': el acceso a internet aviva una rara protesta en Cuba. The New York Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2020/12/09/espanol/america-latina/cuba-represion-san-isidro.html>
- BBC Mundo (21 de marzo 2018). Cómo Cambridge Analytica usó la información de los usuarios de Facebook para hacer propaganda política. BBC Mundo. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-43494409>
- Corona, S. (10 de junio 2015). Así derrotó Kumamoto a los grandes partidos mexicanos. El País. Retrieved from: https://elpais.com/internacional/2015/06/10/actualidad/1433965144_500663.html
- E-estonia (2021). E-governance. Retrieved from: <https://e-estonia.com/solutions/e-governance/i-voting/>
- Garzón, M. (27 de octubre 2020). América Latina: Más de 28 millones de personas entrarían en situación de pobreza este año por el COVID-19. BBVA. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbva.com/es/america-latina-mas-de-28-millones-de-personas-entrarian-en-situacion-de-pobreza-este-ano-por-el-covid-19/>
- Kattel, R. & Mergel, I. (2018). Estonia's digital transformation: Mission mystique and the hiding hand. Retrieved from: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/public-purpose/sites/public-purpose/files/iipp-wp-2018-09_estonias_digital_transformation.pdf

Bibliographic References

- Kaspersky (28 de agosto 2019). Kaspersky registra 45 ataques por segundo en América Latina. Kaspersky Daily. Retrieved from: [https://latam.kaspersky.com/blog/kaspersky-registra-45-ataques-por-segundo-en-america-latina/15274/#:~:text=Durante%20la%20Cumbre%20Latinoamericana%20de,qu e%20afecta%20a%20la%20región.&text=En%20el%20último%20año%20\(julio,en %20América%20Latina%20cada%20segundo.](https://latam.kaspersky.com/blog/kaspersky-registra-45-ataques-por-segundo-en-america-latina/15274/#:~:text=Durante%20la%20Cumbre%20Latinoamericana%20de,qu e%20afecta%20a%20la%20región.&text=En%20el%20último%20año%20(julio,en %20América%20Latina%20cada%20segundo.)
- Kaspersky (4 de febrero 2020) 70% de los latinoamericanos desconoce cómo detectar una fake news. Kaspersky Daily. Retrieved from: <https://latam.kaspersky.com/blog/70-de-los-latinoamericanos-desconoce-como-detectar-una-fake-news/17015/>
- La FM. (3 de enero 2020). Jóvenes y redes sociales, protagonistas de las protestas de 2019 en Latinoamérica. La FM. Retrieved from: <https://www.lafm.com.co/colombia/jovenes-y-redes-sociales-protagonistas-de-las-protestas-de-2019-en-latinoamerica>
- La Vanguardia. (11 de marzo de 2017). ¿Qué países utilizan ya el voto electrónico?. La Vanguardia. Retrieved from: <https://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20170309/42670140542/paises-utilizan-voto-electronico.html>
- Manrique, J. (25 de septiembre 2013). El Partido de la Red araña la democracia en Argentina. Americas Quartely. Retrieved from: <https://www.americasquarterly.org/blog/el-partido-de-la-red-arana-la-democracia-en-argentina/>
- Martí, R. (19 de enero 2020). El crédito social chino: cuando el gobierno te pone nota. Esquire. Retrieved from: <https://www.esquire.com/es/actualidad/a30361853/credito-social-chino-que-es/>
- Massare, B. (2020). Voto electrónico: cuando la tecnología es el problema. Retrieved from: <https://www.unsam.edu.ar/tss/voto-electronico-cuando-la-tecnologia-es-el-problema/>
- Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia. (2018). Cuarto Plan de Acción de Gobierno Abierto 2018-2020. Retrieved from: <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/4to%20Plan%20OGP%20Chile.pdf>
- Núñez, L. (16 de julio 2018). ¿Cuánto costaron las campañas? Los datos de las elecciones de 2018. Nexos. Retrieved from: <https://anticorrupcion.nexos.com.mx/cuanto-costaron-las-campanas-los-datos-de-las-elecciones-de-2018/>

Bibliographic References

- Poder Ejecutivo Nacional – República Argentina (2019). Anexo I Aporte Campaña Categoría Diputados Distrito Buenos Aires Elecciones Generales 2019. Retrieved from: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/di-2019-83643151-apn-dfpyemi_anexo_i_buenos_aires.pdf
- Rodríguez, A. (4 de diciembre 2018). El sistema de crédito social chino. El Orden Mundial. Retrieved from: <https://elordenmundial.com/el-sistema-de-credito-social-chino/>
- Schryen, G & Rich, E. (2009). Security in Large-Scale Internet Elections: A Retrospective Analysis of Elections in Estonia, The Netherlands, and Switzerland. Retrieved from: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/11550234.pdf>
- Servel. (2020). Ingresos y gastos de partidos. Retrieved from: <https://www.servel.cl/ingresos-y-gastos-de-partidos/>
- Uribe, M. (15 de abril 2018). Kumamoto y su forma de hacer política. El Economista. Retrieved from: <https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/politica/Kumamoto-y-su-forma-de-hacer-politica-20180415-0002.html>