

European Parliament shows strong interest in ICOMP's e-campaigning event

ICOMP's dinner debate "European Election Campaigns in the Internet Age: what lessons from the US?" took place on 17 September in the European Parliament in Brussels and attracted a crowd of 100 high profile EU insiders. Attended by guests such as the European Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Viviane Reding, and the former President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox, every fifth person in the room actually was a Member of the European Parliament.

Following introductions from ICOMP legal advisor David Wood and hosting MEP Alexander Alvaro, Commissioner Viviane Reding expressed her personal interest in the fascinating topic of the debate.

Then the speakers set the scene for the debate:

Mark Penn, Worldwide CEO of Burson-Marsteller (ICOMP Member) and senior Democratic campaign strategist. Mr Penn presented insights into the ways the political debate around election campaigns have transformed through the internet, with examples from the current US elections.

Ravi Singh, CEO and founder of ElectionMall, a non-partisan election technology company. Mr Singh focused his intervention on how the online market and certain technologies can be used to attract and engage with voters and help fundraising.

Jacob Boetter, Co-founder of Wemind, a social software company specialised in communication strategies. Mr Boetter explained the need and ways to engage with voters rather than using one way communication routes.

These presentations were followed by a lively debate. MEPs were particularly interested in how the changes translate into European politics. Ravi Singh said that if used correctly, the internet could generate a higher turnout in the upcoming European Parliament elections in June 2009. Mark Penn underlined that "it is not only about going online, but having a message that gets people involved". This was shared by Jacob Boetter who reminded politicians that engaging with the voters is possible and effective using the internet and social networks, but it means entering into a dialogue and stopping the top-down approach. Replying to a question from Pat Cox, this was where the panelists saw the biggest room for improvement regarding the campaign for the Lisbon Treaty in Ireland.

Video's from the Event:



[Speaker: Mark J. Penn](#)



[Speaker: Ravi Singh](#)



[Speaker: Jacob Boetter](#)



[Q&A Session](#)

Pictures from the Event:



