

## Usage of the SEEC On-Line Voters' Guide in the 2009 General Election

### A summary analysis

The SEEC's online 2009 General Election Voters' Guide had approximately 12,200 unique visitors between October 1<sup>st</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup>. These are fairly solid numbers of actual unique human visitors. We do a lot of rigid coding and processing of the raw hits on our site and remove bots, multiple visits from the same user, etc.

These numbers are twice what we saw in the 2007 General Election (6,800) and three times what we saw in this year's primary (4,400).

Some facts about all our visitors:

- Almost half (46.9%) of the visits came in the last 3 days of the election. This is comparable to what we saw in the 2007 General, but not comparable to our experience in the 2009 primary where only a third of all visits came in the last 3 days. Apparently, General Elections bring out more procrastinators.
- The linking sites that visitors arrived from

	2009 Gen'l	2009 Prim	2007 Gen'l
Google	37%	55%	34%
King County	35%	.3% *	36%
Favorite/Typing URL	12%	13%	1%
Bing, Yahoo & Others	6%	8%	6%
Other City of Seattle	5%	11%	16%
Local News/Blogs	2%	5%	6%
Misc./Campaigns/Other	3%	7%	1%

\*In the 2009 Primary King County did not link to our voters guide.

- We analyzed 5,146 of the search engine queries that resulted in a clicked link to our site. Almost all (91%) contained the word "Seattle" as a query term. Some others, and a comparison to 2007:

2009			2007		
WORD	COUNT	% OF 5146	WORD	COUNT	% OF 2466
SEATTLE	4679	90.9%	SEATTLE	1630	66.1%
VOTERS	1812	35.2%	VOTER(S)	1028	41.7%
GUIDE	1649	32.0%	GUIDE	966	39.2%
2009	1576	30.6%	2007	877	35.6%
VOTERS GUIDE	1296	25.2%	VOTER(S)+GUIDE	654	26.5%
ELECTION	1266	24.6%	STRANGER	429	17.4%
SEATTLE VOTERS	1159	22.5%	SEATTLE+VOTER(S)	366	14.8%
SEATTLE VOTERS					
GUIDE	871	16.9%	ELECTION	303	12.3%
CITY	830	16.1%	PAMPHLET	290	11.8%
SEATTLE ELECTION	751	14.6%	NOVEMBER	281	11.4%

ELECTION 2009	559	10.9%	VOTING	271	11.0%
OF	514	10.0%	VOTER(S)+PAMPHLET	269	10.9%
1	502	9.8%	THE	227	9.2%
OF SEATTLE	478	9.3%	GUIDE+2007	222	9.0%
CITY OF	466	9.1%	6	220	8.9%
CITY OF SEATTLE	453	8.8%	CHARTER	219	8.9%
VOTING	435	8.5%	AMENDMENT	218	8.8%
SEATTLE ELECTION					
2009	424	8.2%	SEATTLE+VOTER(S)+GUIDE	210	8.5%
PAMPHLET	384	7.5%	VOTING+GUIDE	203	8.2%
PROPOSITION	347	6.7%	1	202	8.2%

Please note there is “double counting” on the above chart. For example, the 871 queries that included the phrase “Seattle Voters Guide” are a subset of the 1159 queries that included the terms “Seattle Voters”.

## Notes and Methods

Several things were done to pare down the raw data we collected so the final data mostly included single-counted human visits to this year’s voters guide. This stands in contrast to many statistics on web usage which count “robot” visitors, count the same human visitor multiple times, etc...

1. Self-identified “bots” and “crawlers” were removed from the data set. “Bots” and “Crawlers” are automated computers used by Search Engine companies like Google and Yahoo to constantly scan the billions of web pages out there and store that information in the massive databases they use to deliver search results.
2. Efforts were made to only count each human visit once. This is impossible to do with anything close to 100% reliability. For a full discussion on how imprecise this art is try googling “wiki web analytics”. Our methodology was to group downloads of our page into one visit when the grouped pages: 1) were from the same IP address, 2) used the exact same flavor of browser, and 3) were within 30 minutes of each other or were in a chain of downloads with no more than 30 minutes separating each download. Please note that once our software has grouped this we remove the IP address from our records.
3. Other miscellaneous visits to the voters guide were also removed from the data, such as spammer visits, etc...
4. The search terms “Voter” and “Voters” were combined into “Voters”. “Prop” and “Proposition” were combined into “Prop(osition)”, Ref and Referendum, etc....

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