Toronto – September 24, 2007

New online world sees young Canadians on sidelines of election as parties fail to engage with new media.

Just as Robert Putnam wrote in _Bowling Alone_, a recent poll for the Dominion Institute, conducted by Innovative Research Group, shows that young Canadians today are playing politics as an individual spectator sport, staying on the sidelines and not participating in this election.

In a self-fulfilling prophecy, three quarters of young Canadians report being concerned about the low young voter turnout, but very few report discussing politics with their families and friends (8%).

Young Canadians live in a new world where even more (83%) have a facebook page than have a cell phone (81%). Consistent with this new online world, young Canadians prefer to use the internet (35%) when looking for more information about the Canadian election, followed by three-in-ten who chose television (30%). Less than one-in-ten (8%) chose friends and family as their key information source.

Parties have not yet adjusted to this new reality; when asked if any Canadian political parties hade reached out to them through a new media method (email, text message, facebook, myspace and /or Twitter) only one-in-ten (9%) reported that they had been engaged. The parties could learn a very valuable lesson here as this research shows that young Canadians who are actively engaged online are much more likely to vote than those who are only passively engaged. Bloggers are twenty per cent more likely to respond that they are definitely casting a ballot on October 14th than non-bloggers.

Not surprisingly, as young Canadians are so plugged in online, a majority (61%) report that they would be more likely to vote if they could cast their vote online. However, when it comes to extending the vote to younger Canadians, two-thirds (65%) oppose lowering the voting age to 16, with two-fifths (39%) strongly opposing. Young Canadians draw the line at allowing their younger sisters and brothers to vote.

**See attached deck for more information.**