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MERITALK MILLENNIAL MATH STUDY PROVIDES TECH POLICY PRIMER FOR HILLARY AND TRUMP

Flags Tech Trust Dilemma and Tattooed Techie Divide

Alexandria, Va., February 11, 2016 – [MeriTalk](#), a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT, today announced the results of its “Millennial Math: Informing the Next President’s Tech Policy” study. Based on a survey of 1,500 18-25 year old Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math – STEM – students and recent graduates, the study throws up arresting insights from America’s most tech-savvy voters to inform the Presidential candidates’ tech positions. Sixty-two percent of America’s techiest doubt the Internet of Things – IoT – will enhance Americans’ lives. Drilling down, 56 percent do not trust their government with their personal information – interestingly 54 percent believe the government is more trustworthy than private industry.

In God We Trust – Everything Else We Test

Pulling on the public-trust thread, respondents are extremely negative on NSA’s domestic internet and telephone surveillance programs – less than one in four approve of the initiatives. Edward Snowden is a complex figure to this demographic. Thirty-four percent view him as a freedom fighter, while only 12 percent view him as a terrorist. Interestingly, 54 percent are unclear if Snowden is a freedom fighter or terrorist. However, 51 percent of respondents believe Snowden should be allowed back into the United States.

But tech policy and trust go beyond the online experience. A whopping 84 percent of respondents believe law enforcement officers should wear body cameras – and 70 percent say the footage should be available to the public.

App Anxiety?

Eighty percent of respondents express significant anxiety on how websites and applications collect their personal information. Despite these concerns, and the fact that this is America's most tech-savvy group, less than half read the terms of use for website and apps they utilize.

Federal Deficit?

The data reveals a troubling paradox. At a time when the government is falling down hard on IT performance – see healthcare.gov and the OPM cyber security breach – and the aging Federal IT workforce is poised to retire, it is alarming to see that 70 percent of new STEM talent has no interest in pursuing an IT career in the Federal government. Revealingly, 73 percent of respondents interested in working in Federal IT say it is time for Uncle Sam to replace his IT systems.

Men Are From Mars?

Sex matters. Men are almost 10 percent more likely than women to believe IoT will enhance people's lives and 42 percent of men believe the government should regulate IoT, compared to 37 percent of women. Additionally, males are 15 percent more likely to view Snowden as a freedom fighter – and 60 percent believe he should be let back into the U.S. Whereas only 46 percent of women believe Snowden should be allowed back to America. Women are troubled by a lack of STEM role models for younger students – only 28 percent believe there are enough, compared to 43 percent of men. When asked if they would be interested in pursuing an IT career in the Federal government only 24 percent of women said yes, compared to 40 percent of men.

Tattoo Trends?

Tech smarties like ink. Twenty-three percent of the sample report they have tattoos – that compared to [14 percent of all Americans](#). However, techies trail the average 18-25 demographic – 36 percent of young adults have made commitments in permanent ink. Interestingly, there is a link between ink and what you think. Only 38 percent of respondents with a tattoo trust the government with their personal information, compared to 46 percent of respondents without ink. When asked if they are in favor of NSA's Internet and telephone surveillance programs, tattooed techies feel similarly to those without tattoos – 26 percent compared to 23 percent.

“Is IoT DOA?” said Dan Verton, executive editor, MeriTalk. “No amount of bluster from Trump or hope from Hillary will keep America competitive if our young technologists don’t trust their government and have no desire to serve.”

“America’s competitive edge is based on tech, so the candidates need to listen with both ears,” said Steve O’Keeffe, founder, MeriTalk. “I can hardly wait to hear what WAIT WAIT...DON’T TELL ME will make of these figures.”

“Millennial Math: Informing the Next President’s Tech Policy” is based on an online survey of 1,500 STEM students and recent graduates in the U.S., ages 18-25, in October and November 2015. The report has a margin of error of +/- 2.43 at a 95 percent confidence level. To download the full study, please visit: <https://www.meritalk.com/study/millennial-math/>.

About MeriTalk

The voice of tomorrow’s government today, MeriTalk is a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT. Focusing on government’s hot-button issues, MeriTalk’s leading news and information site hosts [Big Data Exchange](#), [Cloud Computing Exchange](#), [Cyber Security Exchange](#), and [Data Center Exchange](#) – platforms dedicated to supporting public-private dialogue and collaboration. MeriTalk connects with an audience of 115,000 government and industry professionals. For more information, visit www.meritalk.com or follow us on Twitter, @meritalk. MeriTalk is a [300Brand organization](#).