

elmo

ELMO is a data collection and reporting system designed for use with tablets, SMS, or online. Developed by The Carter Center for election monitoring, this open-source software can be adapted for use in many disciplines, making quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis increasingly simple, immediate, efficient, and powerful.

Background and Election Use

ELMO was originally conceived as a way to improve election monitoring. The Carter Center deployed the first prototypes during the Liberian and Cherokee Nation elections in 2011 and 2012; findings were submitted via smart phone. Since 2012, ELMO has evolved to allow observers to submit data via smart phone, tablet, SMS, and directly online.

In 2012, ELMO was successfully used on tablets by observers during both rounds of the Egyptian presidential elections and for Libya's legislative elections. In Kenya's 2013 elections, Carter Center observers and staff equipped with ELMO were able to collect nearly 400 data checklists in 36 hours, covering election processes such as polling station opening, voting operations, counting, and tabulation. Prior to the use of ELMO, staff would spend upwards of 20 hours manually transmitting and inputting data for analysis.

Features of ELMO



Collect Data in the Field

Communication conditions change within and among countries and so do the demands and budgets of missions. ELMO was developed so that data can be transmitted on a variety of devices with Internet or wireless technologies. ELMO can be used on wireless or mobile Internet on smart phones, tablets, and laptops in low-broadband settings. ELMO SMS also enables observers to collect and submit data in areas with weak Internet connectivity.



Design Complex Forms

Standard forms or checklists, their questions, and the available answers to questions can be created in ELMO. Standardization eliminates the need for observation groups to remake checklists for every mission and allows for comparisons across missions. While the administration of elections is largely similar from country to country, specific regulations can vary, so ELMO allows for customization in design of the form, its questions, and available answers.



Custom Reporting & Analysis

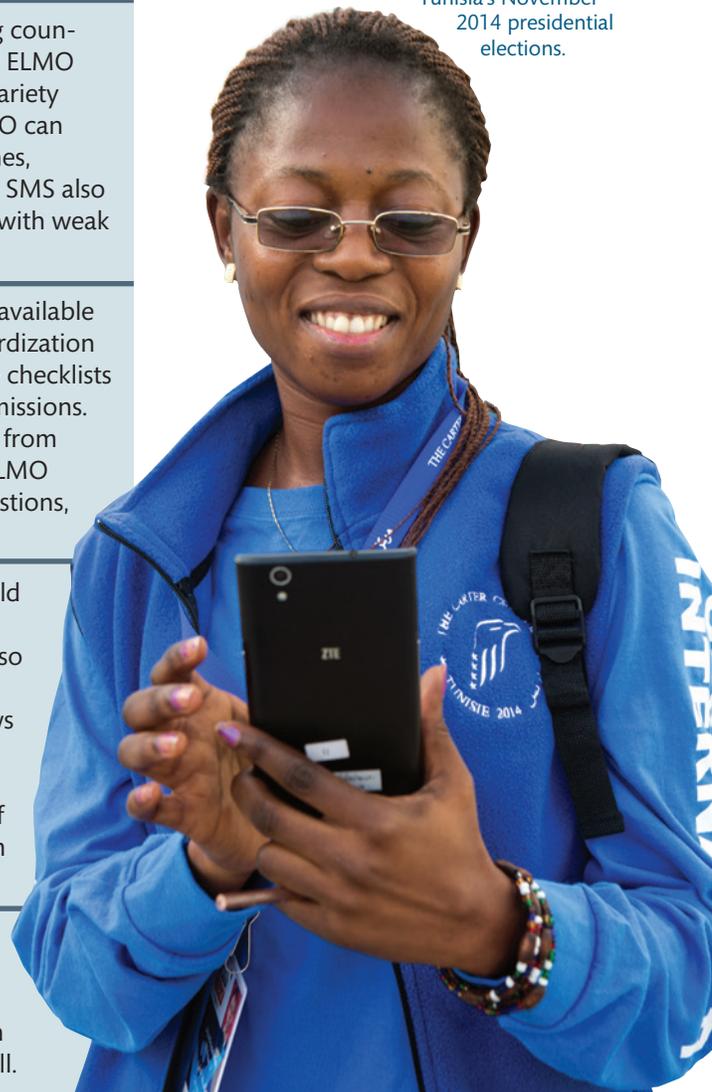
ELMO stores and aggregates incoming data so that field and headquarters staff can quickly chart, graph, and analyze information while writing reports. Data can also be exported from ELMO for further review in other analysis software. The dashboard view on ELMO allows for real-time data analytics, featuring an overview of data gathered from observers, including number of forms sent and by which observer team, a snapshot of most recent forms sent, and a map that indicates from where responses have been sent.



Multi-Language Support

Language settings are easily customized in ELMO. The translation function allows the ELMO interface, forms, questions, and option sets to be translated into a desired language. ELMO is currently available in French, and we are working on other languages as well.

Marie-Danielle Luyoyo Pwenika uses ELMO during the Carter Center's observation of Tunisia's November 2014 presidential elections.





What's Next for ELMO?

Open ELMO is a newly launched initiative by The Carter Center, which strongly believes in sharing ELMO – and leveraging its open-source nature – to allow partners to help shape the tool's development and to serve the election community as a whole. The goal is to build this tool in a way that allows observers and other users to reference commonly accepted election standards, perhaps with links to the Carter Center's database. Future developments could include:

- Empowering citizen observation groups to run election data centers and to issue statements
- Helping humanitarian efforts use and customize ELMO
- Making ELMO available in more languages
- Enabling better storage and assessment of qualitative data for long-term election monitoring
- Enabling links to the Carter Center's searchable database of election obligations and standards (eos.cartercenter.org), and potentially integrating information on relevant election standards into data analysis

Haissam Minkara of Lebanon observes aspects of the polling station process in Egypt during the 2012 presidential elections.

- Improving mapping capabilities to integrate with other applications
- Creating an automatic archiving function that supports future research
- Building a public online forum to better hear and respond to needs and interests

To find out how you can use ELMO and become involved with the ELMO initiative, go to <http://getelmo.org> or contact us at info@getelmo.org.

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