

Module: Modern Nigeria & Global Trends

Topic 2: Electoral Processes & Civic Tech

In the modern era, how we vote and how we hold our leaders accountable is changing. This topic explores the technology used in Nigerian elections and the digital tools citizens use to engage with the government.

1. The Role of INEC

The **Independent National Electoral Commission (IBEC)** is the body responsible for organizing elections in Nigeria. Its job is to ensure that elections are free, fair, and credible.

2. Technology in Elections: BVAS and IReV

To reduce electoral fraud (like multiple voting or result snatching), Nigeria introduced two major technological systems:

- **BVAS (Bimodal Voter Accreditation System):** * This is a handheld device used at polling units.
    - It verifies a voter's identity using **Fingerprints** or **Facial Recognition**.
    - It ensures that only people with valid Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) can vote and that they only vote once.
- **IReV (INEC Result Viewing Portal):** * An online platform where images of the result sheets (Form EC8A) from polling units are uploaded directly after voting ends.
    - This allows any citizen with internet access to view the results in real-time, increasing transparency.

3. The Life Cycle of an Election

1. **Voter Registration:** Citizens aged 18 and above register to get their PVC.
2. **Campaigning:** Political parties share their manifestos with the public.
3. **Accreditation & Voting:** On election day, BVAS is used to verify voters before they cast their ballots.
4. **Collation:** Votes are counted at the polling unit, then sent to ward, local government, and state levels.
5. **Declaration:** The final winner is announced by the Returning Officer.

4. What is Civic Tech?

Civic Tech (Civic Technology) refers to digital tools, apps, and platforms designed to help citizens participate in governance and hold leaders accountable.
Popular Examples in Nigeria:

- **BudgIT:** A platform that simplifies the Nigerian budget, showing citizens exactly how public money is being allocated and spent.
- **Tracka:** A tool used to track government projects (like road construction or school building) in local communities to ensure they are actually completed.
- **Enough is Enough (EiE):** A coalition that uses social media and technology to promote good governance and voter education.
- **Statista/National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Portals:** Where citizens can find data on inflation, unemployment, and economic growth.

5. Why Digital Engagement Matters

- **Transparency:** It is harder for officials to hide information when it is published online.
- **Efficiency:** Reporting a broken pipe or a bad road to the government can now be done via apps or social media (like Twitter/X).
- **Inclusion:** Technology allows young people, who are very active online, to participate in the political process without needing to be in a physical "political meeting."

Student Tip: The "Digital Citizen"

Being a citizen today means more than just voting every four years. It means using these tools to ask questions, track projects in your local government (like Dukku L.G.A.), and stay informed about how your taxes are being used.