

The Converter Currency Poll Results

Bogdan Stăncescu, March 29th 2009

I have organised a poll between March 15th and March 28th 2009 to determine whether the users of the Converter¹ extension for Firefox would need, want or at least support currency conversion features in this extension. I started considering this feature once the dedicated Firefox extension for currency conversions, ViewMyCurrency², stopped being supported.

The results were **overwhelmingly in favor** of integrating that feature into the Converter. This document contains the detailed results, my conclusions, and some extra analysis just for fun.

Enjoy!

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Methodology

The vote consisted of seven completely independent yes/no questions (“*check all that apply*”):

NEUTRAL

- I don't care either way

POSITIVE

- I support the idea
- I need that functionality
- I would use that frequently

NEGATIVE

- I do **not** support the idea
- I do **not** need that functionality
- I would **not** use that frequently

The poll page was shown to all users who installed or upgraded the extension to version 0.7.6 between March 15th and March 28th 2009. The users who chose to vote were presented with the option to receive the poll results via e-mail, by providing their e-mail address in a form.

1 The Converter: <http://converter.mozdev.org/>

2 ViewMyCurrency: <http://viewmycurrency.wordpress.com/>

Participation

- 8,496 total poll hits
- 2,354 votes (27.7% of the hits)
- 446 e-mail addresses provided (18.9% of the votes, or 5.2% of the total number of poll hits).

Results

The results were overwhelmingly in favor of the feature, with 82.06% votes for, 3.24% against, 14.4% neutral, and 0.3% of the votes invalidated (I invalidated obviously contradictory votes, e.g. when someone checked both “*I support the idea*” and “*I do not support the idea*”).

If the results were more undecided I'd take the time to explain how I quantized the votes into categories, but since the results are so obvious there's really no need to: 79.5% of the respondents exclusively checked boxes in the POSITIVE category, 14.2% explicitly checked only the neutral option (all non-voters implicitly did the same), and 2.6% exclusively checked boxes in the NEGATIVE category, for a total of 96.3% completely unambiguous results.

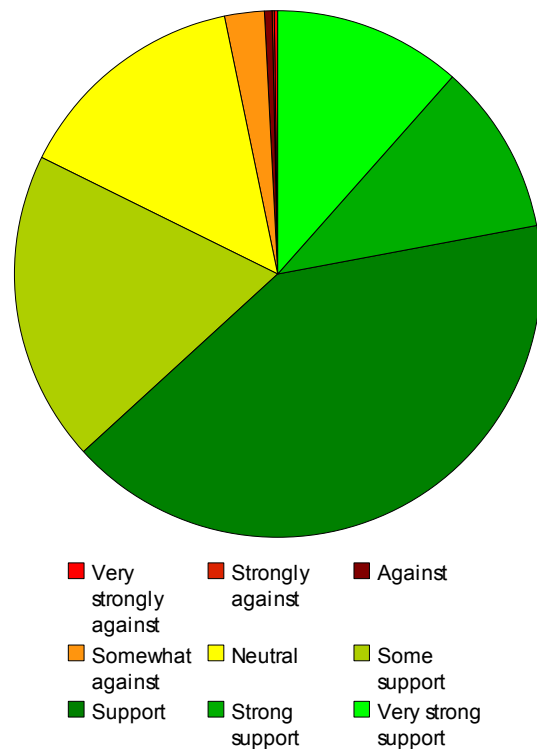
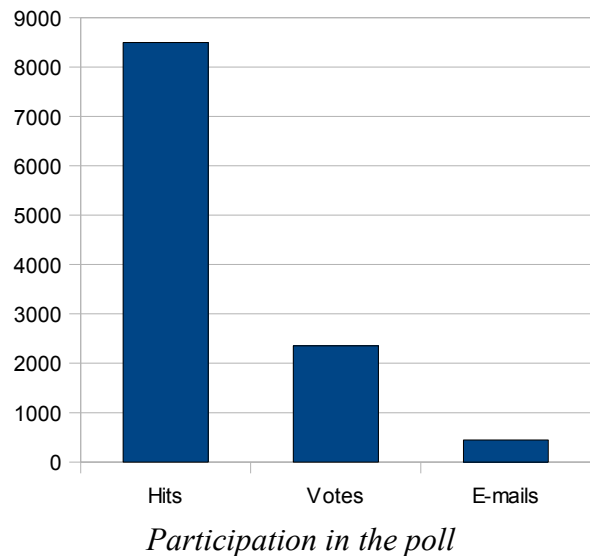
Conclusion

I will implement currency conversions in the Converter. I have already re-released ViewMyCurrency under a different name (“ConvertMyCurrency”) as a temporary solution; it can be downloaded from the Converter's homepage (<http://converter.mozdev.org/>).

Just for fun

Ok, now that we've got the boring stuff out of the way let's take a different look at the data, just for fun. Given that I have the IP addresses of all hits, respondents and people who opted in for the e-mail notification, I was able to determine their respective countries of origin. So I thought it would be interesting to analyze who's more (or less) inclined to vote, and to provide their e-mail addresses to complete strangers in Eastern Europe. (Don't worry, I really am going to delete all those e-mail addresses once I send out the notifications they were provided for.)

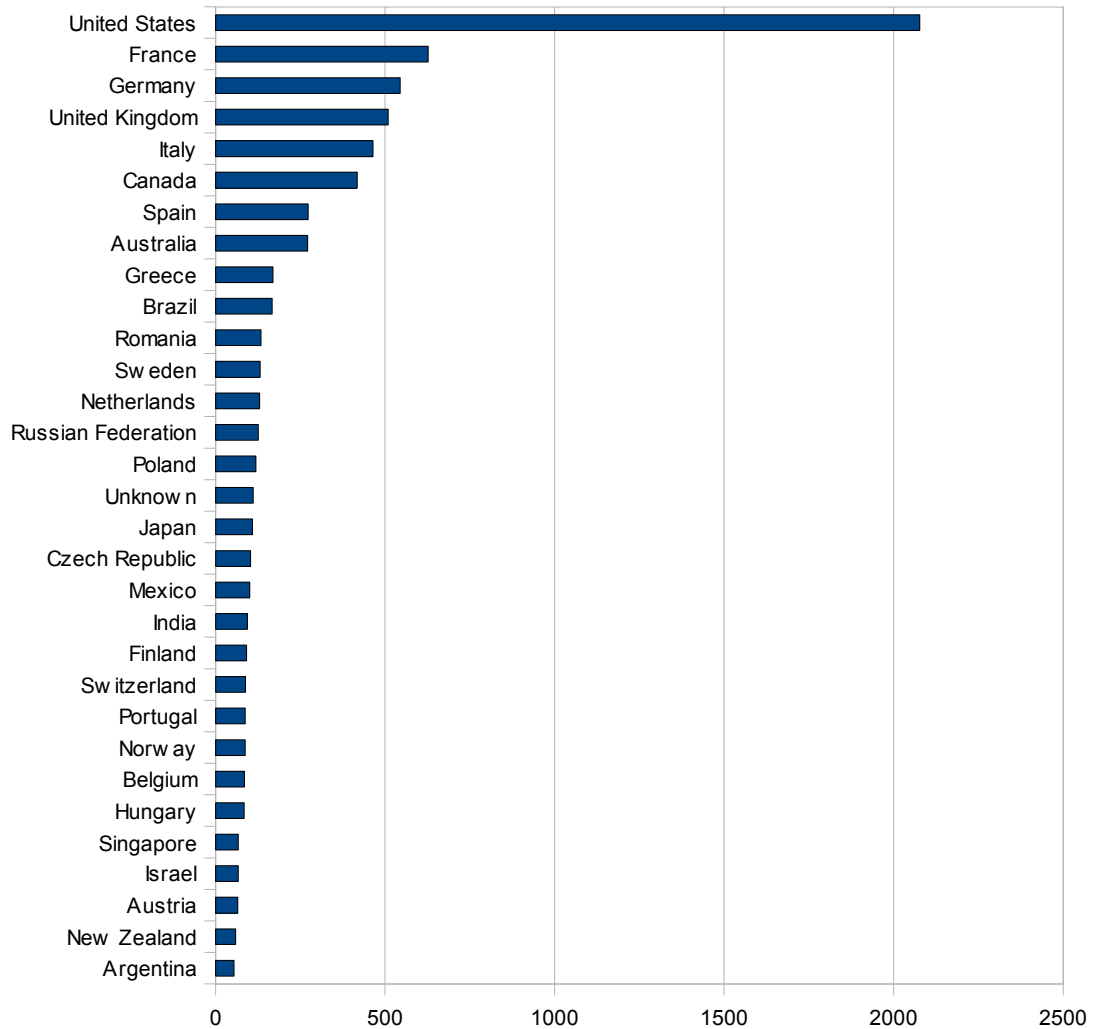
In order to keep the results reasonably meaningful I only analyzed those countries with more than 50 representatives (that is, more than 50 people who have *hit* the poll page, regardless of whether they voted or not).



Poll results

Breakdown by country

First, let's take a look at how many hits there were by country – these are just hits on the poll page, irrespective of whether those people voted or not. Since all people who installed or updated the extension ended up on this page, this is effectively a breakdown of all Converter users by country (once again, the list has been trimmed down in order to avoid excessive clutter).



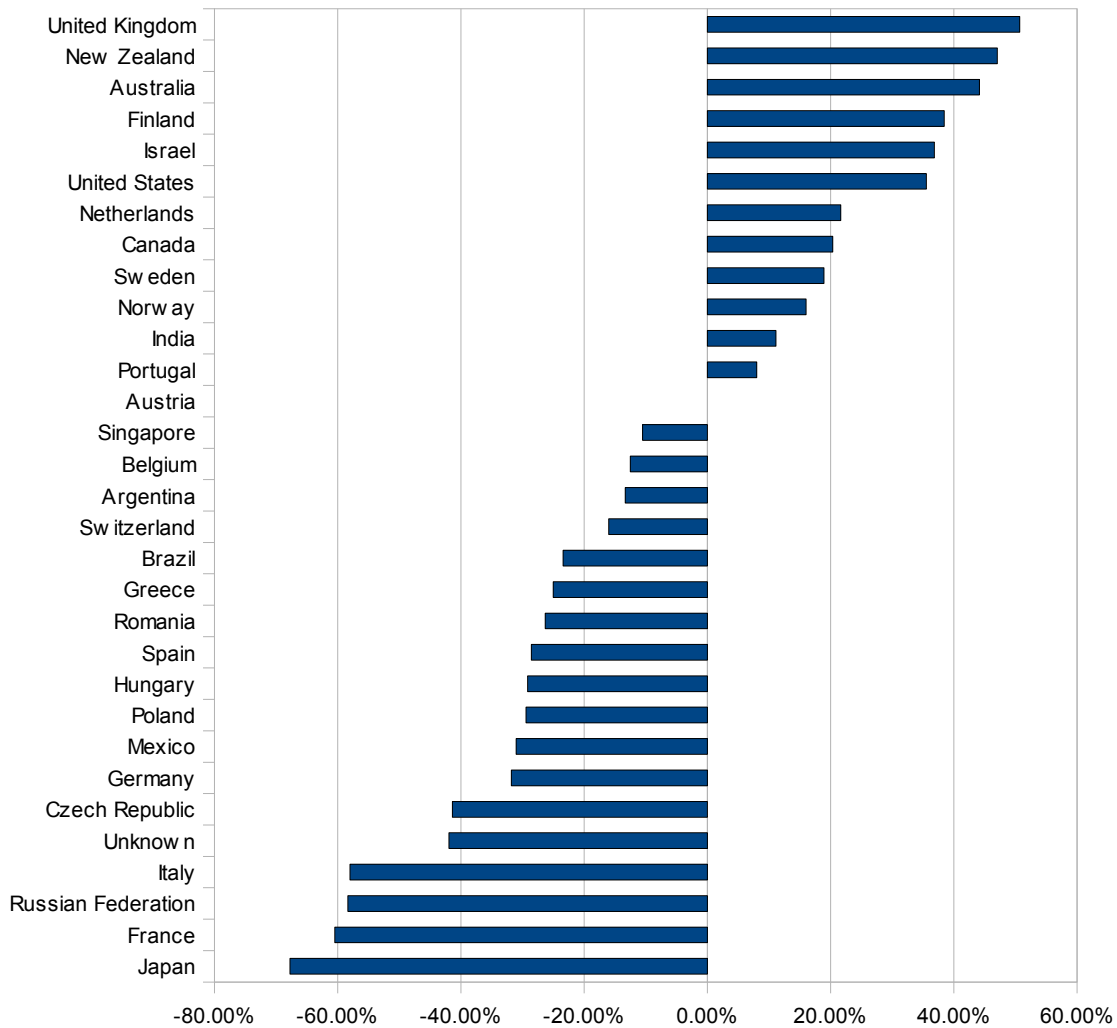
Who's using the Converter

I don't want to get too much into analyzing this chart because you could probably get similar (and way more reliable) statistics from a lot of other sources – but notice the disproportionate presence and/or position of relatively small countries (Romania, the Netherlands, Belgium, Hungary, Singapore), and the absence or awkward position of large countries (China, India, the Russian Federation, Indonesia, Brazil).

Who's more inclined to vote

If we compare the total number of hits with the total number of votes in this data set we get the world average voter ratio. By comparing that world ratio with the local ratio for each country we can find who's more inclined to vote.

The values below are the differences between world average and country ratio (-100% would mean nobody votes, 0% means they're right on the average, and values above 0% mean they're that much more inclined to vote than the average).



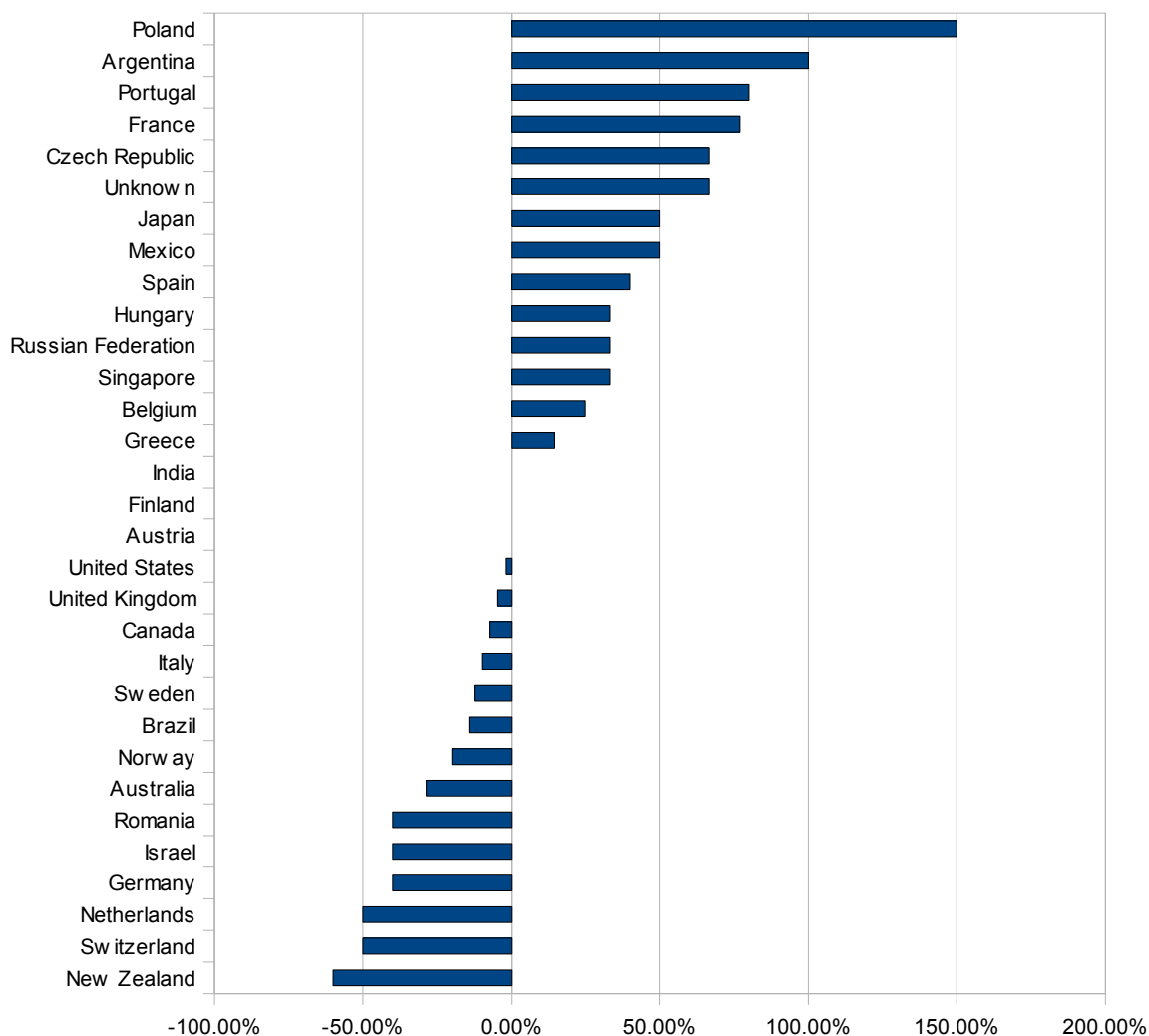
Who's more inclined to vote

You'd expect Western countries to believe in voting more than the average, and you'd probably expect Easterners and South Americans to get less involved. As such, the top ten above are no surprise (UK down to Norway), and having the Russian Federation among the last few is also to be expected.

But there are several surprises: Italy, France and Japan among the last five, Germany among the last ten, and Brazil and Romania sandwiched between Switzerland, Greece and Spain.

Who's more inclined to provide an e-mail address

Similarly, if we compare the world average subscriber/voter ratio with the local subscriber/voter ratio we get this chart (higher up means more willing to provide an e-mail address):



Who's more willing to provide an e-mail address

So, who's willing to risk getting SPAM? Or, if you look at it another way, who's less concerned with privacy issues? You'd expect the citizens of countries which get the most exposed to these issues to be more circumspect – which basically turns the assumptions in the previous section upside down (Westerners get more SPAM and are more privacy aware, so they tend to be more circumspect about providing their e-mail address to complete strangers).

This time the top three and the bottom five make sense – but once again, France, Japan, Romania and Brazil surprise (France and Japan for being unexpectedly high, Romania and Brazil for being unexpectedly low in the list).

About this chapter

This really is just for fun, don't try to draw any real conclusions out of it. For one thing, 50 hits in a country is hardly representative for a people.

Regarding the section about who's more inclined to vote, there's a matter of interest and/or accident: the people who didn't care about this poll enough to vote might not need currency conversions at

all, or might already have local solutions available that I'm not aware of. Also, remember the language barrier: installing and using the Converter is easy regardless of how well you can speak English, but voting in a poll requires you to understand the questions – while you might understand the simple questions in this particular poll even with a basic level of English, maybe the effort isn't worth it.

Regarding the section about who's more willing to provide an e-mail address, remember that people who didn't vote never had a chance to provide their e-mail addresses at all, which might well mess up these results. Also, regarding SPAM/privacy, there are two possible factors (that I can think of) which may sway those results either way. On one hand there's trust (you can live in a country whose culture makes you very aware of SPAM and privacy issues, but which also encourages you to trust real people – I am a real person, so which way do you go?) On the other hand, you may be part of a culture which encourages openness, communication, involvement, interaction – or the opposite; again, which way do you go? Also, many of the e-mail addresses being registered are well protected from SPAM, either implicitly (Yahoo!, Gmail), or explicitly (maybe they're disposable to certain degrees).

And finally, all of the factors I have highlighted above are just the ones I could think of when I wrote this document – there are certainly a heap of other socio-cultural factors I never considered that could explain all of the statistics shown above. Lies, damned lies...³

Technical information

Data collection:

- Typical releases of the Converter extension ask the user whether they want to visit the extension's homepage upon installation/update; by contrast, version 0.7.6 asked all users to take part in the poll and unconditionally made them visit the homepage, which included the poll.
- All of the poll code was contained in a single PHP file hosted on my own server; that page was shown as an IFRAME on mozdev.org.
- The results were stored in plain text files (three files: hits, votes, e-mails).

Data analysis:

- 90% of the raw analysis was done with standard Linux command line tools (sed, sort, uniq, etc).
- IP to country conversion was done with a PHP script using data imported from <http://ip-to-country.webhosting.info/>

Data presentation:

- All data was eventually converted to CSV files (TAB-separated).
- Everything else presentation was created using OpenOffice 3 – that is everything, including charts (based on tables, which in turn were based on the CSV files above), the text you read and the PDF file you opened, which was natively exported by OpenOffice.

3 [...and statistics](#)