

# Don't buy advance poll hype: prof

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Conversely, Thornhill's 6,085 votes, a 36-per-cent drop, ranked as the most significant change among Canada's 308 electoral districts. However, with a large Jewish population, the Passover holiday may have kept many from advance polls in Thornhill.

In Vaughan, 4,392 votes represented a 137-per-cent increase. Markham-Unionville advance polls experienced an 81-per-cent boost, with 7,351 ballots. Richmond Hill's 7,446 advance ballots was a 52-per-cent swell.

York Simcoe had 47-per-cent more votes with 8,505 ballots. Newmarket-Aurora's 7,599 votes was 33-per-cent higher than 2008.

Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, Marc Mayrand, said almost 2.1 million electors voted at the advance polls. More than 676,000 Canadians voted Friday and more than 823,000 voted Monday, representing the two busiest days of advance voting ever.

But the record advance poll numbers creating party gain predictions amongst pundits is mere hype, Mr. MacDermid said.

"Our best hope is that we get at least 60 per cent of eligible voters," he said. "I don't think it'll leap beyond that."

When the ballots are counted, experts may be surprised, he added.

"A lot of people are turned off by the negative (advertising) campaigns," he said. "That traditionally suppresses turnout."

Green Party candidate Trifon Haitas believes the Oak Ridges-Markham electorate proved their leadership by going to the advance polls in record numbers.

"Real change is what people are voting for during this election and the need for change is what is getting a large number of our community out to make their best choice for our riding," he said.

*'Our best hope is that we get at least 60 per cent of eligible voters.'*

Oak Ridges-Markham Conservative incumbent Paul Calandra is optimistic voter turnout will continue election day.

"It is great. I think it reflects how hard each of the candidates have been working to get the message out to people of the importance of voting," he said.

Lui Temelkovski, Liberal candidate for Oak Ridges-Markham, was encouraged by the number of advance ballots.

"We're pleased with the turnout," he said. "It looks like Canadians want to send the government a message - they're not happy, they want change."

"We're hoping that it will translate" into a high voter turnout Monday.

Canada's 41st general election is Monday, May 2.

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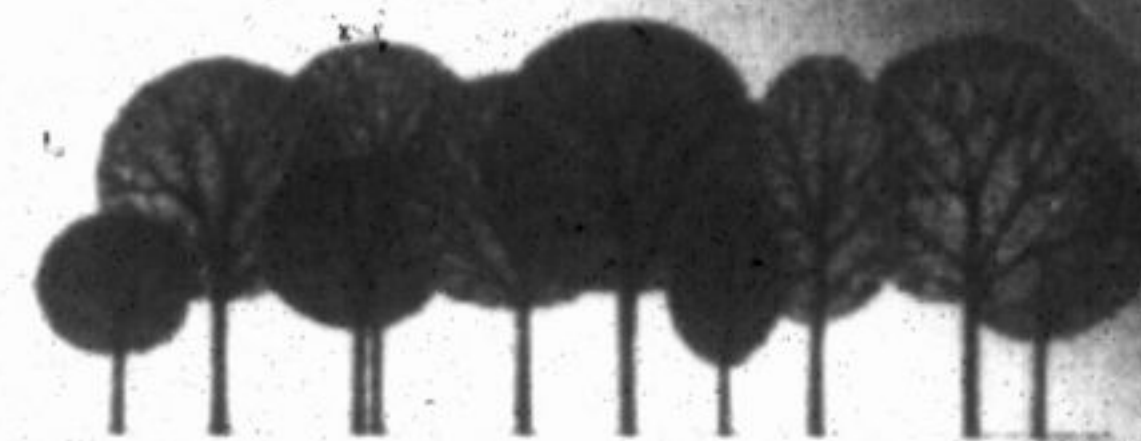
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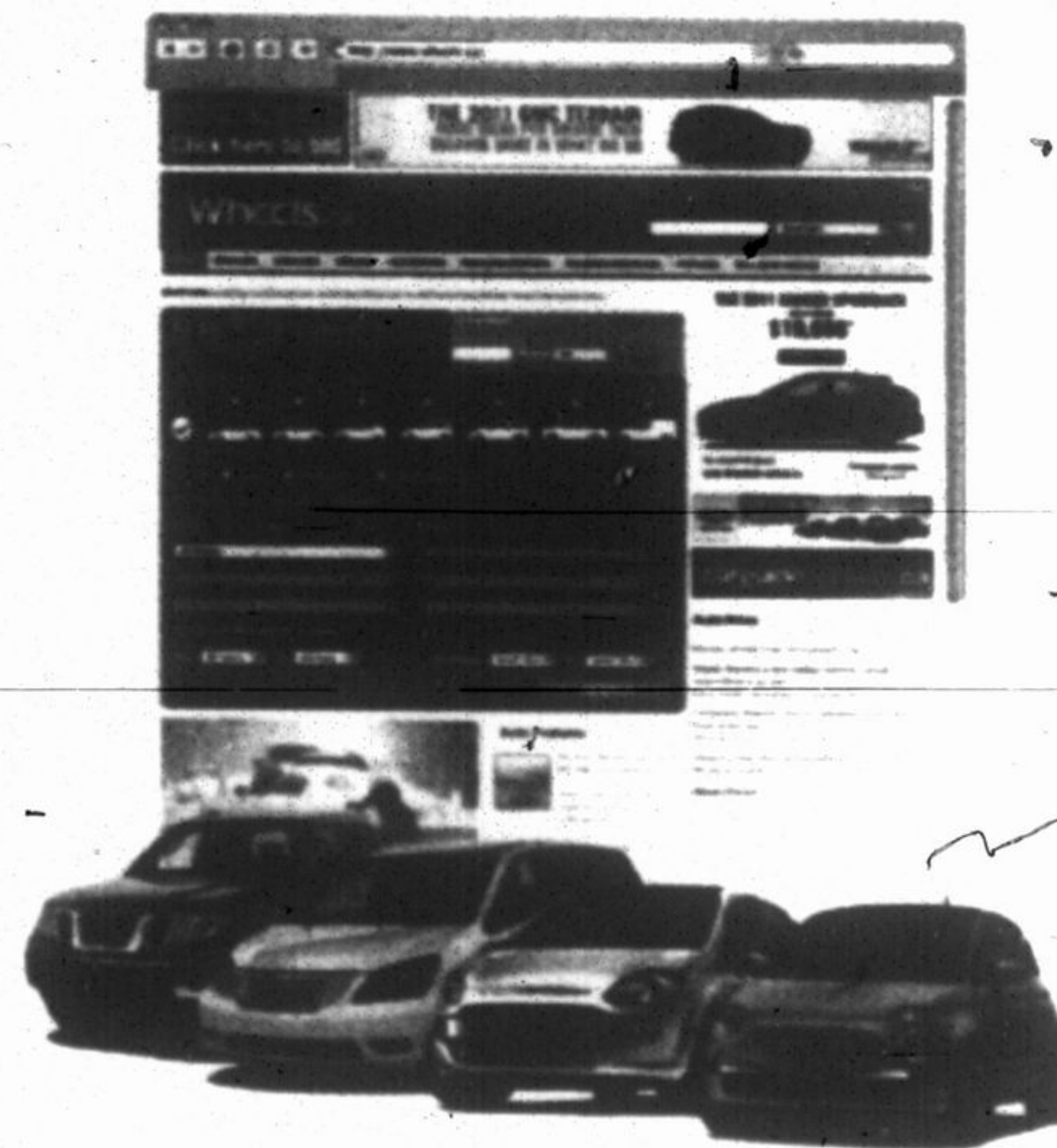
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