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Session 6: Security/Paper Trails/Accountability

For What Purpose Should AVVPATs Be Used?



The Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail serves two purposes:

- 1) To give a voter confidence that his or her own ballot was accurately recorded by an electronic voting machine;
- 2) To give election officials a meaningful audit trail they can use to verify the accuracy of software vote counts.

Why we need to publicly audit the results:

- Increased computerization of the voting and vote-counting process has reduced transparency in elections. A manual count of a subset of ballots or VVPATs provides the public with a reasonable degree of confidence that the final software vote count is accurate.
- If the paper audit trail that the voter verified is not used to verify the overall election results, then it will be possible for the paper record to reflect one set of votes while the electronic record reflects a different set of votes without ever being detected.

Two reforms are needed:

- 1) Require that a voter-verified paper audit trail accompany every electronic ballot;
- 2) Require that a public audit of the software vote count be conducted prior to certifying the election results.
 - Use of the VVPAT should not be limited to recounts, or to cases where the margin is close. Public audits of software vote counts must be a routine step in the certification process, because...
 - Public audits provide voters with an opportunity to see for themselves that software vote counts are accurate and reliable.
 - Pre-and post election testing, and other security measures such as parallel monitoring are good, but not good enough, because these methods deny ordinary voters the ability to have the same level of confidence in the process that inspectors enjoy.

Features needed for meaningful public auditing:

- 1) Require a statistically significant sample size for the manual count – currently, the sample size varies in states from 1 – 10 percent.
- 2) Select the precincts to be counted at random and make the selection process itself open to public observation.
- 3) Prepare the procedures for conducting the public audit and make them available to the public prior to the election.
- 4) Set the date for the public audit well enough in advance to provide ample time to publicize it (at least one week).
- 5) Publicize the date, time and location of the public audit on the election agency's web site and through a media advisory.

Status of VVPAT and public software vote count audits in the states:

- 25 states have enacted voter-verified paper audit trail requirements.
- 11 states enacted laws this year that require or strengthen public auditing of election results:

California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Washington and West Virginia.
(One state, Kentucky, has a pre-existing manual count law.)