



THE ISSUES

Electronic Voting

"With these [electronic] machines, you can alter the outcome of a national election in a way that is just unprecedented in terms of its reach and the power to really play around."

Andrew Gumbel
Journalist & author, "Steal This Election"

Anyone who uses the Internet is familiar with viruses that can spread rapidly and do serious damage to computers and the information stored on them. Unlike the personal risks that computer malfunctions and viruses pose for our home computers, the very legitimacy of our government is threatened when similar problems occur with electronic voting equipment (either through innocent mishap or election fraud malice).

In the case of touch-screen voting machines, these problems are further compounded by the absence of any voter-verified paper records. The lack of sufficient expertise (or even access) at the local level to program, maintain, and trouble-shoot this equipment is also a problem. Additionally, the considerable expense of this equipment is an issue. Add to all that the relative inefficiency and the proprietary nature of touch-screen software, which prevents either local election officials or citizens from examining how the equipment is programmed to count votes, and you have a recipe for democratic disaster.

Since the 2004 election, there have been a number of scholarly and well-researched reports that have documented the many deficiencies with paperless electronic voting.

The Brennan Center Task Force on Voting System Security at NYU School of Law concluded that all three of the nation's most commonly purchased electronic voting systems are vulnerable to software attacks that could threaten the integrity of a state or national election.

http://www.brennancenter.org/dynamic/subpages/download_file_38150.pdf

The Government Accounting Office, a nonpartisan research branch of the U.S. Congress, found flaws in security, access, and hardware controls in electronic voting equipment, as well as weak security management practices by voting machine vendors. The GAO report also identified operational failures in real elections.

<http://oversight.house.gov/Documents/20051021122225-53143.pdf>