

Privacy Issues in an Electronic Voting Machine

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Outline

- Secret ballot
- OVC approach
- Privacy Issues
- Conclusion

Secret Ballot

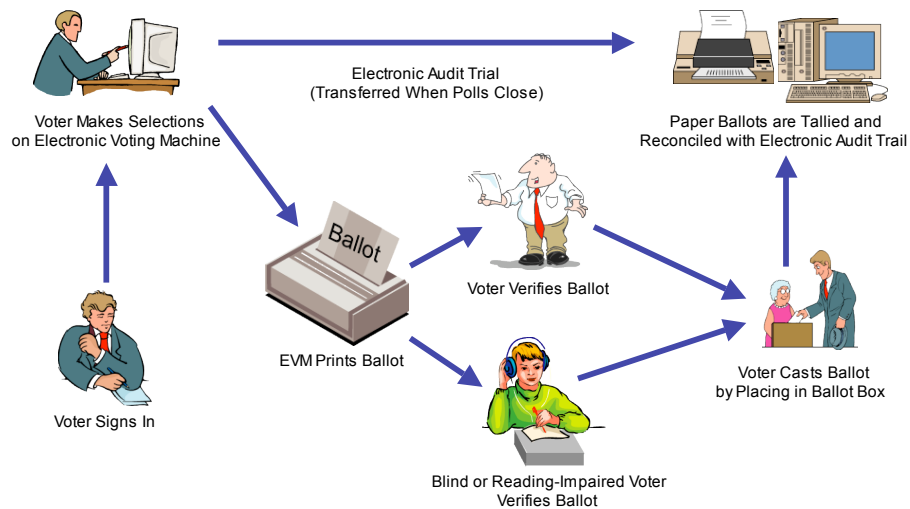
- Ballots cast in secret.
And tallied in public.
- Voter must disclose identity.
But ballot must not identify voter.
- No covert channel.
- No link between registration data and ballots.

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2

OVC System



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Open source

- Published source, so *anyone* can inspect to ensure no hidden trap doors or covert channels.

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Voting token

- Allows voter to vote and specifies ballot type.
- Depending on type of token, could compromise privacy of voter identity.
- More problematic with electronic voter sign-in system.

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Printed ballot and privacy folder

- While voter walks around polling place, voter-verified paper ballot can be seen by others.
- Folder that hides the human readable portion of ballot, but shows the barcode.

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Reading-impaired interface

- Allows blind or reading-impaired voter to cast a ballot.
- Prints a ballot just like ordinary electronic voting machine.

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7

Barcodes

- Facilitates electronic tallying of ballots.
- Facilitates blind or visually-impaired voter to verify ballot audibly.

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8

Ballot verification station

- Allows blind or reading-impaired voters to “hear” their choices, and therefore verify their paper ballots.

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9

Languages

- Potentially compromises privacy of votes for non-English speakers.
- Solution: Always print a non-English language, either voter's language or a random one.
- Solution might not work with preprinted ballots (such as *fill-in-the-bubble* or *connect-the-lines*).

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10

Random ballot IDs

- Helps reconcile paper ballot against electronic audit trail.
- Electronic audit trail maintained in ballot ID order, *not* order ballot was printed.

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11

Public vote tallying

- Ballot box should be shuffled before anyone can see the printed ballots, otherwise vote order apparent.
- OVC reconciles paper ballot and electronic audit trail.
- A problem for Direct Recording Electronic voting machines.

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12

Results by precinct

- Display results by precinct at polling place and on county website.
- Separate by in-polling place regular ballots, and all other ballots (absentee, provisional).
- Small numbers of *other* ballots might compromise privacy. So *tallies* of other ballots are combined, but *counts* are kept separate.
- Good to allow a voter to determine whether absentee or provisional ballot was counted or rejected, and if not, why not.

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13

Privacy and voter collusion

- Printed ballot ID can compromise privacy.
- Write-in votes can compromise privacy.
 - Vote for yourself.
 - Especially a problem when *all* ballots are displayed individually online.
 - Why some jurisdictions limit write-in votes to *only* declared candidates.

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14

Voter-verifiable audit trail

- Helps ensure electronic ballot image is correct.
- Useful for recounts.
- If not machine readable and tallyable, will effectively be used *only* when required.
- Reel-to-reel approach compromises voter privacy by maintaining order of ballots.
- ATM-style roll hard to count by machine.
- Use of airline-style cards could solve these problems using known reliable printers.

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15

Conclusion

- Privacy in electronic voting systems is a problem requiring analysis and study.
- Should be added to evaluation standards along with reliability, security, and trustworthiness.
- Our study in the context of the OVC system, and many of issues applicable to other electronic voting systems.

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16

Contact

- Contact Arthur Keller at ark@soe.ucsc.edu
- Full version of this paper can be found at <http://www-db.stanford.edu/pub/keller>
 - Click on Electronic Voting

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17