



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on October 27, 2010

## Hacked! E-Voting, E-Nightmare

In spite of rising security fears, 33 of our states are allowing some fax, e-mail, or Internet ballots this year. Adding to concerns is news of a security breach in a Washington, D.C., pilot Internet vote. The system was put online for a test in September.

Breitbart's Sunday [report](#), "As e-voting comes of age, security fears mount," quoted Alex Halderman, a University of Michigan professor who led a team of computer scientists that hacked into the system within three hours:



It was extremely easy. Within the first three hours or so of looking at the code we found the first open door and within 36 hours we had taken control of the system.

After penetrating the system, Halderman and his team modified ballots, changed passwords, and directed the system to play UM's fight song. They also discovered that other hackers from Iran and China were trying to do some of the same things.

Halderman and other experts say the breach highlights flaws in online voting that, at present, can't be fixed.

The website of Verified Voting Foundation (VV), advocates of reliable and publicly verifiable U.S. elections, revealed in its report about the Internet pilot in Washington that officials didn't even notice the subversion in the test for several days.

VV argues that electronic attacks can be remote, that defense is virtually impossible, that attackers can arbitrarily change votes, and that hackings may go undetected, noting that Halderman and his team demonstrated all these points in the test.

VV Chairman David Jefferson, also a computer scientist at Livermore National Laboratory, told Breitbart, "After this, there can be no doubt that the burden of proof in the argument over the security of Internet voting systems has definitely shifted to those who claim that the systems can be made secure."

This breach undermines the efforts of those trying to build confidence in electronic voting, as reports continue to surface about system failure, system fraud, and voter fraud. Critics of electronic voting systems claim that accurate recounts cannot be performed without paper ballots, thus compromising the integrity of the whole process.

VV wants [voter-verified paper ballots](#) in all elections. According to its website, "Paperless electronic voting systems are failing us. Voters ... can inspect individual permanent records of their ballots before they are cast, and so meaningful recounts may be conducted."

VV isn't the only one. Vickie Karp, former national chair of the Coalition for Visible Ballots and co-director of VoteRescue, the latter an Austin, Texas-based citizens' election integrity group, believes



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“citizens count, one vote at a time.” [VoteRescue](#) hosted a radio show with that title, and Ms. Karp is also co-author and editor of *HACKED! High-Tech Election Theft in America*.

In an interview with *The New American*, Ms. Karp elaborated about the D.C. breach and her findings on electronic voting:

Mountains of evidence in the form of scholarly studies, expert analyses, and outright hacking in the last 10 years have validated our concerns that e-voting isn't trustworthy. It's non-transparent, and worst of all, puts the corporations who control the machines and maintain the trade-secret-protected software in control of our elections.

We believe the only way citizens can regain control of elections, and the ability to remove from office the unaccountable politicians, is through hand-counted paper ballots.

As with voting machines, Internet voting has the same inherent problem: because votes are counted secretly, a voter has no way to know with certainty how his vote was counted.

Breitbart's article also quoted Paul DeGregorio of the electronic voting firm Everyone Counts, who believes e-voting empowers voters with disabilities and those living abroad:

A return to paper will disenfranchise many voters and also fail to get out some younger, tech-savvy voters. Younger people are going to say, “Why should I stand in line? Why can't I do it on my cell phone?”

DeGregorio seemed to confuse those who can't get to the polls with those who won't. Options have always been available for disabled and absentee voters.

Ms. Karp further observed:

Tech lovers always want to assure us that there is a technological solution to the problem. But why should I have to trust some expert who tells me my vote is really being counted as cast? I want to verify it for myself in a totally transparent, citizen-run, observable system.

In March of last year, the equivalent of Germany's Supreme Court ruled e-voting is unconstitutional — because *it should take no special technical knowledge to understand how your vote is counted.* [emphasis added].

A Dan Rather special premiered recently detailing how the ruling came about, and how many European countries that purchased e-voting machines are throwing them away for all the reasons I've mentioned.

The right to exercise the vote is one of the most powerful tools remaining in the hands of Americans. It should be protected from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Low-tech rules.



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