Internet Voting: What Legislators Need To Know

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Complexity

• Elections and election systems are complex
• There are multiple dependencies among the systems that are used to conduct elections
• Touch one strand of the spider web and it all moves
All voting systems are multi modal

• Voting systems have some element of central-count, VBM, Internet voting, precinct voting, DRE, etc.
• The Election Management System (Ballot definition and tabulation) systems possess some degree of adaptability
• Voters choose
The meaning of words

- Ballot
- Cast Ballot
- Vote
- Independent
Standards

• There are standards for voting systems (Voluntary Voting System Guidelines – VVSG).
• There are no discrete standards for internet voting systems
• There are no “certified” internet voting systems
Controls

- Most controls in election administration are paired detective-corrective controls
- Preventative controls require perfect knowledge and unlimited budget
Analogies

• Be careful of analogous comparisons: “Voting systems are like…” or “Why can’t voting be like…”

• Voting systems are singular given the constraints of voter privacy and severance of “ownership” links
Other voices

• The predominant voice in the Internet Voting discussion has been the security community
• Potential for Internet Voting to address accessibility concerns has gained traction
• Finding the balance between security and accessibility will be more important in the future
Cost & Convenience

• Two driving factors in all e-government systems is decreased cost per transaction and increased convenience.

• Jurisdictions are cash strapped and in many cases saddled with aging voting systems.
Future of the USPS

- Dependence on USPS
- Alternatives
- Cost containment
- Postal Innovation Act
Declining Pool of Poll Workers

- In-precinct voting has many challenges
  - Declining availability of pollworkers
  - Increasingly complex systems
  - Advanced voting
  - Schools
Who controls the decision?

• Jurisdictions may find themselves in the Internet Voting business due to:
  – Natural disasters
    • Displaced residents
    • First responders
  – Court orders
    • Accessibility
    • Epidemics
Technology Disaster Indifference

- Don’t count on public reaction to technology disasters to guide decisions
  - Anthem
  - OPM
  - Every major retailer and credit card company
State Art vs. State of the Practice

• Look at and learn from what other states are doing
  – Challenges and solutions

• Pilots
  – Every certification is provisional; every election a pilot
Need for Strategy

• Ad hoc “fixes” to election code and rule can be chaotic – filled with unintended consequence
• Whether you plan for Internet Voting capabilities, or plan never to have Internet Voting capabilities - Plan
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