

Electronic Voting

Published: January 5, 2005

To the Editor:

I serve on the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers P1583 working group that is drafting the electronic voting equipment standard. The managing director of the I.E.E.E. Standards Association says (letter, Dec. 31) that "the draft standard includes criteria for a voter-verified paper trail performance."

In fact, proposals for verifiable voting records have been rejected out of hand in this committee. As a public relations gesture, the standard includes an addendum that defines, but very specifically does not require, verifiable voting.

Current electronic voting machines cannot be proved trustworthy because they are unauditably. When totals on these machines differ from exit poll projections, we have no empirical way to determine which numbers are correct.

Concerns about voting technology are sometimes painted as sore-loser griping. But when equipment can be unauditably rigged, election results will be bought by organized criminals and terrorists, not just politicians.

Cem Kaner

Melbourne, Fla., Dec. 31, 2004

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