

The Most Severely Disenfranchised Voters – Persons with Disabilities and External Voters – Can Be Provided Secure, Private and Independent Access to Their Ballots, In a Cost-Effective Manner

E-BALLOT DELIVERY AND REMOTE ELECTRONIC VOTING

Electronic ballot delivery enfranchises an increasing number of remote voters while creating administrative efficiencies and cost savings for election officials. It has proven to be successful, secure and private. Due to its many benefits, electronic ballot delivery and voting are being used more often by external voters (i.e., military and overseas citizens) and persons with disabilities. This paper discusses the benefits and successes of electronic systems currently in use, using the Internet and telephone, to allow people to vote from their homes and other remote locations.

Too many voters with disabilities are unable to vote privately, or at all. It is estimated that 55 to 65 million European citizens live with a disability or a long-standing health problem. These citizens, most of whom are eligible voters, could now be able to exercise their full voting rights – even if unable to reach a voting station or mark a paper ballot.

Issues of access are equally problematic for external voters. Service members lose their ability to vote due to the remoteness of their location or inability to receive post in a timely manner. Citizens living externally may reside hours from their nearest polling station. Severe time constraints may exist between the time a ballot is finalized and the time a voter must cast a ballot. The types of limitations and obstacles which may affect external voters are endless. Increasingly, however, election officials are turning to electronic voting in an effort to solve these logistical problems, and just as important, address concerns for equality of voting rights.

ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCIES AND COST SAVINGS

A critical component of choosing an electronic ballot system is the election experience guiding the technology development and the implementation of the electronic election system. Streamlined processes and cost efficiencies result when election and security technology are coupled with election expertise. Having in-depth knowledge of election processes allows the online election supplier to smoothly integrate with existing election processes and voting systems. Everyone Counts'® professional team has decades of unique, hands-on experience in government elections, election system integration and computer and network security experience. Our systems and processes would save European Union Nations hundreds – if not millions of Euros on elections.

“By choosing Everyone Counts’ secure, easy-to-use solution, we have saved significant time and money on this election by streamlining the administrative process and cutting over 50% of the costs for mailing and other expenditures.” – Joan Manke, Executive Director, Honolulu Neighborhood Board Commission

Examples of recent, remote voting election costs include:

- *Finland* – In 2004, the estimate was roughly 110,000 EUR for only 9,000 voters who participated.
- *France* – Spends 1.6 million EUR on external voting. In May 2005, external voters only made up 1.09 percent of all participating French voters yet represented 1.36 percent of the cost.
- *Greece* – In 2004, spent more than 1.1 million EUR on external voting.
- *Switzerland* – Averages 657,000 EUR on external voting for priority mail postage and personnel costs.

PROVEN SUCCESSES WITH ELECTRONIC VOTING

Improved voting results using electronic election solutions provided by Everyone Counts are demonstrated in the following elections:

- **eLect Kiosks:** In the **2007 Australian Parliamentary** election, voting by troops serving overseas increased to 75%, up from 23% in the prior election.
- **eLect Universal, eLect Today and eLect Access:** In 2007, Everyone Counts partnered with the **Borough Council of Swindon, UK** to deliver the first universal access, multi-channel election in the world. Nearly one-third of all participants said they would not have voted had they not been provided an electronic option.
- **eLect Universal:** U.S. expatriates located in 164 countries voted in the **2008 Democratic Presidential Primary** using end-to-end electronic technology. The number of ballots cast was seven times higher than in 2004 when the primary was conducted using traditional post voting.
- **eLect Universal and eLect Access:** In 2009, **Honolulu** held the first all-digital election in the U.S., which included private voting for the blind. This was done at one-third the cost of their previous election.

As reported in the *National Journal*, when the U.S. Democratic Party allowed expatriates to vote in the 2008 Presidential Primary from abroad, voter registration increased tenfold, with 54% choosing to vote online compared to only 3% for paper (post and fax combined).

In July 2010, the Independent Party of Oregon held the first 100% online political party election in U.S. history using Everyone Counts' eLect Universal™ solution. This was the second completely digital election in the world – where participants voted strictly by electronic means and not by paper or in person. Voters spoke positively of their experiences while the Party organizer boasted of cost savings over using paper ballots along with the ballot encryption security provided through electronic submission and tabulation.

Positive Reviews from Voters with Disabilities

For the 2009 U.S. primary and general elections, Everyone Counts provided electronic ballot delivery for 73,000 residents in Franklin County, Washington. While eLect Today™ was available to all voters, it was targeted for use by voters with disabilities due to eLect's compatibilities with devices widely used in the disability community. Some of the features touted in voter feedback included the ability to use the JAWS screen reader and the ability to mark the ballot with a computer instead of by hand. Most users found the screen easier to read than a traditional paper ballot. Response from the disability community was overwhelmingly positive.

VOTER COMMENTS

"It's difficult to open envelopes, draw lines and stuff envelopes due to my disability."

"I like the simplicity; it's pretty easy to understand."

"[It is] hard for me to get to & from the mail boxes."

Fifty percent of the voters who participated in the Franklin County election answered an online survey. When asked if they would use eLect Today if offered again in future elections, 94% of respondents said "yes."

SECURITY OF ELECTRONIC VOTING



Encryption keeps a ballot private, providing the confidence that the ballot is tamper-proof. Digital encryption is made up of extremely complicated mathematical formulas which scramble the message with long numeric passwords or keys, yielding a series of numbers that read as nonsense to anyone lacking the secret decoding passwords. Everyone Counts uses a military-

grade system with an ever-changing 168-digit binary key to encrypt each completed ballot before sending it to the tabulation office. Computers pick a new secret key for each ballot thus ensuring that every ballot is individually protected. Even a spy using a supercomputer cannot decode a single ballot. Encryption protects privacy and prevents alteration; any change to the stream of numbers – while nearly impossible – would result in gibberish when decoded.

VOTER PRIVACY AND ACCESS

In addition to the privacy afforded through the use of secure ballot marking and transmission, voters using electronic election options have greater independence marking a ballot. Many voters with visual impairments have never voted without assistance. Audio voting from a phone ensures that the visually impaired can vote independently and privately. Online voting allows for the physically challenged to avoid accessibility pitfalls at their local polling place. And e-ballot delivery provides the same independence with a ballot that is printed and mailed to comply with paper-ballot requirements in some countries.

The Everyone Counts remote voting solutions use communications tools (telephones and computers) which already exist in or near the voter's home and work with common assistive technology and devices. Using the eElect Platform™, electors may vote using a computer and the Internet or their telephone to either mark and submit a completed ballot electronically, or to mark and print a ballot for return by post, fax or email. These options allow for use of audio recordings, screen readers and other common assistive devices, while removing the burden of travelling to a polling station.

“While in Honolulu, I met a blind Hawaiian woman very interested in her neighborhood board election. This month, for the first time ever, she will be able to vote in privacy: a telephone system, not her relative or neighbor, will record her vote and read it back without bias, without disclosure, and without fear of dishonesty. For the first time, she receives her Constitutional right to a private ballot.” – Aaron Contorer of Everyone Counts, Inc

VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES

The word *disability* includes a vast number of human challenges. We often do not realize that a large percentage of the world's population copes daily with a disability of some form. Though there are many differences, persons with disabilities all have one thing in common – the challenge of voting independently and privately. Increasing access to the ballot for persons with disabilities is good for democracy and has a direct impact on the ability of voters to influence their own state of life.

- According to the World Health Organization, 750 million people in the world (the equivalent of the combined citizens of the U.S., Brazil, Russia and Japan) are challenged with a disability.
- 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries where polling places are kilometers away from their homes and not equipped to address their voting needs.
 - In the 2008 U.S. election, 44% of registered people with disabilities who did not vote cited “illness or disability” as the reason for not voting.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2009 selected Everyone Counts from dozens of worldwide applicants to partner with UNESCO in their “Empowering Persons with Disabilities through ICT's” initiative.

“Today many obstacles still exist in front of disabled people to cast their vote independently due to inaccessibility of premises voting booths or ballots, not to mention those of us who cannot leave our homes,” – Mr. Yannis Vardakastanis, European Disability Forum President.

VOTERS LIVING ABROAD

Whether serving in the military, volunteering as missionaries, studying, working or retiring abroad, it is estimated that more than 250 million citizens in the world live outside of their home countries. In addition to the costs and logistics involved in generating and posting paper ballots, there can be significant delays in international (and military) postal delivery of blank ballots and return of voted ballots. This delay is compounded when people move, such as redeployed military personnel. The result: large numbers of ballots arriving too late to be legally counted. Consequently, many external voters have given up trying to vote on time.

It is also easy to make mistakes on posted paper ballots, which may result in having them voided. An unrecognizable mark on a paper ballot is all it takes to have it discarded in many jurisdictions. Undervoting (skipping a line) and overvoting (marking more than the allowed number of choices) are frequent occurrences with pencil-marked forms. Additionally, procedural errors invalidate absentee ballots in large numbers.

Everyone Counts has been positively changing the lives of disenfranchised voters throughout the world. Our eLect™ solutions have made it possible for thousands of people unable to access a polling place and who have never been able to cast a ballot privately to enjoy their rightful place and purpose as citizens of their countries.

HOW IT WORKS

Everyone Counts' eLect Platform has been built to handle not only millions of voters at once, but to manage multiple, complex elections simultaneously. We understand that while elections may be global or national in scope, they are executed locally. Our technology allows us to custom build elections across borders, ensuring that the election is conducted in a manner where the individual's ballot is uniquely presented in the appropriate format and language.

CONCLUSION

Every eligible voter, regardless of disability or geographic location, deserves the opportunity to exercise his or her right to vote. Yet, millions of citizens in remote locations and those with visual, motor and cognitive impairments are unable to do so using traditional paper forms and in-person voting systems. It does not have to be this way.

Everyone Counts' proven electronic election solutions deliver secure ballots, improve privacy and marking accuracy, are compatible with assistive devices for persons with disabilities, and enable voting from remote locations, whether at home or in the battle field. All of this while creating administrative efficiencies and cost savings for election officials.

Let Everyone Counts be your partner in our common quest to enfranchise all eligible voters.

100% of Submitted Votes Validated and Counted – 100% of Election Results Certified

No Election Disputed



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