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## Board may change voting system

by Lisa Gagnon

The Darke County Board of Elections may rescind its prior choice of the Diebold Election Systems (DES) Accu-Vote TS for elections after an assessment ordered by the Ohio Secretary of State found the Accu-Vote to have the greatest number of high potential risk areas of the four systems tested.

The technical analysis by Compuware Corporation identified a total of 57 potential security risks within the software and hardware of the four systems. Diebold had five high potential risk areas, two medium and eight low. Election Systems and Software's iVotronic had one high risk area, three medium and 13 low. Hart InterCivic had four high risk areas, one medium and five low, and Sequoia had three high, five medium and seven low.

A second report by InfoSENTRY found significant security faults in all systems and led Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell to call for a change in security procedures and processes.

"We picked them (Diebold), but since this hullabaloo went on, we don't know who to trust, so we're going to wait until January," said Myron Keller, president of the Darke County Board of Elections.

The problems listed by CompuWare with the Diebold system were already identified by analysts from Johns Hopkins University in July. They indicated that source code for the Diebold system has already appeared on the Internet.

All analyses indicated that voters can cast multiple ballots, voters can gain access to administrative functions, the machines are vulnerable to poll and maintenance workers and software does not meet industry standards.

The Johns Hopkins analysis indicated that a verifiable paper trail could alleviate the effects of tampering.

"We're interested in a paper trail... and they're supposed to have them, and we find out they don't have one. They said there'd be a guaranteed paper trail," said Keller.

All verified systems have the ability to print out a computerized tally of all votes cast but none presently provides a paper record of choices for voters to verify.

The board of elections has until Jan. 15 to select its preferred voting system. Blackwell is seeking a federal waiver for implementation of the requirements of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) until 2006.

Keller said the elections board planned to meet in January to reevaluate the available voting systems.

"We might make a switch, you never know, at the last minute," he said.

"What I'm concerned about is that the issue is not receiving as much attention as it should, based on its gravity," stated Jim Surber, who said he's speaking as a concerned citizen and not a Democratic Party officer or Darke County Engineer. "We're spending \$87 billion to establish democracy in Iraq. What are we willing to do to ensure democracy stays here?"

"The vote is the basis for our entire democracy. This radical change they're proposing of totally electronic voting and counting needs to be tested and monitored more than any other system we've had in the past, because it can't be reconstructed."

Surber is concerned that the time period from now until November elections is not sufficient to ensure the security and accuracy of the electronic systems.

Ohio Sen. Teresa Fedor has questioned the partisanship of Blackwell's security review team. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur has asked why the Elections Assistance Commission has not performed its function of developing security protocols. She also noted that Ohio has not received any of the almost \$118 million allocated under HAVA.

H.R. 2239 would require a verifiable and auditable paper trail at each polling place, as well as amending restrictions for absentee voting. It is pending in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"There needs to be some sort of a physical record at the time the votes were cast. There has to be oversight and testing and penalties for wrongdoing," Surber said.

"We can not allow even the slightest hint of manipulation or tampering," he added.