I had written to Ron Faucheux, editor and publisher of Campaigns & Elections Magazine, about covering a story involving Massachusetts' rejection of the Vot-o-matic voting system because of technical inadequacies. After I let him know I was active in Internet voting, he invited me to write an article or "featured letter to the editor" on the subject. Finding it difficult to write about my efforts in the third person, I chose to write this letter instead.

Featured Letter to the Editor, Campaigns & Elections Magazine, September, 1998

To the Editor,

While many campaign functions are being virtualized via the Web, the core political activity of voting has not yet been so transformed. The technology to do so now exists. The political will to make use of it needs to be mobilized and its benefits realized.

By using the latest, most-advanced methods of encryption and online authentication, the EVS will protect the security and privacy of all voters, while allowing them the new freedom to vote from their homes, their offices, even their favorite fishing holes, if they have an Internet connection there. One configuration of the system would provide each electronic voter with a secret ID code allowing them to check the contents of their counted ballot and to add up all the other simultaneously-public-and-private posted ballots. This way, they'd know their vote was tabulated correctly and they'd know that the totals were honest as well.

The groundswell of support needed to enact electronic voting has not yet materialized, even though several studies have shown strong support for the concept. My first unsuccessful attempt to legislate the EVS into existence was by means of the Virtual Voting Rights Initiative (VVRI) in 1996. Modified with stronger punishment for electronic electoral fraud, the VVRI became AB44 in the California Legislature in December, 1996. Amended to call for a study rather than an implementation of electronic voting, AB44 eventually passed the California Legislature, against fierce opposition from the Republication minority, then was vetoed by Governor Wilson.

Building and running the EVS would make voting more convenient for busy citizens, and thereby increase voter turnout; it would increase the security and lower the cost of elections, and spur efforts to provide Internet access to everyone, so they could all vote. Equipping millions of voters with digital certificates and smart cards could jump-start these industries and e-commerce generally.

Some will want to use the EVS to replace "representationalism" and pursue direct digital democracy through frequent public electronic plebiscites. Or it could be used to continue to elect representatives, only more efficiently. It will also allow these representatives to

pose questions for their constituents on a weekly, daily, or hourly basis, then do what they will with the results. Constituents who don't like their votes being ignored can try to vote the incumbent out of office, electronically, next time around.

Those concerned about the lack of democracy in countries that seek economic development without granting their populations corresponding political freedom could use the EVS to set up electoral servers stateside and let these disenfranchised foreign nationals cast an unfettered electronic ballot though the Internet connections their rulers have provided for them in order to build up their economy.

The Democratic, Republican, Libertarian, and other parties could hold online primaries according to their own preferences. And all the existing web-based political functionality would be enhanced and synergized because the same means being used to collect and distribute political information could now be used for making the decisions around which the whole system revolves.

Marc Strassman
President, Transmedia Communication
Executive Director, Campaign for Digital Democracy

Rebecca Fairley Raney, a freelance writer who frequently covers digital politics for the
New York Times, *read my post about the Ben Stein show to Democracy Wire and*
contacted me for an interview about electronic voting. This was the result.

Article from the New York Times, September 17, 1998:
Voting on the Web: Not Around the Corner,
but on the Horizon

The URL for this article is:

http://www.nytimes.com/library/tech/98/09/circuits/articles/17vote.html

September 17, 1998

Voting on the Web: Not Around the Corner, but on the Horizon
By REBECCA FAIRLEY RANEY 🔲

arc Strassman first began thinking about Internet voting in 1995. Strassman, a 50-year-old entrepreneur, political activist and occasional Congressional candidate, was in the process of starting a business, and he wanted to file a legal notice online. He soon discovered that an Internet posting didn't satisfy the legal requirement, but the episode got him thinking about the role of the Internet in democracy.

"So I said, 'Why aren't we voting on the Internet?' " he said. "That seemed logical."

So, two summers ago, Strassman spent his days at a food store in Los Angeles collecting signatures to place his Virtual Voting Rights Initiative on the California ballot as a plebiscite. He needed 400,000 signatures. He collected about 6 an hour.

Edward Carreon for The New York Times

Marc Strassman has campaigned for online voting for years, without much success.

Despite the lack of enthusiasm for Strassman's efforts that summer, Internet voting is a subject of keen interest to policy makers in state legislatures, election offices and even the Pentagon. Plans are under way to start testing systems by 2000.

The Department of Defense is sponsoring a program whose success or failure will dictate the near future of Internet voting. The system under design would allow the six million Americans overseas, both military and civilian, to cast ballots by using the Internet. Five states -- Florida, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas and Utah -- will participate in the Pentagon's pilot project, which is scheduled to take place in the 2000 general election. Under current plans, voters will be able to use the voting system on their own computers and on terminals provided at United States installations.

Election offices in the participating states will be given Government computers to receive the ballot transmissions.

Lessons from the Federal pilot project will help state election officials decide whether they want to offer Internet voting to residents at home. Thomas Wilkey, executive director of the New York State Board of Elections, said that election officials had a responsibility to find ways to make voting as easy as possible but that he was taking a cautious approach to Internet voting.

"You have to get up on the horse and get comfortable in the saddle before we can take a ride," Wilkey said. "I think every state has a long way to go."

In Florida and California, election officials are moving ahead. Paul Craft, a computer audit analyst for the Florida Division of Elections, said Internet voting systems might be ready for testing in Florida as soon as next year. After studying online security, he said, he concluded that the Internet was "a very viable technology" for transmitting ballots.

"My initial reaction was, 'That's a stupid thing to do,' " Craft said. "I ended up becoming a leading proponent of it."

A program whose success or failure will dictate the near future of Internet voting.

Now he talks in detail about the ease of using digital signatures to verify voters' identities, about protecting voters privacy by making sure no one could found out how any person voted and about setting up multiple control points to make audits easy.

Craft argues that the Internet could make elections cheaper.

Electronic voting machines cost $5,000 to $7,000 apiece. With electronic ballots created for Internet use, the cost of each machine needed to retrieve the ballots would be about $600.

While Florida officials are pursuing the issue through their election office, California's Secretary of State, Bill Jones, is setting up a panel to study the issue. He said that when the panel completed its report, perhaps next year, he would send the Legislature the findings. In 1997, the Legislature passed a bill to finance a study of online voter

registration and voting, as well as the use of digital signatures on the Internet for signing petitions for ballot initiatives, but Gov. Pete Wilson vetoed the bill.

Along with the promise of lower costs and increased access, Internet voting raises many questions as well, particularly about security. Polli Brunelli, director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program, said the transmission of votes through the military's pilot program would be protected by an encryption system created at the Department of Defense. Also, the system that is being developed must provide a way for an individual to log in with a unique identity and password, but, to protect the right to a secret ballot, it must make it impossible to match an individual with the vote cast.

"At no time during that process would we be able to see how any person voted," Ms. Brunelli said.

In his veto message, Governor Wilson cited concern about security as the reason for vetoing the Internet voting bill.

Related Articles
Santa Monica Seeking a Return To Online Civic Forum of Yore
(Sep. 8, 1998)

"The use of such a system will compromise voter confidentiality and generate significant opportunities for fraud," he wrote. "Although current encryption technology is making advances in providing a more secure environment to prevent tampering by third parties, no one can yet guarantee a completely safe, tamper-proof system. Without such a guarantee, a study is premature."

The vetoed bill resembles in some respects the Virtual Voting Rights Initiative that Strassman circulated in Los Angeles in 1996. "I was flattered that the Republicans were concerned enough to try to kill the bill," he said. On the issue of Internet voting, Strassman has found that he is not so far ahead of his time as he has been: in 1980, he ran for Congress in Silicon Valley with a slogan of "Compute, don't commute." He lost.

He has also learned some of the hard math of California politics. After hours of collecting signatures, Strassman found that the backers of initiatives often spent $1 million to collect enough signatures to get a measure on the state ballot. So he decided to put the Internet to the test by placing a copy of the voting initiative on the Web for people to sign.

The results were not encouraging. In the course of several months, only one person, a Berkeley resident, found it, printed it out, signed it and mailed it.

Rebecca Fairley Raney at rfr@nytimes.com welcomes your comments and suggestions.

Tracy Westen, head of the Center for Government Studies, referred the reporter on this story to me. The fallout from this article is documented in several mailings in Chapter 6.

Article from the Christian Science Monitor, Friday, November 13, 1998: In California, Taking the Initiative - Online

The URL for this article is:

http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1998/11/13/fp1s2-csm.shtml

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1998
In California, Taking the Initiative - Online
? Internet site to draft ballot measure hints at a future of democracy by computer.

Paul Van Slambrouck
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

SAN FRANCISCO

If you think the election season is buttoned up and put away, think again.

Another has already begun in California, which this week delivered one of its signature innovations in the workings of democracy. Combining a hot topic with hot technology, it could be a glimpse of where citizen power is headed in the 21st century.

Supporters of education reform here have posted an Internet site (www.localchoice2000.com) that encourages the public to help draft a ballot initiative for the spring 2000 election. Its overarching aim is to increase local control of schools.

The issue itself is hot enough. Public opinion polls show education is the top worry among Californians, and any new citizen-based policy here could well reverberate nationally.

But the most controversial feature of this measure, and one that could spread instantly regardless of whether the measure is ever approved, is the process itself, something akin to writing legislation with several million co-sponsors.

To critics, it's a logical excess in an already excessive process that has turned the ballot initiative into a fourth branch of government, albeit one with almost no rules of order. To others, it's an inspired use of technology to help broaden participation in civic affairs amid signs aplenty that traditional voter turnout is in decline.

6

In any event, the melding of cyberspace and democracy is surely on its way, say a number of analysts.

> **Drafting measures online can broaden participation and lead to initiatives with fewer obvious flaws. Of course, that broader base applies only to those with online connections.**

"It's part of an interesting, important, and inevitable trend. The Internet is uniquely susceptible to this form of participatory democracy," says Tracy Westen, president of the nonprofit Center for Governmental Studies in Los Angeles.

Pin numbers for voting

Beyond just writing ballot measures interactively over the Internet, a number of analysts expect some states to begin permitting registration and voting from computer terminals over the next several years.

Backers of the education measure being drafted here intend to seek permission from the state to be the first to gather the 400,000 signatures necessary to put it on the ballot electronically. They would use pin numbers like those used at ATMs.

Such a step in itself could revolutionize the ballot-initiative process by making it vastly easier and cheaper to qualify measures.

Digital "signatures" are already legal in California for many business purposes, but they are not yet permitted in the election code. A spokesman says Secretary of State Bill Jones will convene a task force next month that will begin exploring Internet voting and ballot signatures.

The main backer of this education initiative is Silicon Valley venture capitalist Tim Draper. He was appointed to the state board of education this year.

While "choice" has become almost synonymous with vouchers, Mr. Draper says he's not certain what the final language of this initiative will include. But he says his inclination is to leave public dollars in public schools.

The only guiding principle for the initiative is to achieve greater local control and decisionmaking for schools. The online ballot site asks for comments and suggestions from anyone interested in helping "take back our schools."

California is among 23 mostly Western and Midwestern states that permit ballot initiatives. Activist states like California and Oregon have enacted controversial policies on everything from physician-assisted suicide to affirmative action, stirring national debate on issues that did not survive the conventional legislative process.

"It has become excessive," says Norma Brecher of the California League of Women Voters. The League intends to recommend a comprehensive package of reforms early next year. They will either encourage legislation or take the reforms directly to the ballot with an initiative of their own.

Tweaking a popular process

Reformists advocate a number of changes, but some of the most prominent include stricter vetting of initiative language to avoid flagrant legal conflicts, clearer disclosure of initiative backers, and a process that would increase the odds of a legislative resolution to issues before they go on the ballot.

Attorney Robin Johansen was involved this year in drawing up a reform initiative on behalf of San Diego Padres owner John Moores, but the measure never made it to the ballot. Though they may try again, Ms. Johansen concedes major reform is difficult "because the initiative process is so popular."

Still, Utah, Mississippi, and Montana have recently approved reforms to their initiative processes. In Utah, for instance, a two-thirds majority is now required to pass measures related to wildlife and the environment.

Some think cyberspace can help improve the initiative process. Drafting measures online, like the current effort here, can broaden participation and lead, in the end, to initiatives with fewer obvious flaws. Of course, that broader base applies only to those with computers and online connections.

In all, putting the electoral process in cyberspace "saves money, is more convenient and once it's in place, can be even more secure than what we have now," says Marc Strassman of the Campaign for Digital Democracy in southern California.

Still, critics of the initiative process like author Peter Schrag believe involving more cooks in the stew is not necessarily a progressive step. Speaking of the LOCALCHOICE 2000 initiative, he says, "This is not my idea of political leadership."

Before bookmarking this page in your browser, click **here**.

The URL for this page is:
http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1998/11/13/fp1s2-csm.shtml

Amidst all this activity and speculation, one would like to know just how American voters feel about voting on the Internet. New studies are coming out regularly now, but this early examination of the issue by Kellyanne Fitzpatrick of The Polling Company and Betsy Cragon at Proxicom was one of the first and one of the most thorough.

Report from The Polling Company, December 12, 1996: Majority of Americans Favor Voting by Internet

12/12/96

MAJORITY OF AMERICANS FAVOR VOTING BY INTERNET

Most say Internet will be better than TV for news and information by 2000

Contact:

Betsy Cragon Public Relations Manager betsy@proxicom.com 703.918.0270

or

Kellyanne Fitzpatrick - The Polling Company 202-667-6557

Washington, DC: December 12, 1996 -- A new survey suggests that the historically low turnout in last months elections could increase in the future through a single mechanism: voting on the Internet. Fifty-one percent (51%) of those polled said they would support allowing registered voters to cast their ballots by Internet if proper safeguards were in place, with 28% strongly supporting the idea. Key demographic groups favoring voting-by-Internet include:

68% Generation Xers (18-29)
65% Daily Internet users
56% Blacks
56% Independents
55% Never watch network news programs
53% Pacific Region
53% Liberals
52% Conservatives
52% Urban dwellers
52% Labor union households
50% of those who voted on Election Day (November 5, 1996)

On the flip side, 42% of those polled voiced opposition to voting by Internet. Opposition was particularly salient among senior citizens (49% opposed), whose current access to the Internet is somewhat limited.

"In the rush to judgment that low voter turnout stems from apathy or anarchy within the electorate, two other factors may have been overlooked: mobility and convenience," observed Kellyanne Fitzpatrick, CNN Political Analyst and president of the polling company, a Washington-DC based research firm which conducted the survey for Proxicom of McLean, Virginia.

"Modern technology allows someone to e-mail a friend in Japan or access up-to-the-minute news and information affecting their lives," said Raul Fernandez, President and CEO of Proxicom, "but does nothing to help the busy single mother, the disabled, or the out-of-town business traveler to exercise his or her constitutionally-protected right to vote."

Greater flexibility and electronic ballot access might lead to increases in the number of people who participate in the electoral process. Evidence of this trend is shown in the high number of "absentee" ballots cast in states with vote-by-mail programs, such as Washington and Oregon, even though overall turnout there mirrored the poor showing nationwide this election. In many foreign countries, voting occurs on Sunday, a traditional day of rest when people do not work. The Founding Fathers here chose the first Tuesday in November.

"The time-and-place rules of voting have been especially restrictive on young people," says Miss Fitzpatrick, a noted expert on the "Gen X" vote. "Many college students attend school far from home, the place where they registered to vote. Their options are limited to traveling home mid-semester at their own expense or requesting an absentee ballot weeks in advance to vote for politicians they don't relate to in the first place. Voting in the privacy of their dorm rooms through a medium they understand may go a long way toward re-enfranchising them into the process."

In separate survey questions, it was revealed that more people believe that by the year 2000 the Internet will be a better source of information about products and services than television (56%-30%). In fact, a majority (53%) of Internet non-users agree. Key demographic groups who believe that the Internet will provide superior knowledge and advice as we approach the next century include:

74% Male Daily Users
71% Weekly Internet users
70% Daily Internet users
67% Watch network news once per week
67% Baby Boomers (30-49)
67% Black men
66% Middle income ($40-$60K)
66% Married, 2+ kids home
65% Working women
64% Small Business Owners
62% Generation Xers (18-29)

"The Internet is the ultimate in channel-surfing, placing the consumer in control of what appears on the screen next," remarked Fernandez, whose clients include MCI and American Express, and whose firm won the first Clio ever awarded for home page design. "Television advertising provides a one-way megaphone with a one-size-fits-all message; in contrast, the World Wide Web and e-mail is interactive, allowing you to access the specific information you need, with continuous updates."

The survey, which was administered by telephone November 5-7, 1996, features responses from 1,200 adults, 800 of whom voted on November 5th. It has a margin of error of +2.8% at the 95% confidence level.

This release was found in the AIM InfoCenter. Check in often for more news!

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Florida seems to be taking up the slack left by Governor Wilson's abdication of a leadership role for California in electronic voting technology. This e-mail from the Florida official charged with overseeing his state's certification of secure digital voting systems shows how interest in new possibilities for state voters can translate into leading-edge policy.

E-mail from the Florida Secretary of State's Office, July 21, 1998, regarding the status of electronic voting in Florida

Subject:
    Electronic Voting System
 Date:
    Tue, 21 Jul 98 10:37:19 -0500
 From:
    "Paul Craft"<pcraft@mail.dos.state.fl.us>
  To:
    <transmedia@pacificnet.net>
  CC:
    <ebaxter@mail.dos.state.fl.us>

  Dear Mr. Strassman,

  I manage the Voting System Section in the Florida Division of
  Elections. Accordingly your e-mail to the department about the
  "Electronic Voting System" was forwarded to me for response.

  Florida has been using electronic voting systems since the early
  eighties. In 1987 we passed ground breaking legislation setting
  standards for electronic voting system design and function. We
  presently lead the nation in electronic voting system testing and
  evaluation.

  We began working on standards for internet voting systems back in
  September of 1997. We planned to run a pilot program of an internet
  voting system during the fall 1998 election cycle but abandoned this
  effort when publicity surrounding absentee balloting in a City of
  Miami election raised too many concerns for us to be able to continue
  the project this year.

  We have been approached by numerous vendors during the past year who
  want to tryout various approaches to internet voting security and
  procedures.

At present, we plan to publish standards for provisional certification of voting systems which transmit untabulated ballots across the internet later this year. These will be available on our website upon publication.

In January of 1999, we plan to publish a "Request for Information" inviting interested parties to apply for provisional certification of their internet voting systems. Voting Systems so certified would then be linked up with local jurisdictions who wished to volunteer to use the systems on a trial basis for a real election.

If you are still interested in exploring this in January please contact me early in the month so that we can get you on the list of vendors who will receive a direct mailing of the RFI.

I've attached a copy of the document "Florida Voting Systems Standards" All voting systems provisionally certified must comply with these standards in addition to the new standards for the internet communication subcomponents of the system.

Sincerely,
Paul W. Craft
Computer Audit Analyst

Florida Department of State
Division of Elections
Voting System Section
401 S. Monroe Street, Room 203C
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Phone (904) 921-4110
Fax   (904) 488-6174

E-mail pcraft@mail.dos.state.fl.us

Website http://election.dos.state.fl.us

Chapter 5
New Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial

Late in October, 1998, I got an e-mail from Bernard Steeds, a reporter with the New Zealand Press Agency. He said he'd been talking with Rex Widerstrom, a New Zealand political activist and former talkshow host who had recruited me online to become a "Polemic Associate," one of a group of political consultants working online worldwide (http://www.polemic.net), Mr. Steeds asked me a series of questions about our planned trial of electronic electoral systems in New Zealand. I sent him my answers and he wrote this article, which appeared in the Evening Post in Wellington, New Zealand, effectively kicking off our efforts on this project.

Article from the Wellington (New Zealand) Evening Post, November, 1998

By Bernie Steeds of NZPA

Wellington, Nov 4 - About 20,000 New Zealanders will next year be asked to act as guinea pigs in a mock election in which voting will be done over the phone and internet, trialing a system which could one day be used for general elections.

At the same time, hackers will be asked to try to hack into the system and distort the ``election" results.

The system, called Integrated Electronic Election System (IEES) has been developed by Californian company Transmedia Communications Ltd. It is working in New Zealand with consultant Rex Widerstrom, a former NZ First adviser.

The system has already been used for elections by private organisations in the United States. Transmedia sees the trial as the first step towards offering the system to governments -- including New Zealand's -- for use in public elections.

Transmedia president Marc Strassman told NZPA by e-mail from California that New Zealand had been chosen because of its high level of technological development, ``technically-literate" population, and tradition of democracy.

``Also, it's not too big and not too small to run a useful trial at reasonable cost."

He said the company was trying to recruit 20,850 voters to take part.

They would be sent confidential pin numbers, and would use these to register votes either by telephone (via an 0800 number) or internet, in a mock election, possibly as soon as February.

The election is likely to use real political parties, but fake candidate names, while the referendum is likely to ask a question about making New Zealand a republic.

The company has already asked political parties to check out the system and plans this month to start raising the $50,000 it needs to fund the trial.

Mr Strassman said if the trial went well, ``the next step would be to make the political case for adopting this electronic voting system for use in New Zealand and all other countries''.

Electronic voting could lead to lower costs and higher participation in elections, and would also make it easier for New Zealanders to vote from overseas, he said.

Chief electoral officer Phil Whelan told NZPA he had not been contacted by Transmedia or Mr Widerstrom but would be interested in hearing how the trial went.

His office had been approached with several phone voting and electronic voting systems, and he believed it was possible some could be trialled in public elections as early as 2002.

``New Zealand is one of the areas in the world that is keen to embrace new technology, and if the voting public is keen on something that's going to make it more efficient for them then that's something we should be considering.''

However, he said, any new system would have to match existing standards of secrecy and integrity.

Questions would also have to be answered about whether the phone system could handle two million votes being cast on a single day, and whether people could get access to touchtone phones or the internet.

Mr Whelan said public electronic voting booths in places like lotto or TAB outlets could -- in theory, at least -- be a possibility.

The IEEC system is one of two significant developments in internet-based election systems expected to be trialled in New Zealand.

The other is an internet-based system for holding political conferences and debates, which was used in this year's German elections but has not yet been used in English.

Earlier this year, Rex Widerstrom ("PolemicHOST") had invited me to co-host a chatroom session focusing on electronic democracy. I signed in as "VirtPol" (virtual politics) and did my best to be informative and amusing.

Polemic Chatroom Discussion of Electronic Democracy, August 12, 1998

PolemicHOST:
>Hello robert

racrutch:
>Rex is that you ?

>..........................VirtPol joined............. :)

PolemicHOST:
>It is indeed. I just got rid of your "ghost"

PolemicHOST:
>Hi Marc

VirtPol:
>Hi rex

VirtPol:
>let's welcome our guest, racrutch

VirtPol:
>hi, racrutch!

racrutch:
>I am glad our schedules finally met.

VirtPol:
>So am I.

PolemicHOST:
>Marc, that's Robert Crutchfield, a fellow Polemic Associate

VirtPol:
>Hi Robert!

VirtPol:
>where are you from?

racrutch:
>Houston, Texas

PolemicHOST:
>Over here in NZ the government has just collapsed, so I have one ear on the radio and one eye on the screen.

VirtPol:
>How hot is it there?

VirtPol:
>That's interesting. Does that mean e-lections coming up soon?

racrutch:
>near a hundred

VirtPol:

> So it would be much easier to stay home in air-conditioned comfort if you had to vote now, wouldn't it?

PolemicHOST:

> Maybe, but a minority government is more likely. We had a coalition and one party just walked out. The other may try to govern alone.

VirtPol:

> Were there any issues, or just personality conflicts?

racrutch:

> no question, you think as alternate presiding judge for this precinct I could arrange something wouldn't you?

VirtPol:

> can you?

VirtPol:

> or do you need permission from Austin?

racrutch:

> No, the election code doesn't allow it, but i could vote from the space shuttle.

PolemicHOST:

> Sale of public assets, the final straw being an airport. Yes, good question Marc - just who does have the power to say "yes" to e-voting. Who should we be lobbying?

VirtPol:

> well, one would think it is the state legislatures and governors, since elections are strictly a state responsibility under the US Federal system. Perhaps it's different in NZ and other national parliamentary systems

racrutch:

> Here in texas it would be up to the legislature. that's how astronauts got the vote.

VirtPol:

> could we all claim astronaut status?

VirtPol:

> Kentucky has honorary colonels.

VirtPol:

> You could all say you have the right stuff.

racrutch:

> No you actually have to be in space at the time.

VirtPol:

> many in california would still qualify under that arrangement

PolemicHOST:

> LOL

VirtPol:

> and we're all in CyberSpace!

VirtPol:

> but seriously, you have to find a legislator who knows something about technology and convince them to sponsor a bill to legalize e-voting, perhaps as part of a bill to set up digital signature rules.

racrutch:

In Texas we have honorary admirals, I KNOW I ARE ONE

VirtPol:

or you can approach the secretary of state and ask him or her to put together a task force to study digital voting.

VirtPol:

that is happening now here in California

PolemicHOST:

In NZ too voting rules are set by the existing pollies. Which of course is why it's so easy to introduce innovative techniques to give more access to democracy

VirtPol:

the secretary of state or whatever official is in charge of voting

VirtPol:

you have no initiative process in NZ?

PolemicHOST:

We have a referendum system, introduced after much lobbying. You need about 200,000 signatures to start one and the results aren't even binding on the govt.

VirtPol:

you can also use the system my company should have ready soon and let political parties, labor unions, class re-unions or any voting group use it and see how great it is and then when everyone wants to use it, take it public

racrutch:

oddly enough at the county level here its split between the county clerk, and the tax assessor

VirtPol:

that's too bad

VirtPol:

what's the split?

PolemicHOST:

There has been only one citizens initiated referendum successfully gotten through the signature barrier since the legislation in 1993, and the results of that were completely ignored.

racrutch:

County clerk runs the election; the tax assessor is in charge of the registration records.

VirtPol:

well, the masses ought to be crying out for e-democracy then

VirtPol:

well, that shouldn't be a problem, as long as they use the same operating system and software

racrutch:

not always, that's currently a campaign issue.

PolemicHOST:

Since 1984 successive "left" and "right" govts have followed a New Right cut welfare /sell assets / disenfranchise the people policy, and people over here are too shell-shocked after years of protest marches etc.

VirtPol:

you could adopt the Myanmar model

VirtPol:

no voting at all

PolemicHOST:

But I agree that the key is to let them play with it, see how easy it is, then they'll wake up to how much control they could have literally at their fingertips.

racrutch:

we are going through a period of reduces voting here which is a shame.

PolemicHOST:

Shoot the opposition? Imprison their supporters? Hey, I couldn't support that. At least until after I'm in power ;-)

VirtPol:

maybe the choice will be e-democracy or no democracy. and you can vote electronically to decide.

PolemicHOST:

That may be so. With so many competing demands for time, and it being so hard to change things by traditional routes. That's why I have embraced the idea, personally.

VirtPol:

great!

VirtPol:

so what should we do next, since we all seem agreed?

PolemicHOST:

I wonder where Steven Clift's 400, plus the Campaign Techniques 200-odd, plus the PSoTD list's many hundreds, are? Sitting at home in front of the box waiting to find out what the sticky stuff is on Monica's dress I guess. So my suggestion as to what to do next would be to shake them by the lapels.

racrutch:

As I said on the campaign techniques list i notice more media outlets are accepting email press releases.

...........................virtpol joined............. :)

virtpol:

there was a small coup here. I'm back now.

racrutch:

All we can do is keep trying different ideas until one works.

virtpol:

that sounds pragmatic

PolemicHOST:

He heh. Keep control of the troops Marc. Watch as I magically zap your alter ego :-)

...........................VirtPol left .... :(

virtpol:

how does it feel to have such power, rex?

PolemicHOST:

Wishing I could demonstrate it to the huddled masses.

virtpol:

e-voting or your power?

racrutch:

Now that I have got these chats in my routine i am going to try and help promote them more

PolemicHOST:

Both. As long as they kept me on as benevolent dictator they could vote for whatever else they wanted. ;-)

virtpol:

great. eventually we'll have a working majority of world voters

virtpol:

so, where do we have the best change to succeed: New Zealand, Texas, or California?

virtpol:

Is Governor Bush into e-democracy?

PolemicHOST:

I think you'd vanished into cyberspace for a sec when I asked where all Steven Clift's list (some 400) plus the Campaign Techniques list (200 odd) plus the PSOTD list (a few hundred I guess) are. If this is the level of interest amongst *them* what hope is there for getting the public to get interested?

racrutch:

He submitted his campaign finance reports in electronic form so it's a start.

virtpol:

do you have a connection with his office or presidential campaign? maybe he needs a new issue.

virtpol:

it would be good to keep e-voting a bi-partisan issue, with support from both parties

racrutch:

I know some people who know some people.

virtpol:

that's a start. I can provide you with endless piles of essays, news stories, and model laws on digital voting which I'd be glad to forward to you to forward to them to forward etc. and consult with anyone along the way about this.

virtpol:

get them in a rivalry with California

virtpol:

and Florida

racrutch:

contact me latter at racrutch@c-com.net and we'll talk

virtpol:

ok

.........................Madeline joined............. :)

virtpol:

hi madeline

PolemicHOST:

NZ led the way granting the vote to women, broadcasting its legislature etc. I'd like to think we could do something here, but I think we'll have to wait till closer to the election because people are sick to death of politics generally.

Madeline:

hi!

racrutch:

Greetings Madeline

PolemicHOST:

Hello Madeleine. We're discussing "e-democracy" - the use of the Internet and other technologies to empower citizens to find out more about government, to communicate with it, and maybe even to vote. I'm Rex Widerstrom, Director of Polemic Political Consultants (http://www.polemic.net) and my co-host this evening is Marc Strassman, the man behind the Virtual Political Action Committee (http://www.vpac.org), Director of Transmedia Communications, and an expert in the field.

virtpol:

I think getting one or more of the parties to use Electronic voting might be the best approach in NZ

virtpol:

great intro rex, thanks!

virtpol:

and so fast, too

Madeline:

Nice to meet you

PolemicHOST:

Heh heh.. Got that bit to work okay, anyhow.

virtpol:

nice to meet you. where are you from?

.........................Zoon joined............. :)

Madeline:

Do you think people are about voting online?

virtpol:

I know I am.

racrutch:

Hello Zoon

virtpol:

hi zoon

PolemicHOST:

Hello Zoon, welcome.

Madeline:

hi zoon

virtpol:

almost a quorum now

PolemicHOST:
> Madeline: Why wouldn't they? What do you think are the barriers? It's easy for us zealots to overlook the cons while promoting the pros.

racrutch:
> If I were at the recreation board where I sit we would have one now.

virtpol:
> the pros have enough people promoting them, agents, managers, etc.

Madeline:
> I don't think people in general care about politics

virtpol:
> I think you're completely right.

racrutch:
> Only when their ox is the one that gets gored.

virtpol:
> or Gore is running for head ox

PolemicHOST:
> But isn't that because they don't get listened to by the pollies? And isn't this a way to make sure they are?

virtpol:
> It would certainly help.

racrutch:
> When he is not running for cover.

virtpol:
> who's running for Cover? who's running against him?

Zoon:
> Hello room

PolemicHOST:
> Now now, bi partisanship, please. (Save the zingers for when we discuss the forthcoming residential race, which we will do soon)

virtpol:
> the residential race? who gets which house or apartment?

> ....Madeline left .... :(

virtpol:
> lost another one.

Zoon:
> Have we exhausted the e-democracy topic?

PolemicHOST:
> Oops, should have minded my p's as well as my q's.

virtpol:
> have we?

PolemicHOST:
> No, sorry Zoon, we were deviating there. My fault.

virtpol:
> let's not deviate, rex

virtpol:

we have enough of that here already

Zoon:

I live in Minnesota where e-democracy started.

PolemicHOST:

What's your feeling Zoon? Is the wider electorate ready for the idea?

virtpol:

you mean where steven clift lives?

Zoon:

Yes, where Steve lives.

virtpol:

you're not Steve are you?

racrutch:

Most of the e politics i see is basically experimentation. people seem to be trying to figure what to make of it.

virtpol:

not that there's anything wrong with that?

PolemicHOST:

So does Garrison Keillor, and he's not him either ;-)

Zoon:

No, I am not. I know him though and even let him know about this chat.

virtpol:

he sent out a notice about it. I got a copy.

virtpol:

his essay Democracy is Online is worth reading

racrutch:

There was one in today's mining company newsletter also.

virtpol:

great

virtpol:

how extensive IS e-dem in Minnesota? what's it used for?

Zoon:

The site is developing quite nicely. They have been including a raft of

information

on this years political candidates and are even talking about including video and audio.

..........................bjornski joined............. :)

virtpol:

hi bjornski

racrutch:

welcome bjornski

bjornski:

hiya

virtpol:

do you think e-democracy can be complete without e-voting?

Zoon:

I am slow to endorse an electronic voting format.

PolemicHOST:

Number of Internet Users According to Various Sources: Intelliquest 70 M, MRI 40 M, Nielson Media 58 M, Morgan Stanley 80 M, eStats 47 M. That is a huge lobby if they all decided they wanted to e-vote.

virtpol:

please tell me why

bjornski:

I'd be slow to endorse it right now also. Too many ways to cheat

PolemicHOST:

Ah hah. That I feel is one of the main concerns, and especially one that the pollies will throw up. Marc?

bjornski:

the security is too lax right now, and any efforts to get it solidified will result in national ID numbers, which is an idea that's even slower to catch on

Zoon:

I do not support a direct democracy. I believe that the founding fathers had it right to create a representative democracy.

virtpol:

well, they weren't the greatest democrats, many of them

bjornski:

but our elected reps are not doing OUR job, they're doing their "investors" jobs

virtpol:

what exactly is wrong with national ID numbers?

racrutch:

I am hoping as we gain experience with the space shuttle that will change.

bjornski:

I don't want all of my personal info stuck into one number, that can be accessed with the swipe of a card by almost anyone with (and even some without) a reader.

virtpol:

maybe we should launch all registered voters into space and THEN let everyone vote

Zoon:

There is more than one school of thought on the role of an elected official.

PolemicHOST:

Zoon: e-democracy does not mean that the people replace Congress. But that important decisions on national policy direction could be decided more than once every three or four years, and more subtly than by voting for an entire platform.

virtpol:

I'd like to see Mini-Voting Booths in the offices of every representative.

Zoon:

I feel that the ability to get elected and the ability to serve are two different things.

virtpol:

They could pose questions and use or disregard the results

bjornski:

forget voting for the platform. I believe in referendums to be voted on by the voters.

racrutch:

I would like to see more voters in the office of every representative.

virtpol:

bjorn, if you like referenda, can't we vote on them electronically, so we can do it frequently?

PolemicHOST:

While supporting e-democracy I also don't want a single ID number. Big brother (and sister) know too much about me now. Marc, is there a way to do it without that? Say, a PIN number only for voting and not known to anyone but you, like an ATM card?

bjornski:

like, why even hold presidential popular elections right now? It's basically all decided by the electoral college (tho I'd like to see them radically sway from the pop vote. They'd be beheaded)

Zoon:

Referendums only foster a system that focuses on push button voting and appeals to emotional issues.

virtpol:

as though emotion plays no part in elections now. ;--)

bjornski:

and the current representative government breeds ignorance of the issues, and apathy for the people being voted in. Nobody cares anymore. It's all corporate politics

virtpol:

there's no reason why voting id numbers need to be linked to anything but your voting registration, rex.

Zoon:

I believe that the Electoral college should be changed from winner take all to popular vote total in each Congressional District.

virtpol:

jurisdictions are splitting up. 1.5 million people in the San Fernando Valley MAY exit los angeles.

PolemicHOST:

bjornski: Would that satisfy you? A voting PIN that only you know?

racrutch:

Here we have separate voter id numbers now so a single number is not necessary.

virtpol:

they could use e-voting there soon.

bjornski:

I could go for a voting card like that, as long as people had to show up in person to sign for them.

virtpol:

you want to stand behind the counter and give them out?

Zoon:

They have thumb print signatures at my bank that could be employed.

bjornski:

if that's what it took to avoid falsified info, yes.

virtpol:

you can add fingerprint scanners to keyboards and use that

PolemicHOST:

Well there we are. One more trip to the polls, at which you'd show some ID, get a card issued, go into the booth, vote AND choose your PIN, and bingo! You're an electronic voter from then on.

racrutch:

We already have branch offices around the county where that could be accomplished.

bjornski:

thumbprint starts tapping into a database that can be tied into law enforcement. nada

virtpol:

all I'm saying is that we should look at these technologies from the private sector for use in the political sector

virtpol:

what if the people controlled law enforcement through their electronically-elected and advised representatives?

Zoon:

I think that the act of voting should be a social exercise. It is too easy to isolate yourself from your fellow human being and then no longer respect any opinions other that your own.

PolemicHOST:

If you were issued with a PIN which was "locked out" of the system to avoid duplicate votes, you'd soon know if anyone else had stolen your PIN and voted in your stead, surely?

bjornski:

but the ratio of households with computers is greatly outnumbered by those that don't. If we started closing down voting booths in favor of e-vote (even in only a few places), you'd throw off the votes to those that have and have not

virtpol:

but people are ALREADY isolated and it is already illegal (at least in California) to campaign at the polls. So what are we loosing?

racrutch:

The military calls it COTS (commercial of the shelf) hardware

virtpol:

And no one is talking about shutting down the "legacy" polls.

Zoon:

I have participated in voting by mail and felt that that skewed the outcome.

PolemicHOST:

Agreed, access to technology is an issue. So we run the two systems alongside
each other, is that the way it works, Marc?

Zoon:

Not that I didn't enjoy helping skew it though.

virtpol:

those without computers can go to the walk-in polls

virtpol:

Yes. and we can put lap-tops or palm-tops with big screens and internet
connections in the polling stations for those who want a social experience while
voting or who don't own a computer

bjornski:

hmm. I'd have to see a system like that in place, but I think I could be convinced
to use it. I'm already shopping online

virtpol:

this is just shopping for pollies.

bjornski:

too bad I can't afford to swing the votes, like many corps

virtpol:

and if we had them set up Mini-Voting Booths in their offices and present us
with the Daily Referendum which they can use or not

virtpol:

if we don't like it that they don't use it, we can vote them out next time, since the
results will be posted everyday

PolemicHOST:

Postal voting is a whole can of worms. Amongst the allegations that I've heard
leveled: voting papers stolen from letterboxes of neighbourhoods where few
were likely to be bothered to vote anyway, and so few complained; men
standing over women as they filled out their ballot, or simply filling it in for
them,

and vice versa. Electronic is much safer.

..........................Mugwump joined............. :)

bjornski:

I'd groove on a daily referendum. Even just a daily referendum survey. Check
my e-mail in the mornings, cast my votes, and go on with my day knowing that
my opinions would be heard

virtpol:

also, electronic voting from home will make it much easier for visually- and
mobility-challenged voters to vote privately

PolemicHOST:

Hello Mugwump. We're discussing "e-democracy" - the use of the Internet and
other technologies to empower citizens to find out more about government, to
communicate with it, and maybe even to vote. I'm Rex Widerstrom, Director of
Polemic Political Consultants (http://www.polemic.net) and my co-host this
evening is Marc Strassman, the man behind the Virtual Political Action
Committee (http://www.vpac.org), Director of Transmedia Communications,

and an expert in the technology we'd be using

Zoon:

I feel this way that elections, while being anonymous are not completely good decisionmaking processes. When you select a candidate your decision affects me a person should stand up and be counted and not operate in the privacy of their own home or voting booth.

racrutch:

We even had mail ballots tampered with at the counting station recently it does go on.

bjornski:

and hey, the losing party, instead of dumping cash on failure commercials, could just hire a hacker to destroy the whole election. heheheh

virtpol:

another benefit of e-voting is that the ballots will be posted in a big spread sheet with your secret ID next to it.

PolemicHOST:

And at a party level here, we've had postal votes simply thrown away and the results issued by the party bosses - and who's to say they cheated with no way of checking?

virtpol:

well, we are working on protecting the integrity of the system.

Zoon:

I have used e-communication to empower my readership and inform them about political happenings in my state.

virtpol:

with e-voting, we will post the ballots with secret ID numbers so you can see that your vote was properly counted.

virtpol:

and that they all add up. at least the electronic votes.

virtpol:

like in a class, where you want to see how you did on the final exam but don't want others to know.

PolemicHOST:

Marc, is there a URL which takes people through the hows of e-voting, step by step?

Mugwump:

you can make sure your vote is counted, but how will you make sure all the other millions of votes are legitimate?

virtpol:

you can't do that with non e-ballots

racrutch:

In Harris County where we have over 1 million registered voters that would be some spread sheet.

virtpol:

anyone who's ballot is listed wrong can complain, and show their time-stamped official digital copy of their ballot

Mugwump:

    but how will we know if false ballots are posted?

virtpol:

    well, it would mean more business for Texas Instruments, wouldn't it? which is
    another reason e-voting is good.

Mugwump:

    I am more concerned about false ballots being posted than I am making sure my
    one ballot is correct

virtpol:

    the auditors we've hired will let us know

racrutch:

    Or somebody,

bjornski:

    no, we'd subcontract it to some company from India. cheaper that way

Mugwump:

    India.....the keepers of international peace.....

virtpol:

    only ballots that are submitted by voters on the list would be accepted.

bjornski:

    ya, no kidding

virtpol:

    this, I think, is another issue.

Zoon:

    There is a Canadian company which is advancing a technology that will allow
    electronic balloting from a fixed location.

bjornski:

    PGPkey protection on the votes and timestamp results forms.

virtpol:

    but if the Indians were busy voting electronically, they'd have less time to do
    other things. The same goes for other groups.

bjornski:

    oh yeah, Big Bro doesn't like PGP

PolemicHOST:

    Yes, auditors are important, I think - KPMG or Ernst and Young, or whoever
    counts the votes for the Oscars.

virtpol:

    yes

virtpol:

    another advantage of e-voting is that it can be conducted in undemocratic
    countries that are opening up to the Net for business reasons.

racrutch:

    As I said on the radio once any voting system can be compromised, they're only
as

    good as the people running them. that too is part of the problem.

virtpol:

    think of big countries with growing Net populations but NO elections.

bjornski:

> China? Have the official pushing the buttons for you after you've entered your ID?

virtpol:

> we can't solve every flaw in human nature with e-voting. or any other technology. except maybe genetic engineering, but that's really another issue.

PolemicHOST:

> Marc - can you recommend a URL which takes people step-by-step on how they'd cast an e-vote, how it would be verified etc etc. All I've found is proprietary stuff for a few systems?

virtpol:

> get the ids to voters somehow, then let them vote on servers in Palo Alto and post the results.

> ....Mugwump left .... :(

racrutch:

> Agreed we can only provide the best system and enforcement tools possible.

virtpol:

> I don't think there is such a site, rex.

virtpol:

> but we can collect e-mails for our mailing list and send it to them when we have it.

PolemicHOST:

> Well judging by the very good questions raised here today, there needs to be one. The "how" seems to be more of concern than the "why" right now.

virtpol:

> better yet, when we have the system up and in beta, we can send them an id and let them use and try to break it.

virtpol:

> well, I'll take that into account in my next efforts in this area.

PolemicHOST:

> While the topic changes regularly here at the Mining Co, we intend to return to the subject of e-democracy regularly. If you'd like to be kept informed of upcoming chats, please go to http://www.polemic.net/chatlist.html where you'll find a form to register for updates.

virtpol:

> what's that UTL again, rex?

racrutch:

> That's an idea as an election official although a grunt one i would be interested in that.

virtpol:

> the time has certainly gone fast.

PolemicHOST:

> http://www.polemic.net/chatlist.html

Zoon:

> If we get a candidate elected via electronic tampering we will need to create a

new term for it. We could call it electrogopoly

virtpol:

and the questions have been far above average, sort of like the students in Lake Wobegon, where, I understand, they don't have e-voting yet.

virtpol:

let's call it electrokleptocracy

PolemicHOST:

elctrogerrymandering

bjornski:

or PACing

virtpol:

there are so many possibilities.

Zoon:

Hey, now no regional disses.

racrutch:

That's how we got our last districts in Texas.

virtpol:

Well, thank you all and I hope we can continue this discussion soon with ourselves and even more guests.

virtpol:

visit the polemic site and I'll be working on getting the e-vote beta test site up and running so we can have some real fun with it.

racrutch:

Rex what's the next date and subject?

PolemicHOST:

If you go to http://www.polemic.net/chatlist.html you can sign up to be told when the next chat is. Thanks for coming. That's the end of the "official" chat, but feel free to stay on.

Zoon:

I write an online magazine about Minnesota Politics it is growing almost daily and is helps create a buzz .

Zoon:

I am expecting to launch into Iowa by the first of the year.

bjornski:

Minnesota politics? Can you toss me on it, Zoon? I'm a BIG supporter in the Ventura race this year (I'm just outside of MPLS)

PolemicHOST:

The next date is a week from now, Wednesday 9 pm EDT. Topic.... um..... any suggestions? We'll leave e-democracy for a few weeks. Zoon: tell us the URL

bjornski:

or drop me the URL or something

Zoon:

http://checksandbalances.com

bjornski:

aaah, I know a guy that was doing some work for your site. gregor

PolemicHOST:

Thanks Zoon. And thanks Marc for helping host the chat. We will do it again soon, for certain.

racrutch:

No thoughts off hand but I'll try co-hosting if you want

Zoon:

Just to plug my stuff. It is the site of the first online paid political advertisement.

Zoon:

There is no gregor I have worked with.

PolemicHOST:

Alright Robert. We'll talk in the next couple of days and come up with a topic. Hope I'll see you all here then. remember the URL http://www.polemic.net/chatlist.html for notification of the next e-democracy chat.

bjornski:

that was his handle. his name was Brad. Socialist as they come (and I loved it, heheh)

racrutch:

Good i'll check Campaigns and Elections etc. for ideas

PolemicHOST:

Zoon: whose ad are you running? Is it really the first paid political ad?!

Zoon:

Yes, by all accounts. Run by Ted Mondale last October covered in Wired and here is a URL for the Center for Responsive Politics article ran July 15th.

...........................virtpol left .... :(

Zoon:

http://www.crp.org/pubs/ce54/03virtual.htm

PolemicHOST:

Thanks. I'm going to get a transcript of this and will post it to the web. I'll link to it from http://www.polemic.net/chatlist.html

Zoon:

We also had the first paid issue ad in the history of the net.

Zoon:

The article says that the Washington post online is getting $5000 to $10,000/ per month for issue ads.

racrutch:

I'll leave ya'll now see you soon.

PolemicHOST:

Well I have to go, thanks again to all of you for attending and I hope you'll join future chats same time, same day, same place.

Zoon:

If you're linking make sure you go to my URL.

...........................PolemicHOST left .... :(

...........................racrutch left .... :(

bjornski:

    whoa, your site has grown since I last visited

bjornski:

    but I'm gonna go read for a while (pose those unposed questions to Ventura. He'll answer them!!!) Go Jesse!

    ....bjornski left .... :(

    ....cowboy joined............. :)

cowboy:

    Hello Zoon

cowboy:

    The key to taking back government is to begin with personal accountability and responsibility -- no entitlements!

    ....Zoon left .... :(

    ....cowboy left .... :(

    -- Log stopped at Wed Aug 12 19:35:10 PDT 1998

Rex also asked me to write a chapter for his online politics manual about how to campaign once Internet-based voting becomes a reality. Interestingly enough, the dynamics of getting elected under a system of Internet voting turn out to be a lot like those for getting elected in a system where a lot of campaigning is conducted on the Internet but where people can't yet vote that way. As in the system we have now.

How to Get Elected in the Age of Internet Voting

by Marc Strassman
Executive Director, Campaign for Digital Democracy
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Since I've been working hard lately to implement Internet voting systems all over the world, it seemed reasonable to offer some suggestions about how candidates can change their campaigning techniques in order to successfully pursue their electoral goals as these systems come into existence everywhere, including their own districts.

All the advice below, for "Internet campaigning," is completely agnostic as regards content. Nothing will be said about issues, except strictly Internet-related ones. What you want to say about the issues affecting your voters is up to you, whether you base your stands on your own convictions, polling, or a psychic hotline. These suggestions are about process, not content.

The most important thing to remember about electronic campaigning is that if you want voters to vote for you on the Internet, you need to convince them that you (or at least your campaign organization) know how to use the Internet to reach them with your message, whatever that message is. Here, as in other contexts, as Marshall McLuhan said, the medium is the message.

By showing your potential voters that you are comfortable with Internet technology and possibilities, are open and reachable, creative and competent is using Net resources, you demonstrate to them that you understand what the Web is about, show them that they will be able to establish an ongoing virtual relationship with you, and that they can rely on you, once elected, to provide responsive and understanding support for them in their future interactions with the government in which you will be representing them.

This will persuade them that they should use the Internet to vote for you.

Here are a dozen specific suggestions:

1. Use as much video as you can. Record "self-snippets" of yourself talking about the issues, your opponents, yourself, whatever. Encode and post these clips, then e-mail the URL's to everyone who asks and publicize them in all media.

2. Schedule and attend "virtual town meetings". These can focus on specific issues or be more general. You can hold them in existing public chatrooms or set up your own. Eventually, someone will develop a "secure anonymous chat environment" where the candidate and the citizens can be authenticated as belonging there (because they live in the district) but the citizens can remain anonymous (or make their identities known, as they choose).

3. Consider using a program like the Email Management System to automatically answer your e-mail according to your own specifications regarding keywords in the incoming texts and with the provision of links to your own text, audio, and video files. Assure your voters that you will continue to use such a system after you're elected to help speed their interactions with you and the rest of the government.

4. Participate in online debates, including ones that are text-based, audio-based, and video-based, synchronous and asynchronous. Archive them on your site and urge everyone to visit them.

5. Submit files about yourself, your positions on the issues, and your campaign, in all media, to sites such as DNET (http://www.dnet.org) which aggregate candidate data for easy, comparative browsing. Include links to your own site, where possible.

6. Include and feature your campaign website URL in all your earned and paid media.

7. Register with sites such as COIN (Candidates Online Interactive Network), where you can fill out a form reflecting your views on issues, be put into a candidate database, and be matched with legal contributors who like your stands and want to support you with contributions.

8. Clearly address Internet-specific issues such as encryption, privacy, censorship, Internet taxation, and so on, so that your Internet-using constituents will know that these things matter to you, that you are knowledgeable about them and that you consider them important enough to feature them in your campaign.

9. Make an effort to use the platform given to you by your campaign and/or incumbency to educate and bring others in to educate your constituents about the underlying technology and science behind the issues you and they are wrestling with so that together, linked by Net technology, you and they can reach the best possible solutions.

10. Work to build a community of contributors, supporters, volunteers, media, and citizen/voters that uses the Net to communicate, educate, evaluate, motivate, and coordinate itself politically. Build a virtual-learning-political organization that can use the Net to get you elected, then can use the resources you'll have access to, as an office holder, to build, strengthen, refine and expand this organization in order to more effectively pursue your collective goals, as determined through the synergy created by you, your constituents, and the Net.

Borrow freely from organizational models provided by universities, entrepreneurial start-ups, non-profits, and Fortune 500 companies to build a unique and personalized Net-based political organization that will synergistically leverage the abilities of its citizen/members, the computing and communicating power of the Internet, and your own creative contributions.

You might want to employ the latest in electronic voting systems within this organization to help you formulate your positions on issues and even resolve questions of campaign strategy. By involving your constituents in the over-all and even day-to-day operations of your campaign, you can build bonds of trust and solidarity that will be invaluable in gaining their on-going support.

Furthermore, citizen/voters who have already used an electronic voting system scores of times to register their preferences within the context of your campaign for office will be very predisposed to cast their electronic ballots for you in the election, both because it will have been you and your campaign that have made them familiar with the technology and practice of electronic voting and because they will know that by voting you into office they will assure themselves of the opportunity to continue governing themselves through a responsive and trusted medium supported by Internet technology, mediated and catalyzed by you, and energized by their own participation.

11. Share what you have learned with others, and help them build similar organizations.

12. Consider what the creation and growth of such organizations will mean for party politics as we know it, and what the creation of a Virtual Party organized along these lines, in every political jurisdiction of each country and in loose (networked) affiliation internationally, would mean for world politics.

In summary, to get elected on the Internet, you need to show the voters you know how to use, even innovate, on the Web. Do that, and you will establish the foundation for electing you now and for real accomplishments, using the Web and the organization you will have created, for years after your election.

-30-

On September 18, 1998, I taped a segment in Santa Monica, California, on the "Week in Review" news program, hosted by Century Cable Television Vice President Bill Rosendahl. The topic was electronic voting. Tracy Westen, head of the Center for Government Studies, was also a guest. We both answered questions from panelists who had doubts, and received praise from one who was supportive, about electronic voting. There is no printed transcript of this event. But if you download a RealNetworks RealPlayer G2 from http://www.realnetworks.com or use the one you already have, you can watch it for yourself.

Streaming Video Appearance on "Week in Review" to Discuss Electronic Voting

Just insert either of these URLs in the Open Location slot:

pnm://real.vod.intervu.net/smirror/ecom/demo/transmedia/week_in_review_28.rm

or

http://www.polemic.net/marcs1.ram

Of course, the New Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial has a website, and you are invited to visit it, as they used to say of voting in the pre-electronic days, "early and often".

NZEET Website URL

The NZEET URL is: http://www.polemic.net/nzeet.html

Chapter 6

Messages Number 1-7 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

The day after the general election on November 3, 1998, I learned about the Listbot Mailing List Service. I created a mailing list for the Campaign for Digital Democracy immediately, and, on November 9th, sent out the first of a series of messages to the growing membership, which you can join at http://digitaldemocracy.listbot.com

Message Number 1 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
    Nov 09 1998 18:43:45 EST
From:
    Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
    NZEET

To the Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List:

November 9, 1998

Here are two items that may be of interest to you.

The first is the original version of an article by Bernard Steeds, a reporter for the New Zealand Press Association (their AP). A version of this text recently appeared in The Evening Post newspaper in New Zealand.

The second is a more detailed explanation of the upcoming New Zealand Electronic Elections Trial (NZEET), now scheduled for the first quarter of 1999 in that country, within the context of a fundraising appeal for the $30,000 that will be required to carry out this first nationwide beta test of a working electronic voting system.

For more information about this initiative from Campaign for Digital Democracy, or to discuss it with those involved, just drop me an e-mail at transmedia@pacificnet.net.

More soon about the "99 in 99" campaign to pass digital voting legislation in every state legislative house in the country next year, the "Vote-by-(e)Mail project, and renewed efforts to bring electronic voting to California, now that the state will have a Democratic governor beginning 12:01 am, Monday, January 4, 1999.

Sincerely,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director, Campaign for Digital Democracy
President, Transmedia Communications

NZPA PAR bs
pls q 0600
   (Eds: with internet-politics)
   By Bernie Steeds of NZPA
   Wellington, Nov 4 - About 20,000 New Zealanders will next year
be asked to act as guinea pigs in a mock election in which voting
will be done over the phone and internet, trialing a system which
could one day be used for general elections.
   At the same time, hackers will be asked to try to hack into the
system and distort the ``election'' results.
   The system, called Integrated Electronic Election System (IEES)
has been developed by Californian company Transmedia Communications
Ltd. It is working in New Zealand with consultant Rex Widerstrom, a
former NZ First adviser.
   The system has already been used for elections by private
organisations in the United States. Transmedia sees the trial as the
first step towards offering the system to governments -- including New
Zealand's -- for use in public elections.
   Transmedia president Marc Strassman told NZPA by e-mail from
California that New Zealand had been chosen because of its high
level of technological development, ``technically-literate''
population, and tradition of democracy.
   ``Also, it's not too big and not too small to run a useful trial
at reasonable cost.''
   He said the company was trying to recruit 20,850 voters to take
part.
   They would be sent confidential pin numbers, and would use these
to register votes either by telephone (via an 0800 number) or
internet, in a mock election, possibly as soon as February.
   The election is likely to use real political parties, but fake
candidate names, while the referendum is likely to ask a question
about making New Zealand a republic.
   The company has already asked political parties to check out the
system and plans this month to start raising the $50,000 it needs to
fund the trial.
   Mr Strassman said if the trial went well, ``the next step would
be to make the political case for adopting this electronic voting
system for use in New Zealand and all other countries''.
   Electronic voting could lead to lower costs and higher
participation in elections, and would also make it easier for New
Zealanders to vote from overseas, he said.

Chief electoral officer Phil Whelan told NZPA he had not been contacted by Transmedia or Mr Widerstrom but would be interested in hearing how the trial went.

His office had been approached with several phone voting and electronic voting systems, and he believed it was possible some could be trialled in public elections as early as 2002.

``New Zealand is one of the areas in the world that is keen to embrace new technology, and if the voting public is keen on something that's going to make it more efficient for them then that's something we should be considering.''

However, he said, any new system would have to match existing standards of secrecy and integrity.

Questions would also have to be answered about whether the phone system could handle two million votes being cast on a single day, and whether people could get access to touchtone phones or the internet.

Mr Whelan said public electronic voting booths in places like lotto or TAB outlets could -- in theory, at least -- be a possibility.

The IEEC system is one of two significant developments in internet-based election systems expected to be trialled in New Zealand.

The other is an internet-based system for holding political conferences and debates, which was used in this year's German elections but has not yet been used in English.

NZPA PAR bs

"Request for New Zealand Electronic Elections Trial Funding" (RNZEETF)

Dear Potential Sponsor,

I'm writing to ask for your support in underwriting the world's first nationwide beta test of Internet- and telephone-based voting, scheduled, if we can get the funding, for the beginning of 1999 in New Zealand.

This "shadow virtual balloting" will give 20,805 New Zealand voters (1% of the number of registered voters) an opportunity to use their computers or their telephones to participate in a mock election where they can vote on individual candidates, parties, preferences for prime minister, and even an initiative question ("Should New Zealand become a republic, and select its own head of state?") (New Zealand doesn't normally have initiatives in its elections, although it does have referenda).

This first-ever national test of the Integrated Electronic Elections System (IEES), which enables electronic voting over the Internet and by

phone, is being planned and carried out by an international group of companies and organizations, including the Campaign for Digital Democracy, Transmedia Communications, Polemic Associates, Interactive Certified Elections, and a Big 4 accounting firm still to be named. The project will be coordinated by the New Zealand Electronic Voting Foundation, a non-profit organization, now being formed.

Following what promises to be a lively mock election campaign by the candidates and parties involved, more than 20,000 New Zealanders will go to their computers or their phones and access an electronic ballot that will offer them the same choices they'd have on a paper ballot. Clicking their mouse or punching their phone's keypad will let them record their choices as to candidates, parties, and the initiative question. Their computer screen or phone speaker will display or read back their choices. Then the voter will validate these choices by clicking on the "submit" button or by punching a phone keypad number. The IEES is fast, convenient, and secure.

The totals will be tabulated and announced online to the participating voters, then to the media. Data will be gathered on the operations of the system in order to improve its performance in future elections. Improved and refined versions of this Integrated Electronic Elections System will be tested in other countries and, eventually, will be offered to governments worldwide for normal operational use in elections at all levels. The implementation of secure, convenient electronic elections technology will reduce government costs, increase convenience to voters and hence turnout levels, make voting more secure, as well as easier for the disabled, and make it possible for voters away from their home precincts to vote wherever they can find Internet or phone access.

Interactive Certified Elections will be providing the core technology for this test and will be managing the voting operations. Campaign for Digital Democracy, the leading advocacy group for online voting, will handle media coverage for the event, along with Transmedia Communications. Polemic Associates, a global consortium of political consultants based in New Zealand, will coordinate relations with the New Zealand political community and recruit 20,805 voters for the test. The major accounting firm will audit the voting procedures, as well as the project's budget.

Interactive Certified Elections will receive $15,000. Campaign for Digital Democracy and Transmedia Communications will receive $5,000, as will Polemic Associates. Five thousand dollars will be used for administrative support and unforeseen expenses.

We are asking foundations and corporations such as yours, which have

expressed a commitment to building a more democratic 21st century through the creative application of this century's best technology, to join with us and provide some of the $30,000 we need to allow 20,000 free men and women to become the first to use the tools that we hope will become to future democratic civilizations was the printing press was to the Enlightenment and fire was to our Neo-Lithic ancestors, a means of raising all mankind a little higher out of the mud and a little closer to the stars.

Message Number 2 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
      Nov 13 1998 00:41:27 EST
From:
      Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
      Christian Science Monitor Writes about Cyber-Initiatives in California

The URL for this page is:
http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1998/11/13/fp1s2-csm.shtml

   The Christian Science Monitor

      FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1998

In California, Taking the Initiative - Online

   Internet site to draft ballot measure hints at a
future of democracy by computer.

Paul Van Slambrouck
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

      SAN FRANCISCO

If you think the election season is buttoned up and put away, think
again.

Another has already begun in California, which this week delivered
one of its signature innovations in the workings of democracy.
Combining a hot topic with hot technology, it could be a glimpse of
where citizen power is headed in the 21st century.

Supporters of education reform here have posted an Internet site
(www.localchoice2000.com) that encourages the public to help draft
a ballot initiative for the spring 2000 election. Its overarching aim is
to increase local control of schools.

The issue itself is hot enough. Public opinion polls show education is

the top worry among Californians, and any new citizen-based policy here could well reverberate nationally.

But the most controversial feature of this measure, and one that could spread instantly regardless of whether the measure is ever approved, is the process itself, something akin to writing legislation with several million co-sponsors.

To critics, it's a logical excess in an already excessive process that has turned the ballot initiative into a fourth branch of government, albeit one with almost no rules of order. To others, it's an inspired use of technology to help broaden participation in civic affairs amid signs aplenty that traditional voter turnout is in decline.

In any event, the melding of cyberspace and democracy is surely on its way, say a number of analysts.

> Drafting measures online can broaden participation and lead to initiatives with fewer obvious flaws. Of course, that broader base applies only to those with online connections.

"It's part of an interesting, important, and inevitable trend. The Internet is uniquely susceptible to this form of participatory democracy," says Tracy Westen, president of the nonprofit Center for Governmental Studies in Los Angeles.

Pin numbers for voting

Beyond just writing ballot measures interactively over the Internet, a number of analysts expect some states to begin permitting registration and voting from computer terminals over the next several years.

Backers of the education measure being drafted here intend to seek permission from the state to be the first to gather the 400,000 signatures necessary to put it on the ballot electronically. They would use pin numbers like those used at ATMs.

Such a step in itself could revolutionize the ballot-initiative process by making it vastly easier and cheaper to qualify measures.

Digital "signatures" are already legal in California for many business purposes, but they are not yet permitted in the election code. A spokesman says Secretary of State Bill Jones will convene a task force next month that will begin exploring Internet voting and ballot signatures.

The main backer of this education initiative is Silicon Valley venture capitalist Tim Draper. He was appointed to the state board of education this year.

While "choice" has become almost synonymous with vouchers, Mr. Draper says he's not certain what the final language of this initiative will include. But he says his inclination is to leave public dollars in public schools.

The only guiding principle for the initiative is to achieve greater local control and decisionmaking for schools. The online ballot site asks for comments and suggestions from anyone interested in helping "take back our schools."

California is among 23 mostly Western and Midwestern states that permit ballot initiatives. Activist states like California and Oregon have enacted controversial policies on everything from physician-assisted suicide to affirmative action, stirring national debate on issues that did not survive the conventional legislative process.

"It has become excessive," says Norma Brecher of the California League of Women Voters. The League intends to recommend a comprehensive package of reforms early next year. They will either encourage legislation or take the reforms directly to the ballot with an initiative of their own.

Tweaking a popular process

Reformists advocate a number of changes, but some of the most prominent include stricter vetting of initiative language to avoid flagrant legal conflicts, clearer disclosure of initiative backers, and a process that would increase the odds of a legislative resolution to issues before they go on the ballot.

Attorney Robin Johansen was involved this year in drawing up a reform initiative on behalf of San Diego Padres owner John Moores, but the measure never made it to the ballot. Though they may try

again, Ms. Johansen concedes major reform is difficult "because the initiative process is so popular."

Still, Utah, Mississippi, and Montana have recently approved reforms to their initiative processes. In Utah, for instance, a two-thirds majority is now required to pass measures related to wildlife and the environment.

Some think cyberspace can help improve the initiative process. Drafting measures online, like the current effort here, can broaden participation and lead, in the end, to initiatives with fewer obvious flaws. Of course, that broader base applies only to those with computers and online connections.

In all, putting the electoral process in cyberspace "saves money, is more convenient and once it's in place, can be even more secure than what we have now," says Marc Strassman of the Campaign for Digital Democracy in southern California.

Still, critics of the initiative process like author Peter Schrag believe involving more cooks in the stew is not necessarily a progressive step. Speaking of the LOCALCHOICE 2000 initiative, he says, "This is not my idea of political leadership."

Message Number 3 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
    Nov 13 1998 18:58:07 EST
From:
    Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
    New Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial Website is Launched

November 13, 1998
Los Angeles, California
USA

Those of you on the Campaign for Digital Democracy mailing list who want
to take a look at the website of the world's first nationwide beta test of
an electronic voting system can go to:

http://www.polemic.net/nzeet.html

Feel free to send any comments you have about the form or content of this
site to:

digitaldemocracy@listbot.com

and they'll be re-posted through this list to all the other members of the
CDD list.

Any of you with contacts, connections, friends, relatives, or business
associates in New Zealand, please feel free to send the NZEET site's URL
to any of them you think might want to be among the 20,000 beta testers we
are trying to recruit.

Sincerely,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

Message Number 4 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
    Nov 14 1998 14:08:23 EST
From:
    Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
    Waivers for Electronic Signature Gathering

To the Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy mailing list:

In 1996, I created Campaign for Digital Democracy to work for the passage
of the Virtual Voting Rights Initiative, which I had just written.

According to the official Legislative Counsel's Digest of the original
AB44, which was identical to the VVRI, except for harsher penalties for
electoral fraud:

"This bill would require the Secretary of State to design, develop, and
implement a digital electoral system for the collection, storage, and
processing of electronically generated and transmitted digital messages to
permit any eligible person to register to vote, sign any
petition, and vote in any election using the digital system. A willful
manipulation of the digital electoral system would be a crime....

"The bill would require the Secretary of State and all county elections
officials to permit the use of digital signatures for voter registration,
voting, and signing of petitions."

At the time, I asked the California Secretary of State's Office to allow
me to use the Net to collect some of the 492,000 signatures required to
put an initiative on the California ballot. Saying that that could only
be done if the VVRI had already passed, they refused to allow us to
collect electronic signatures online. They eventually grudgingly sort of
agreed that it might be OK if I reproduced the complex initiative form
visually online for people to download, print out, sign, and return by
snail mail. This approach was unsuccessful.

Now, according to an article in the Friday, November 13, 1998, issue of
the Christian Science Monitor

(http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1998/11/13/index.html):

"Backers of the education measure being drafted here intend to seek
permission from the state to be the first to gather the 400,000
signatures necessary to put it on the ballot electronically. They would
use pin numbers like those used at ATMs.

"Such a step in itself could revolutionize the ballot-initiative process
by making it vastly easier and cheaper to qualify measures."

"Digital "signatures" are already legal in California for many business
purposes, but they are not yet permitted in the election code. A spokesman
says Secretary of State Bill Jones will convene a task force next month
that will begin exploring Internet voting and ballot signatures."

Today I sent the following e-mail to Secretary of State Bill Jones:

Dear Secretary Jones,

If Tim Draper gets permission to collect initiative signatures online
for his LocalChoice initiative, I respectfully request the same
permission to collect them that way for my Virtual Voting Rights
Initiative.

Sincerely,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

Watch this space for news of his response.

Sincerely,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

Message Number 5 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
   Nov 17 1998 20:50:22 EST
From:
   Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
   California Secretary of State's Office Says "No Waivers" for Electronic
Signature Gathering

Last Saturday, I e-mailed the Office of the California Secretary of State
for clarification about their position on electronic signature gathering
on initiative petitions.

This afternoon, Cathy Mitchell, the director of the initiative division in
that office, sent me the following e-mail:

Marc,

The SOS is putting together a task force to study Internet
voting and all that the concept would entail -- from digital signatures
for voting to an electronic voter roll to electronic petition signatures.

There is an initiative campaign that has expressed an interest
in collecting digital signatures on petitions over the Internet, but we
have told them that current law does not allow for the collection of
anything other than a manual signature for elections purposes -- and
practically speaking, digital signatures could not be verified for
authenticity against the registration affidavits the way manual
signatures are, so we would have an apples to oranges comparison at the
county level if we were to permit it.

Much studying must be done before this interesting concept can
become a reality. So the short answer is "no", we will not be providing a
waiver of the signature requirements.

Hope this answers your questions.

Cathy

Message Number 6 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
    Nov 19 1998 01:22:50 EST
From:
     Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
    Re-posted Announcement of NZEET Launch from NZEET Mail List

To Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List:

 Campaign for Digital Democracy is co-sponsoring--with Polemic Associates
of New Zealand--the world's first national electronic voting beta test,
early next year, in New Zealand.

 I'm passing on this mailing from Rex Widerstrom, New Zealand Electronic
Electoral Trial (NZEET) Project Director, New Zealand.

 Everyone is invited to visit the site at:
http://www.polemic.net/nzeet.html

 If you're a journalist interested in reporting on this site and the NZEET,
please send me an e-mail at transmedia@pacificnet.net so we can arrange an
e-mail or phone interview.

If you're a New Zealander, please visit the site and consider signing up
to be a triallist.

 If you want to support the future of digital voting worldwide, please
 consider visiting the site and making a large or small contribution
 through the newly-installed contribution system.

Cheers,

Marc Strassman
 Executive Director, Campaign for Digital Democracy
President, Transmedia Communications

Hello NZ Electronic Electoral Trial List Members:

The NZEET web site is now open for business. We still have a little work to do, in terms of establishing a Media Area and adding links to other e-democracy resources. But the site has a page where new traillists can join, a FAQ (including provision for people to ask questions), and a discussion board.

There is also information and a contact form for potential corporate and charitable sponsors, so if you know of any now's the time to point them to the site.

And there's even a way for people to contribute smaller amounts via credit cards or cheques.

As with any new site there are probably a few "bugs" so we'd appreciate you letting us know of any - and how the site looks in a range of browsers - by responding either to the list or privately to nzeet@polemic.net

NZ Telecom's Xtra Internet service have agreed to publicise the site in their weekly email newsletter. They estimate that when that message goes out we'll get approximately 14,000 visitors, so your numbers are likely to swell considerably very soon.

In the meantime, don't forget that this is also a discussion list - if anyone has any early thoughts or observations, feel free to contribute.

Regards

Rex Widerstrom
Project Director (NZ)

Message Number 7 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
    Nov 20 1998 18:41:57 EST
From:
     Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
    NetPulse Covers NZEET

To Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List:

There's a great website at http://www.politicsonline.com/ that's full of
links to live and archived political videos and a lot of other relevant
material.

The next edition of their newsletter, called NetPulse, will be out soon.
Here's an advance look at their coverage of our 20,000-voter mock election
in New Zealand:

ONLINE ELECTIONS ON THE WAY? A new study by ActivMedia
(http://www.activmedia.com) highlights how two of three Internet users
think it would be a good idea to vote for elected officials online.
Interestingly, there's some work being done on that exact topic. The New
Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial (http://www.polemic.net/nzeet.html) is
a New Zealand-US project that is seeking to raise $30,000 to conduct a
mock election of 20,000 volunteer virtual voters from New Zealand. An
alpha test of a few people will occur this year and a beta test of the
volunteers is expected to occur next year. In Australia, VoteBot
(http://www.votebot.com) is an online polling and survey firm. It's
interesting because it's developing technology that could be applied to
online voting in real elections, not just surveys. We'll stay tuned.

First NetPulse Report on
New Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial

ONLINE ELECTIONS ON THE WAY? A new study by ActivMedia (http://www.activmedia.com) highlights how two of three Internet users think it would be a good idea to vote for elected officials online.
Interestingly, there's some work being done on that exact topic. The New Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial (http://www.polemic.net/nzeet.html) is a New Zealand-US project that is seeking to raise $30,000 to conduct a mock election of 20,000 volunteer virtual voters from New Zealand. An alpha test of a few people will occur this year and a beta test of the volunteers is expected to occur next year. In Australia, VoteBot (http://www.votebot.com) is an online polling and survey firm. It's interesting because it's developing technology that could be applied to online voting in real elections, not just surveys. We'll stay tuned.

Chapter 7

Messages Number 8-23 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Around Thanksgiving, 1998, the pace of everything sped up. World affairs were exploding, and so was the volume of messages about electronic voting that I was generating and receiving. The key challenge of the time was to upgrade my message-generating and -transmitting infrastructure sufficiently to keep up with the faster rate. I also tried to keep my ideas fresh and new, and began making notes about, but not communicating publicly, the substance of policies for Internet Parties and a strategy for an Internet Party rise to power.

Message Number 8 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
> Nov 23 1998 23:15:31 EST

From:
> Campaign for Digital Democracy

Subject:
> Streaming Video Clip of Answers to the Most Common Objections to
Electronic   Voting

To the Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List:

This link is finally working, so click on it if you want to see and hear answers to the most common objections to Electronic Voting.

http://www.polemic.net/marcs1.ram

If you don't have the RealPlayer G2 full beta you need to view this clip, go to http://www.realnetworks.com and download it for free.

Message Number 9 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
   Nov 24 1998 18:56:00 EST
From:
   Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
   Florida iVoting, Oregon Lawsuit

To Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List:

Here are two articles dealing with "alternative" means of voting. The
first reports on the latest development in Florida's efforts to move ahead
with Internet voting. The second deals with a struggle in Oregon over
vote-by-mail and, by implication, vote-by-e-mail.

Electronic Electoral Reform Moves Ahead in Sunshine State

Looks like Florida continues at the head of the Internet voting pack.
Paul Craft, Voting System Section manager in the Department of State
there, reported on November 24th: "I'm working on the Florida
Internet/Intranet Voting Systems Standards this week. I'll meet with
counsel next week and start the process of promulgating the standards as
part of our administrative code which will give the standards the force of
administrative law. Any system used in a pilot project will require
certification under the new standards."

VIP Fights to Block M60 in Oregon

What Oregon's recently-passed (by a 69-31 vote) Measure 60 does, according
to Phil Keisling, their Secretary of State
(http://www.sos.state.or.us/executive/exechp.htm), is "essentially,
automatically make every elector an 'absentee voter,' without their having
to do any paper work. Every registered voter gets a ballot automatically.
They can then return it, how they want--return mail, or dropping it off--
and they can do it WHEN they want."

M. Miller Baker, of Carr, Goodson, Lee & Warner, the Washington, D.C. law

firm litigating to overturn the measure on behalf of the Voting Integrity
Project of Arlington, VA, (http://voting-integrity.org/) agrees about what
the new law does, but thinks doing it violates
2USC7 and 3USC1, which require a uniform date for holding federal
elections. He says Measure 60 "makes the exception the rule." Miller
sees universal absentee ballot voting reducing ballots to the status of
 "junk mail," which will be thrown away and reclaimed by perpetrators who
will use these discarded ballots to cast fraudulent votes. He's also
worried about the loss of the secret ballot under this legislation.
Voters could become "subject to manipulation by employers, churches, or
family members," he says.

 Clergy holding "voting nights" when they instruct their parishioners how
to vote or one politically-motivated parent collecting the ballots of his
or her spouse and voting-age children, voting all the ballots himself or
herself, and serving dinner only after all the family members have signed
their filled-in-by-him or filled-in-by-her ballots are two scenarios that
the VIP suit in Federal Court in Portland are designed to block, according
to the lawyer.

Asked about the relevance of this case for Internet-based voting, Miller
 said that the "legal arguments" applied here as well, but that he hadn't
yet gotten around to thinking through the secrecy implications for that
method of casting ballots. He said that the phenomenon of directed or
 coerced group voting at a church might still take place with
Internet-voting if all the voter/parishioners were using hand-held
computers.

 Phil Keisling disagrees. He told an Oregonian reporter, "I'd be
 embarrassed to make this legal argument--but then, I'm not a lawyer." He
 makes the alternative argument that if allowing voters to cast ballots on
 any day other than election day were unconstitutional, no
state would be in compliance. He cites Measure 60's strong showing in the
 polls, and says, "Clearly, VIP folks don't LIKE vote by mail, but there's
a world of difference between an opinion and a strong legal argument.
Oregonians have debated the various merits and possible downsides of this
for 15 years--e.g., alleged fraud, coercion, loss of ballot secrecy, etc.
etc.--and are ready to move on. The irony is, lawsuits like this will
 likely give the issue more national press, and may make more states say,
 "Hmmm...with record low turnout in the last election, maybe Oregon is on
to something here."

 Voting Integrity Project attorney Miller is undaunted. He says that when
 he brought suit in Louisiana to overturn what the VIP felt were misguided
 election laws there, state officials laughed at him and his arguments the
 same way Oregon officials are laughing now. Nine

justices of the US Supreme Court eventually agreed with Miller in that case. Motions for summary judgment will be filed next week by both sides in Portland. You can be sure that the Justices won't be using absentee ballots to decide this case, if it gets to them.

Message Number 10 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
    Nov 25 1998 23:41:05 EST
From:
    Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
    Electronic Voting in UK, NZ, and California

To Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List:

 This article appeared on Thanksgiving Day in The Guardian Online, a
British electronic newspaper. Except for a small mistake about when the
nationwide electronic voting trial will take place (it says December,
 rather than February, which is the month we expect to conduct the beta
test) Dan Jellinek has written a fine article about moves towards
 electronic voting both in Great Britain and New Zealand, and mentions that
"many states such as California are now studying moves towards Internet
voting."

Part of CDD's strategy is to inspire a friendly and peaceful competition
 among the political jurisdictions of the world, so that each of them will
 try harder to achieve virtual voting for its citizens as soon, securely,
conveniently, and cost-effectively as possible. Reports such as this help
 let everyone know that efforts are underway in other places to provide
 virtual voting opportunities for residents of various countries.

You can access the article by clicking here:

http://online.guardian.co.uk/two.html

 You might want to stay on the site and browse around. The Guardian is a
 very literate newspaper, and "cool" or not, Britain these days is a pretty
interesting place, one that can be studied profitably to gain a clearer
 understanding of the political, as well as the economic, cultural, and
 social, environment and evolution of the United States, or just for fun.

Or you can read it here:

 Electronic elections will give mouse the vote

The stubby pencil, used in curtained booths across the nation on election day, could be replaced within a few years by a modem and a mouse, writes Dan Jellinek. Voters could register their choice either from home via the Internet or in an online kiosk using a pin number, just like making a credit card booking or using a cash machine.

Next week the Local Government Management Board (http://www.lgmb.gov.uk), representing senior council officials, meets the election officials' body the Association of Electoral Administrators with the intention of testing a pilot system within two years and holding a full online election within three.

"The critical point is secure identification of the individual," says Andrew Larner, LGMB information society project manager. "But the technology is already in place - we are likely to use a system similar to automatic banking with a council "account number" held on a card used in conjunction with a PIN number.'

The world's first national electronic voting trial is scheduled for testing in New Zealand, in December, with around 21,000 volunteers from across the country - about 1 per cent of the voting population.

NZEET, the New Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial (http://www.polemic.net/nzeet.html), will use touch-tone telephone voting systems alongside Internet voting. It is being operated by a non-profit trust set up by New Zealand political consultancy Polemic in collaboration with the California-based electronic voting lobby group Campaign for Digital Democracy.

The first stage of testing will refine the user interface. In a full trial early next year participants will vote for fictitious candidates who will represent all registered political parties. Friendly hackers will be invited to test security by attempting to break into the system.

Political parties will construct lobbying Web sites for their fictitious candidates, with links from the NZEET home page.

Marc Strassman, the executive director of the Campaign for Digital Democracy, predicts that electronic democracy will play an important role in Britain's political evolution in the next few years, especially with the creation of national assemblies using modern technology and the plans for further devolution.

The recent elections to the US Congress were accompanied by a frenzy of online activity by politicians and voters, and many states such as

California are now studying moves towards Internet voting.

A conference at the George Washington University in Washington DC on December 7 http://www.gspm.org/politicsonline) will analyse the issues which have been raised.

25 November 1998

Message Number 11 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
    Nov 27 1998 03:18:25 EST
From:
    Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
    Big Blue Leader Strongly and Publicly Endorses "Net-based voting"

Big Blue Leader Strongly and Publicly Endorses "Net-based voting"

By Marc Strassman
    Executive Director
    Campaign for Digital Democracy
    info@vpac.org

On Wednesday, November 25th, C-SPAN and C-SPAN2 cablecast two high-powered
panel discussions from Harvard University, the epicenter of high-powered
discussion.

At a weighty conclave on "The Future of Journalism" at the Joan
Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at the John F.
Kennedy School of Government, Washington Post reporter David Broder
attacked those who would transform the United States from the "republic"
it was intended to be under the Constitution to a "democracy," where
citizens marginalize their elected representatives and make laws
themselves through the initiative process. He noted that this pernicious
habit seems to be especially rampant in the western states of the United
States.

Not far away, while participating in an equally august discussion of
"Privatization, Globalization, and Constitutional Structures," Charles
Fried, formerly a professor at the Harvard Law School and now merely an
Associate Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts, pointed to the "democratic deficit" that is arising in
Europe as the consolidation and expansion of the administrative structures
of the European Union run ahead of the development of democratic means for
the control of these structures.

One answer to this problem and other, similar ones, suggested a panelist from Kenya, would be to focus on the individual, and create a "governance beyond government" that would empower and protect the rights of citizens in an age of globalization and privatization, in which national governments are increasingly "hollow" anyway.

One thing these statements show is that being high-powered and being at Harvard University is no guarantee that you'll come to the same conclusions, which is, of course, the whole idea at Harvard, or at least part of the whole idea.

One of the panelists at the "Future of Journalism" conference mentioned that perhaps the most-improved newspaper now being published in the US was USA Today, which, it was noted, found it could not succeed by going after the lowest common denominator of reader and so went "upmarket" in search of a higher class of clientele. An example of that "flight to quality" can be found, I think, in this article from the November 16, 1998, op-ed page of that newspaper. This article, written by the chairman and CEO of IBM, indicates that the advocacy and pursuit of virtual voting has been transformed from a fringe activity of a few visionaries into an item high on the agenda of the technological and political Establishment.

USA TODAY * MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1998 15A

THE FORUM

Next time, let us boldly vote as no democracy has before

By Louis V. Gerstner

The number of eligible American voters who took time to go to their local polling places and cast a ballot this month was predictably anemic. At 34%, the turnout marks a 50-year low, ranking the U.S. at or near the bottom of the world democracies in voter participation.

Once again, our national post-election dialogue is punctuated by laments over what we, by rote, label "voter apathy." But while it's easy to lay the blame for poor voter turnout on an uninterested electorate, or perhaps the politics of meanness, or television, one simple truth is that the act of voting is antiquated, inconvenient and just too hard.

It's time to harness technology to the service of democracy.

Most Americans are working longer hours, struggling harder to balance work and family, and the process of voting is turning people off. We trek

to a polling location in a school or firehouse, stand in line, wait to be
authenticated and then finally cast our ballot (an interesting, if
intimidating, exercise in chart-reading, lever-pulling, switch-flipping
and, in some precincts, poking pinholes in paper).

All this in a day when information technology--especially the
Internet--is in the process of transforming everything from how we design
cars to the way we buy them. We can pay our bills, secure a mortgage,
renew a driver's license or trade a stock from our den or office.

We've improved the speed, efficiency and convenience of many of the daily
patterns of American life, with more to come.

Yet the vote--the defining ritual and central task of American
democracy--stands stiller than a mastodon entombed in the tarry pits of La
Brea.

It's time to ask how this technology might improve participation in our
national elections. It's time we acknowledge that the process of voting
is at least an equal partner in this problem, and we have to commit to
make it easier, faster and more convenient.

Oregon has stepped up to this by promoting mail-in balloting. State
residents like the system so much, they voted last week to make the mail
the state's preferred voting method, replacing polling places.

The message is clear: We either improve convenience or resign ourselves
to the status quo. I don't believe the latter choice is acceptable--not
when the technology exists to allow us to cast a ballot over the Internet
from the comfort of our home, or with the convenience of an ATM-like kiosk
at work or at a traditional polling location. The technology is here
today.

In rethinking the process of voting, it's inevitable that we'll have to
confront human nature and institutional inertia. We'll have to answer
questions about security and privacy. American citizens will have to know
that the confidentiality of their votes will be maintained. We'll all
want to be assured about the integrity of our system of one person, one
vote.

The combination of large-scale computing behind the scenes of our
government infrastructures and technologies such as smart cards and
biometrics for digital identification will deliver all the security we
take for granted in the current process: that any individual is, in fact,
entitled to vote; that they are who they say they are; that only official
vote counters can see their ballots; that it can't be changed, and you

can't later deny you cast it.

The technology exists today to do all this. Much of it is at work every time you go to the Net to transmit a confidential document or buy a book. We know these questions will come because similar questions have already been asked and answered across a variety of industries and inside thousands of institutions that are embracing the Net to become "e-businesses" and make fundamental changes to existing processes.

Perhaps more important, we'll have to address concerns about whether we can make Net-based voting possible for all our citizens or only those fortunate enough to have a PC at home. Only about 20% of Americans use the Net today. While that number is increasing at a galloping pace--more than 50,000 people come on line every day--the net won't be in every American home for the foreseeable future.

Obviously any system, including the current one, is more convenient for some than for others, but this challenge can be addressed by making if possible for people to vote using computers at work or at walk-up kiosks in public buildings and places.

Bear in mind that no one is suggesting that Net-based voting will supplant the traditional physical process. They'll exist in parallel, with the Net as a complementary option for some who will choose it--and I believe, for many who will choose it over their current practice of abstaining on Election Day. This effort would augment other initiatives that occasionally bubble up, such as creating a two-week voting window, or holding elections on Saturday.

Finally, let's go down this road with open eyes. Applying the available technology is not insurance against knaves or fools in high office. That's always the great gamble of democracy and what caused Winston Churchill to say, famously, that "Democracy is the worst form of government--except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." Increasing voter participation must continue to be a priority for democracies because, in the aftermath of the midterm elections of 1998, this much is certain: The approach we've tried for so long simply doesn't work. We should confront the fact that there's more to the problem of low voter turnout than complacency or a bored resignation over the rate and pace of change in state, local or federal government.

Having demonstrated that cajoling, lecturing and even trying to shame people to the polls isn't the solution, we owe it to ourselves and our country to try something new.

Louis V. Gerstner is chairman and CEO of IBM.

Message Number 12 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:

Nov 27 1998 03:40:41 EST

From:

Campaign for Digital Democracy

Subject:

NZEET Site Awarded Political Site of the Day Award

Thanks mainly to the creativity and hard work of Rex Widerstrom, New
Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial Project Director (New Zealand), the
NZEET Website has won the Thanksgiving Day Political Site of the Day Award.

We are proud and happy to have won this recognition and glad that it will
mean more traffic to the site and more electronic voting trial volunteers
and, who knows, more contributors to help us defray the $30,000 cost of
this project.

You can see that I'm not making this up by going to
http://www.aboutpolitics.com/.

NZEET has a big gray graphic announcing its selection, which you can see
if you go there right now, and will remain on the PSOTD list and in their
archive for some time, so drop by and take a look.

Trying to see just how far I could take this "re-purposing" concept, I wrote to several of the reporters who'd covered this story and asked them to answer some questions about how they worked and the evolution of politics in cyberspace. Then I cut and pasted and ended up with this posting.

Message Number 13 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
      Dec 02 1998 12:12:40 EST
From:
      Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
      Covering Political Cyberspace

To Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List,

I recently wrote to several of the reporters who've covered Campaign for Digital Democracy for stories of theirs, asking them a few questions about how they cover the Internet side of politics. Rebecca Fairley Raney, Dan Jellinek, and Paul Van Slambrouck were kind enough to respond.

Rebecca Fairley Raney is a free-lance reporter whose work usually appears in The New York Times.

Dan Jellinek writes for The Guardian (UK) and often appears in their Online section, which is both the online section of the Guardian dealing with technology issues and the name of their print section dealing with the same subjects.

Paul Van Slambrouck covers politics in the Western United States for The Christian Science Monitor.

Here's what they had to say:

1. Does reporting on political cyberspace differ in any significant way from technology reporting, or political reporting, or reporting generally and, if so, how?

Raney:

This area is so interesting because you never have to write the same story twice. Even if you write twice about the same topic, the story is always very different the second time.

Jellinek:

The political media got very excited earlier this year about the party leaders conducting discussions online, but these were in truth fairly basic affairs and the non-specialist national media - i.e. the political media who do not understand computing - on the whole were only impressed because they do not fully grasp what is already possible from the technology. For example, William Hague, the leader of the Conservative Opposition, did hold a live chat with members of the public online but conducted it using AOL instead of the Internet proper, a techno-gaffe in my opinion but none of the political reporters would have picked it up. The Prime Minister Tony Blair went one worse and had his officials select some questions beforehand to answer. But they are improving all the time - Tony Blair's Downing St site recently hosted a bulletin-board style debate on China in which the PMs of France and Germany participated, a more meaty and meaningful event, and so as politicians become more clued up I imagine the coverage will follow.

Van Slambrouck:

The only trouble I see with cyberspace reporting of any kind is a temptation to view the world from a desk, or computer terminal. In politics, and other reporting, there is no substitute for getting as close to the real candidate and the real voters as possible. You need that balance, along with what the Web has to offer.

2. Is it ever a problem for you to understand the technology involved? How do you make sure that your readers are able to understand the technology involved?

Raney:

The technology is the easy part; I was a technologist before I was a technology writer. If anything, I have to be careful not to get too technical in pieces for general audiences.

Jellinek:

I write about the issues on the whole, and very rarely the technology - and in writing for a national newspaper I must make every sentence completely comprehensible to anybody - or aim to. This is a very good

discipline - if you can't explain it to anyone, why not? What interests me the most is what the Internet and other new technologies can do in our daily lives, how it will transform society, and communications in the home and workplace - but not how internet protocols work. But I do understand a certain amount about the nuts and bolts, which helps in explaining it.

Van Slambrouck:

Yes. I figure if I can understand the basics, I should be able to explain it in a basic way.

3. In light of the recent elections, what trends seem to be emerging in the area of political use of the Internet?

Raney:

E-mail. E-mail. E-MAAAILLL!

Van Slambourck:

Campaign finance disclosure, candidate info-sites, live voting results and more information available to more people.

4. What do you expect will be the next few steps in the evolution of political cyberspace?

Raney:

I'd be a damn fool if I said I knew. My view remains that we have no idea how this area will evolve, simply because the audience for 2000 has not arrived. These people have not even bought computers yet.

In any medium, and especially this one, it's the audience that drives the evolution.

Jellinek:

trends/evolution: the sky's the limit, it is a really exciting area. The Internet was made to enhance democracy, although it is a long way off achieving it - first step is for access to pervade all parts of society. Then it can become a tool for all parts of the political process from political self-education by aggrieved members of public to lobbying, campaigning (digital petitions), voting, use as a means of communication

between politicians and public, to hold referenda, to conduct opinion polls . . .there could be ethical problems down the line though - would you like a load of political spam arriving from prospective candidates every day?

Thanks to all three for their work covering the evolution of political cyberspace and for taking time out from their hyperbusy schedules to share what they know about what they do.

Rebecca Fairley Raney's article about electronic voting, "Voting on the Web: Not Around the Corner, but on the Horizon," can be found at:

http://www.nytimes.com/library/tech/98/09/circuits/articles/17vote.html

Dan Jellinek's article about the electronic voting in California, Great Britain, and the New Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial in The Guardian Online can be found at:

http://online.guardian.co.uk/two.html

Paul Van Slambrouck's article in The Christian Science Monitor about electronic initiatives in California can be found at:

http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1998/11/13/fp1s2-csm.shtml

Their new articles will probably be found in and around these same sites, so bookmark these spots and check back often.

Sincerely,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

Message Number 14 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
     Dec 02 1998 19:47:25 EST
From:
     Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
     Florida Begins Setting Standards for Internet-based Voting

To Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List,

I'm forwarding this e-mail, which I just received, on to all of you
because:

 1. it shows how far we've come and how fast we're moving in the direction
of electronic voting

2. it will allow those of you who want to to get additional information
 from Paul Craft about the formulation of standards for the certification
 of Internet-based voting systems

3. it will encourage wide-spread participation in Florida's rule-creation
 project by expert and interested parties, thereby facilitating a
 thorough-going process that will result in regulations and standards for
 Internet voting that can be adopted not just in Florida but in other
 states and countries as well, thereby setting the stage for uniform
 technical standards, which will encourage both competition from vendors
 and adoption by multiple jurisdictions

4. it will announce to officials in jurisdictions other than Florida that
 serious progress is occurring on the electronic voting front and that they
 need to get moving themselves if they want to stay current

5. it will encourage other jurisdictions to consider working together
 with Florida to develop workable uniform national standards in the area of
electronic voting.

So get involved!

To: Interested Parties

From: Paul Craft, Florida Division of Elections

Subject: Notice of Proposed Rule Development to Set Standards For
Internet and Intranet Voting Systems

At the bottom of this message I have attached the text of our Notice of
Proposed Rule Development. The Notice was filed today and will appear in
the December 11, 1998 issue of the Florida Administrative Weekly which we
publish on-line at: http://election.dos.state.fl.us/faw/index.htm.

This is our public announcement that we are working on a rule to set
standards for provisional certification of voting systems which transmit
untabulated ballot images or ballot data through the internet or any
intranet.

A rule development workshop may be scheduled on December 29, 1998.

If anyone is interested in providing input to the development of this rule
please call, e-mail, or write me prior to December 29, 1998.

Thanks!

Sincerely,

Paul W. Craft, CPA, CISA
Computer Audit Analyst

Florida Department of State
Division of Elections
Voting System Section
401 S. Monroe Street, Room 203C
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Phone (850) 921-4110
Fax   (850) 488-6174

E-mail pcraft@mail.dos.state.fl.us

Website http://election.dos.state.fl.us

The text of the notice follows:

_____

NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE DEVELOPMENT

DEPARTMENT: Department of State, Division of Elections

RULE TITLE: Certification of Electronic or Electromechanical Voting systems

RULE NO.:   1S-5.001

PURPOSE AND EFFECT: To establish minimum standards for certification and provisional approval of hardware and software for electronic and electromechanical voting systems.

SUBJECT AREA TO BE ADDRESSED: Development and adoption by reference
of a form titled Florida Internet and Intranet Voting Systems Standards which will set minimum standards for provisional certification of all voting systems which transmit untabulated ballot images or ballot data through the internet or any intranet.

SPECIFIC AUTHORITY: 101.015, 101.294, FS.

LAW IMPLEMENTED: 101.141, 101.151, 101.161, 101.5605, 101.5606, 101.5607, 101.5608, 101.5609, and 102.166(9)(a), FS.

IF REQUESTED IN WRITING AND NOT DEEMED UNNECESSARY BY THE
AGENCY HEAD, A RULE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP WILL BE HELD AT
THE TIME, DATE AND PLACE SHOWN BELOW:

TIME AND DATE: 9:30 AM, December 29, 1998.

PLACE: Director's Conference Room, Room 1801, The Capitol, Tallahassee, Florida.

THE PERSON TO BE CONTACTED REGARDING THE PROPOSED RULE DEVELOPMENT IS: Paul Craft, Division of Elections, (850) 921-4110.

THE PRELIMINARY TEXT OF THE PROPOSED RULE DEVELOPMENT IS NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.

By way of an early virtual Christmas gift for all the members of the CDD mailing list, I tried here to make them an offer they couldn't refuse.

Message Number 15 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
> Dec 02 1998 20:44:42 EST

From:
> Campaign for Digital Democracy

Subject:
> Please Order Your Absolutely Free Copy of The Virtual Voting Book, Volume1:
> Early Documents

To Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List,

I've put most of what I've written in the last few years about digital democracy together with most of what's been written about me and the Campaign into a virtual book called: The Virtual Voting Book, Volume 1: Early Documents.

In its Works 4.0 WP version, it's 147 pages long and contains 42,712 words in six chapters.

It can't do anybody any good if no one reads it, so I want to offer each member of this list a free copy of this virtual book, in the format of his or her choice, including (and limited to):

HTML
RTF
Text
Word 6.0
Word 97
Works 4.0 WP
WordPerfect 5.0
WordPerfect 5.x for Windows
WordPerfect 5.x
5.0 Mac.mcw

All you need to do to get your free copy is send me an e-mail at <transmedia@pacificnet.net>, specifying the format you'd like, and I'll send it right out. If you have friends or colleagues you think might like

a copy (it's just right for a virtual Christmas gift, and you can't beat the price) and who you think might prefer a different format, just mention that and I'll send you one in their preferred format, too.

Even with this speed and ease of delivery, digital democracy is evolving so fast that unless you get and read The Virtual Voting Book before the end of the year, you may not be able to find time to read it later or put its insights and historical principles to work before you are deluged with additional materials on this subject from all over, including The Virtual Voting Book, Volume 2, which will certainly include this posting as part of it.

So order today.

Thanks,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

Stan Smith, from the Palo Alto Cable Co-op, which I had co-founded with him in the early 1980s to provide a community-controlled cable system to the Greater Palo Alto and Stanford Service Area, e-mailed me around 9 pm on December 3, 1998, and told me about Worldwide Election System's announcement of a viable Internet voting system. I sent the president of WES an e-mail suggesting we talk about cooperating and I sent this note out to the CDD mailing list.

Message Number 16 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
> Dec 04 1998 01:25:44 EST

From:
> Campaign for Digital Democracy

Subject:
> Possibly the World's First Viable Internet Voting System

To Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List,

Worldwide Election Systems, Inc., says it has the world's first viable Internet voting system.

You can check this out at: http://www.worldwideelection.com/index.htm

*The **Los Angeles Times** ran a story about the suppression of cyberdissidents in China on December 5, 1998, so I wrote this essay to convey some ideas about electronic democracy in China that I'd been carrying around for years.*

Message Number 17 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
        Dec 05 1998 17:35:13 EST
From:
        Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
        Cyberdissidence in China

Dear Internet Users and Netizens,

        One of the more fanciful suggestions I've been making over the last few years is this:

        That digital democracy, indeed democracy at all, could be brought to the world's most-populous country, China, by allowing its citizens to use the Internet to vote in free elections.

        Obstacles to implementing this suggestion have included the fact that China does not have a democratic system of governance and that not that many Chinese have access to the Internet.

        It's been my contention, though, that the Chinese government, eager to modernize its economy, would need to deploy the Internet throughout the country in order to do so. As it would be doing this, it would be simultaneously laying the groundwork for digital democracy, to be implemented through the very infrastructure it was building in hopes of advancing its economy without undermining the power and authority of the ruling Communist Party.

        In an ironic deja vu of the original theoretical basis of communist power as analyzed by Karl Marx, in which capitalism, in order to expand to the greatest extent possible, creates an economic and social infrastructure that contains the seeds of its own repudiation and replacement (communism), so Chinese communism, in order to build itself up by modernizing its economic and financial infrastructure through the deployment of the Internet, would similarly sow the seeds of its own repudiation and replacement (digital democracy).

One stage beyond "dialectical materialism," we can call this process "dialectical virtualism," or "the virtual dialectic." Nor, of course, would digital democracy be immune to this process; it will become the starting point (thesis) for yet another organically-generated response (antithesis), creating a new synthesis (hard to say now what it will be).

More practically, bringing (digital) democracy to China would involve assigning Voter Identification Numbers (VINs) to those over 18 who want to vote, setting up servers with Internet voting programs here in the US or in other democratic countries, carefully publicizing the elections, conducting them, tabulating the returns, and using the Internet and other media to publicize the results.

Thus, perhaps with some turmoil, would "Western-style" (digital) democracy come to hundreds of millions of people now without it. Additionally, these e-voters would now be more prepared to become global e-consumers, something that should be of interest to every entrepreneur and every company planning an e-commerce strategy for the next millennium.

Furthermore, no Western democracy would be able to argue against letting its own people have at least as much electronic political freedom as the people of China would now enjoy, so the coming of digital democracy to China would also signal the arrival of digital democracy in all of the already-democratic countries.

Those who believe that the spread of democracy brings domestic and international peace in its wake would be able to test this theory. And we would have a model for bringing (digital) democracy to other not-yet-democratic countries.

And those politicians planning to seek popularly-elected world-wide official positions would certainly know that they'd need to learn Chinese, or hire someone who knows it already for their staff, if they want to be viable candidates for winning e-elections in global balloting in the coming years. Winning the crucial Chinese vote will be even more important in world democratic politics than winning in California is today in US politics.

The occasion for this essay was the following article, which appeared in the Saturday, December 5, 1998, edition of The Los Angeles Times:

'Cyberdissident' in China on Trial for Subversion

By MAGGIE FARLEY
Times Staff Writer

SHANGHAI--In an attempt to extend political control into cyberspace, Chinese authorities put a young software entrepreneur on trial here Friday on charges that he tried to undermine the state through the Internet, the first trial of a "cyberdissident" in China.

Lin Hai, 30, is accused of inciting subversion by providing 30,000 Chinese e-mail addresses to "hostile foreign organization," a charge that could bring a maximum penalty of lie in prison. Lin pleased not guilty.

Lin, who ran an Internet job search and marketing business in Shanghai, allegedly gave the addresses to the Washington-based VIP Reference, an Internet dissident magazine that e-mails pro-democracy essays and articles to hundreds of thousands of Internet users in China.

The four-hour trial was held behind closed doors at Shanghai's No. 1 Intermediate People's Court, but a verdict may not be reached until next week, Lin's lawyer said after the trial.

"I'm afraid it doesn't look good for Lin Hai," the lawyer Wang Wen-jiang told the Associated Press by telephone Friday evening. "I think he's going to be found guilty."

Lin Hai's wife, Xu Hong, whom security officials apparently prevented from appearing at the courthouse, has been campaigning to clear her husband's name since he was arrested in May.

She maintains that exchanging e-mall addresses, which are public information like telephone numbers, was part of his Internet business and that he was not the one who sent the material the government deemed subversive.

"If someone is killed with a knife, should you arrest the knife-maker or the murderer?" she wrote in a letter of appeal to top authorities.

The case is being monitored carefully not only by international human rights groups and organization that promote Internet freedom but also by business people who hope to do e-commerce with one of the world's fastest-growing computer communities.

There are an estimated 1.2 million Internet accounts registered in China, many with multiple users, and authorities expect the number to reach 5 million by 2000.

Lin's case is an important warning to those using the Internet to spread information that would otherwise be censored on the mainland.

China's security apparatus is struggling to control the Internet. Special monitors survey electronic traffic, and the government has erected filters and "firewalls" to block sites deemed pornographic or subversive, including the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times and the BBC.

However, the blocks are not enough to keep groups such as VIP Reference from zipping their material into the country. The electronic magazine, known in Chinese as Da Cankao, was started by a handful of Chinese students in the United States last year.

They evade the firewalls by e-mailing their compilations of pro-democracy essays and articles directly to about 250,000 people inside China. The Internet address--http://www.come.to/dck--changes frequently to sidestep filters, and the magazine is sent from a different e-mail address every day.

"China apparently considers us 'counterrevolutionary,' but we are not dissidents," said one of the founders, Feng Donghai, a software engineer in New York. "We are not a political party. We are only interested in freedom of speech. I never meant to be a dissident, but I am forced to be a dissident by China."

Feng said the magazine's publishers use a "spam strategy," sending the magazine to random addresses across China--even to top government officials--so no one can be accused of intentionally subscribing. He added that they trade and receive mass e-mail lists from many different sources; they did not know Lin, and Lin did not necessarily know what his lists would be used for, he said.

Other Internet magazines are written in China, then sent overseas to be e-mailed back into the country. One is Tunnel (http://www.geociteis.com/Silicon Valley/Bay/5598), which relishes its role as a brash challenger to the party line.

The mainland editors of another political newsletter, Public Opinion, have gone underground since the government heightened a crackdown on dissent. This week, 10 members of China's first opposition party were arrested or detained on the same charges as Lin Hai: inciting subversion of the state.

VIP Reference's Feng said he believes that the government is not wrong to be afraid.

"If the students had e-mail [during the Tiananmen Square protests] in 1989, student leaders in different cities could have been united. The news of the massacre could have spread overnight; the authorities couldn't block the news. It could have been a very different situation," he said. "Right now, the Internet is becoming more and more important for the Chinese democracy movement. We never imagined the power."

-30-

The Shah had the Ayatollah Khomeini's cassette recorders; Deng Xiao Ping had the students' fax machines, and, thanks to the political amendment to Moore's Law stating that chip-based political power doubles every 18 months, President Jiang Zemin now has these dissidents' Web servers. May he profit from the examples of his predecessors.

And if we do nothing now that they've come for Lin Hai, what will we be able to credibly say when they come for us?

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

Well, I mistyped the URL for Tunnel magazine so I sent out a correction.

Message Number 18 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
    Dec 05 1998 18:03:13 EST
From:
    Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
    Corrected Tunnel URL

Dear Internet Users and Netizens,

 The correct URL for Tunnel magazine is:

http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Bay/5598/

 Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
 Campaign for Digital Democracy

Florida wanted feedback to help it formulate regulations to govern the provision of Internet-connectivity for voters voting in public polling places (see Message 14 for details). I drafted a set of proposed requirements and sent it to the CDD membership for their consideration and comments.

Message Number 19 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:

    Dec 09 1998 16:04:04 EST

From:

    Campaign for Digital Democracy

Subject:

    Feedback on Proposed Guidelines for Electronic Voting in Florida

Dear Members of the CDD Mailing List,

As you know if you've read Message 14 in the CDD Archives ("Florida Begins Setting Standards for Internet-based Voting"), Florida is in the process of formulating standards to be adhered to by vendors who want to provide Internet- and intranet-based voting systems to be used in local polling places in Florida elections.

While the systems to be regulated by these new rules will NOT be ones that allow voters to vote from their homes, offices, cars, or mobile computers, Florida's efforts to establish a framework for the use of TCP/IP-based networks in elections represents a significant step forward, and one that can logically evolve into a more extensive Internet-based system that allows user/voters to vote directly through the Internet from wherever they may be and during whatever time period is established for their exercise of a digital franchise.

I've prepared a list of 8 criteria that I plan to submit to the Secretary of State's Office in Florida as the position of CDD regarding their formulation of regulations to govern Internet voting in the form they now envision it, as a means of collecting ballots at public polling stations.

I'm mailing it out to all of you first, so you can give me any feedback you might have about this list. Please feel free to send me comments concerning the completeness of this list, the appropriateness of the items I've chosen to include on it, and any modifications that you'd like to see made to this selection of requirements before I submit it to the

authorities in Florida.

I'm submitting this material for your comment not just because I want to get your views so I can send in the best possible set of recommendations, but because I want to initiate a process of discussion and consultation which I hope will eventually evolve, through this and other, more technically-advanced platforms, into an on-going systems for the development and consideration of policy positions on a range of issues of interest to us as we work together to make electronic democracy a reality and not just a theory.

Here is what I plan to submit:

The Campaign for Digital Democracy is pleased to submit this list as part of its efforts to establish sound principles and workable guidelines for the creation of electronic voting systems for use in Florida and elsewhere.

The CDD believes that any Internet- or intranet-based voting system needs to be:

1. secure as to the identification and authentication of the voter, as well as the privacy, secrecy, and integrity of the voter's ballot, which includes its anonymity
2. ease-of-use for every voter
3. accessible to every voter who wants to use it
4. upgradeable as technology improves
5. integrated with the existing reporting and auditing systems
6. capable of assuring the non-repudiation of the voting transaction
7. useable by mobility- and visually-challenged voters
8. auditable by the Information Risk Management Practice of any major accounting firm

Respectfully submitted by:

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Los Angeles, California

Please send your comments on these proposed guidelines to me at:

transmedia@pacificnet.net

If possible, please return your comments to me by 12:00 pm, Pacific Standard Time, on Friday, December 11th, so I can incorporate them into the final draft that I will send out to Florida before the close of

business there that day.

Thanks very much for helping with this.

Sincerely,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

Dr. Michael Macpherson at Integral Studies in Berlin told Dinu C. Gherman at LHS International in Zurich about what I was doing in New Zealand and he (Gherman) e-mailed me to suggest I check out his site, which is using the Net to mobilize Euro-Netizens to work for more citizen input in the upcoming selection of the President of the European Commission. It's a good idea for and a good execution of a site, and I wanted to alert CDD members to it.

Message Number 20 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
    Dec 10 1998 17:27:22 EST
From:
    Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
    Electronic Euro-elections

Dear Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List,

There's a website at http://www.prom.org/vpc that is trying to do for Europe what CDD and Polemic Associates are trying to do for New Zealand, namely, run a mock electronic election designed to explore the technical and political ramifications of digital voting.

Please take a look.

Sincerely,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

Bob Stiens, a political consultant, e-mailed me a link to a story on CNET about the electronic voting standards rule-making process in Florida. I read the piece, then sent the reporter who wrote it a copy of the letter I'd sent to Paul Craft at the Secretary of State's Office there in Tallahassee. Then I sent a link to the story and a copy of my submission to Florida to everyone (now 72 people) on the CDD mailing list.

Message Number 21 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Dear Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List,

Here's the URL for an article that ran on CNET on Friday, December 11, 1998:

http://www.news.com/News/Item/0,4,29830,00.html

It's about Florida's cutting-edge work in setting standards for TCP/IP-Internet-protocol-based voting.

The day before this article appeared, I sent the e-mail below to Paul Craft, who's heading up Florida's effort on this:

Campaign for Digital Democracy
transmedia@pacificnet.net
Los Angeles, CA

December 10, 1998

Paul W. Craft, CPA, CISA
Computer Audit Analyst
Florida Department of State
Division of Elections
Voting System Section
401 S. Monroe Street, Room 203C
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear Paul,

The Campaign for Digital Democracy is pleased to submit this list as part of its efforts to establish sound principles and workable guidelines for the creation of electronic voting systems for use in Florida and elsewhere.

The CDD believes that any Internet- or intranet-based voting

system needs to be:

    1. secure as to the identification and authentication of the voter, as well as the privacy, secrecy, and integrity of the voter's ballot, including its anonymity
    2. easy to use by every voter
    3. accessible to every voter who wants to use it
    4. upgradeable as technology improves
    5. integrated with the existing reporting and auditing systems
    6. capable of assuring the non-repudiation of voter/government transactions
    7. useable by mobility- and visually-challenged voters
    8. auditable by the Information Risk Management Practice of a major accounting firm

I look forward to working with you to see that the best possible set of standards for electronic voting within a TCP/IP framework are developed and implemented for the benefit of the relevant state agencies and the voters of the State of Florida.

Respectfully submitted by:

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Los Angeles, California

Just a progress report from Paul Craft in Florida, along with a list of addressees showing who was interested at this point (December 17, 1998) in getting into the electronic voting market.

Message Number 22 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:
   Dec 17 1998 16:20:54 EST
From:
   Campaign for Digital Democracy
Subject:
   Progress in Florida 1

Dear Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List,

Paul Craft in the Florida Department of State, Division of Elections, has
sent me an update on the TCP/IP Voting Standards Rule Development Process
that I wanted to pass on to you.

As you'll notice if you look over the list of addressees, major players in
the elections business are playing close attention to the formulation of
this Rule. Fortunately, through the Internet, so can we.

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

   Subject:
      Rule Development Workshop on Internet/Intranet Voting Systems
Standards
   Date:
      Thu, 17 Dec 1998 15:36:22 -0500
   From:
      "Paul W. Craft" <pcraft@mail.dos.state.fl.us>
Organization:
      Florida Department of State, Division of Elections
    To:
      berns@prologic-inc.com, bill@ocfelections.com,
lonn@ocfelections.com, jerry@ocfelections.com,

phollarn@co.okaloosa.fl.us, bwilliams@ksumail.kennesaw.edu, brunellip@fvap.gov, leader.susan@fvap.gov,

daveh@essvote.com, jsgroh@essvote.com, smbolton@essvote.com, wfwelsh@essvote.com,

herbellen@aol.com, herbert.fensury@canada.cdev.com, sandra.falconi@canada.cdev.com,

pricej@nichols.com, jdearman@hnt.wylelabs.com, southws@nichols.com, khazlett@teleport.com,

pnolte@ballots.com, lorrie@research.att.com, transmedia@pacificnet.net, padlerberg@soundcode.com,

tony_sirvello@co.harris.tx.us, ponder@mail.irm.state.fl.us, marc.Blanchet@viagenie.qc.ca, roysalt@aol.com,

culturex@vcn.bc.ca, carl@chage.com, tomas.ohlin@telo.se, biophilos@flinet.com, kaye@ix.netcom.com,

kriegsherr@juno.com, judiemul@kc-inc.net, aurken@choicelogic.com, sbrill@mail.dos.state.fl.us,

jcrozier@mail.dos.state.fl.us, ebaxter@mail.dos.state.fl.us, bmitchell@mail.dos.state.fl.us,

mlindsey@mail.dos.state.fl.us, pcraft@mail.dos.state.fl.us

To: Interested Parties

First Item -

I have finally found time to assemble an e-mail mailing list for everyone interested in our initiative to set standards for internet and intranet voting systems. You are receiving this message because you have either corresponded with me on this topic or because I have reason to believe that you are interested.

This list is NOT interactive and I plan to strictly limit its use to notifying you of meetings, deadlines and significant events as we go through the rule development and promulgation process.

If you are not interested in this matter, please accept my apology for the intrusion. If you will notify me by e-mail I will remove you from the list.

Second Item -

We have changed the location of the December 29, 1998 rule development workshop to accommodate a larger audience. The time, date and new location are as follows:

Time and date: 9:30 a.m., December 29, 1998.

Location: Room 171, the Betty Easley Conference Center 4075 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, Florida.
Map and directions to the meeting site have been posted on our website at:

http://election.dos.state.fl.us/votemeth/inetvss/map.jpg

This notice of location change will appear in the Florida Administrative Weekly (the Weekly) on December 18, 1998. When the proposed rule is finally drafted its full text will be published in the Weekly. The Weekly is published on-line on our web-site. See:

http://election.dos.state.fl.us/faw/issues.htm

Third Item -

For those of you planning to attend the Rule Development Workshop who want more information on the rulemaking process in Florida, we publish a Rule Making Handbook which can be found on our website at:
ftp://election.dos.state.fl.us/ftp/rulemake/rmhndbk.pdf

Fourth Item -

Those of you with bulletin boards and e-mail lists may, if you wish, feel free to redistribute this message to your members. However, please do not add me to your mailing lists. Although I have requested input from the public on the proposed rule, our internet e-mail server resources are limited and heavily used so it is important that I limit my e-mail traffic to actual correspondence addressed to me from individuals.

As always, if you have any questions about this or need assistance while making your plans to attend the meeting please feel free to call, e-mail, or write.

Sincerely,

   Paul W. Craft, CPA, CISA
   Computer Audit Analyst

   Florida Department of State
   Division of Elections
   Voting System Section
   401 S. Monroe Street, Room 203C
   Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Phone (850) 921-4110
Fax   (850) 488-6174

E-mail pcraft@mail.dos.state.fl.us

Website http://election.dos.state.fl.us

This was my final message of a busy 1998 and my exhortation for a busier 1999.

Message Number 23 for
Campaign for Digital Democracy
Mailing List

Date:

    Dec 31 1998 17:06:18 EST

From:

    Campaign for Digital Democracy

Subject:

    Happy New Year!

Dear Members of the Campaign for Digital Democracy Mailing List,

I just wanted to thank all of you for your interest and support during 1998 and wish you a truly great 1999, professionally and personally.

Let's make 1999 the Year of Electronic Voting!

Regards,

Marc Strassman
Executive Director
Campaign for Digital Democracy

Brief Afterward

Brief Afterward

As you can see, these documents reflect an effort that falls into several distinct phases. First, there was the Theoretical Period, in which I thought through and wrote out the principles of electronic voting. This was followed by the failure of the Virtual Voting Rights Initiative, which led, via media coverage, directly to the introduction, passage, and vetoing of AB44.

Then came the media period, roughly February, 1998, to the present, when I made the same points again and again to the national and regional press. Now, the New Zealand Electronic Electoral Trial (http://www.polemic.net/nzeet.html) is coming to the fore. I've been made a "contributing editor' at NetPulse (http://www.politicsonline.com). Membership on the Campaign for Digital Democracy mailing list (http://digitaldemocracy.listbot.com) is growing. California Secretary of State Bill Jones promises to set up the Electronic Voting Task Force mandated in the passed-but-vetoed amended version of AB44 anyway, but he won't say when and his deputy says he'll put me on it but he won't say as what.

Meanwhile, the recent election showcased the Internet as never before, and most everyone who was asked said they'd like to use it to vote on the next time around. It's possible, but not certain, that we will. As always, it's up to us. It's up to us to demand our right to decide our futures for ourselves. This time, the issue is using the Internet. Next time, it will be something else. But if we can win the right to use the Internet to select our leaders and formulate the policies that will govern us, then the chances will be a lot brighter that we'll end up with leaders and policies we'll be happy with.

Marc Strassman
January 21, 1999