

## **Televoting: An Alternative Approach to Internet Voting for Deployed Military Personnel**

Since the founding of our nation the right to vote has stood at the core of America's democratic ideas and principles. While it is assumed every vote that a legal citizen casts will be counted, there are instances when this assumption is not accurate. Often during election cycles many citizens are serving our country in distant stations overseas. This distance factor disables service members from being able to submit their ballot in person. In response to this issue, the house passed "The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)". According to this legislation, qualified service members are allowed to register and vote by absentee ballot in federal elections. This procedure is initiated by mailing a blank ballot to the UOCAVA voter. Once the ballot arrives, the voter completes it and sends it back to their home state to be counted. Although UOCAVA has been effective for over two decades many mailed ballots remain uncounted. In 2010 a survey issued by The United States Election Assistance Committee reported that only 35% of ballots sent to UOCAVA voters were returned [1]. In this same report it was stated that almost seven percent of the ballots received were not counted. Factors that played a role in the rejection of ballots included lack of a post-mark, missed deadlines and irregularities with voter signatures. We are doing a disservice to those who risk their lives for our country with the flawed overseas voting system currently being used. As technology continues to advance many are beginning to look to Internet voting as a solution to this voting problem. Presently, the Internet is commonly used to transfer extremely sensitive data such as banking information. While some have become acceptant of the concept of an Internet based voting solution, others argue that Internet voting raises many security concerns. Dr. Barbara Simons, a member of the Board of Advisors of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission has stated that Internet and electronic voting are much less secure and reliable than traditional paper ballots, like those currently used by UOCAVA voters. She argues that Internet and electronic voting systems are not secure because many do not print a paper ballot that can be hand counted [2]. The research we present in this poster, suggest the development of an internet voting process called Televoting. This process allows military and overseas voters to cast a private ballot independent of their location. By coupling live video streaming technology with a secure ballot submitting process, Televoting presents a voting alternative that avoids many of the factors that are responsible for rejected and uncounted ballots. Televoting also addresses the security concerns raised by Dr. Simons and others by accounting for malicious tactics that pose a possible threat to voting over the Internet. This process is presented as a secure alternative to the problem of mailed ballots and Internet voting in general for uniformed and overseas citizen communities.

## **Reference**

[1] U.S Election Assistance Commission, (2011). Uniformed and overseas citizens absentee voting act survey observations, october 2011. Retrieved from [www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/EAC 2010 UOCAVA Report FINAL.pdf](http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/Documents/EAC_2010_UOCAVA_Report_FINAL.pdf)

[2] Simons, B. (2012, October 4). Interview by C Rose [Web Based Recording]. Barbara Simons on her book "broken ballots: Will your vote count?". Barbara Simons, Retrieved from <http://www.charlirose.com/view/interview/12588>

---

### **Chris Crawford**

Clemson University  
cscrawf@clemson.edu

### **Juan E. Gilbert**

Clemson University  
juan@clemson.edu