

To : Technical Guidelines Development Committee

VR systems is a vendor that has provided 1600 pollbooks in the Florida marketplace. The product is called EViD.

I would like to address the issue relating to epollbooks that was addressed in the meeting of TGDC May 21-22.

As discussed in the meeting, epollbooks are being used for the support of early voting. Data communications are vital to operation of epollbooks in the early voting environment. There is no physical restraint on the location a voter may go to, so preventing double voting requires the message that a voter has voted get to other centers before the voter can. Voting multiple times has been attempted.

Our customers are also pressing us to control the printing of Ballots on Demand (BOD) to reduce errors in the provision of the correct ballot to a voter. It is not clear to me if the printing of a BOD constitutes "Ballot Activation". These comments assume that by connecting to the BOD systems, the epollbooks which are also using data communications will be included in the proposed language.

I really want to address the "single point of failure" issue for these kinds of devices. The EViD product has a local database on each EViD station which is transferred to the EViDs using thumb drives. Updates are moved between the EViD stations and the county database through a store and forward mechanism. If communications are down, service to the voters is maintained without break. On restoration of communications, the systems clear the backlog of updates between the county database and the EViD stations. A heartbeat detection flags to the county technical staff any stations that are not communicating regularly, so that remediation can be swift. In the event of DOS attack on the communications, the only exposure is that voters could vote more than once. However since the staff at the polling sites are not informed that communications are lost, information that service is degraded is hard to obtain. A citizen going through the process cannot detect that communications are down.

Our design is not vulnerable to the single point of failures that characterized the failures in Sarasota County and Denver. We are concerned that you create standards that in attempting to fix poor design, penalizes good design also.

David S Watson  
VP R&D  
VR Systems Inc