

FEATURE

E-voting and voter registration: The vendors

Who's building the gear that's running the show?

By Angela Gunn

Computerworld |

NOV 1, 2006 12:00 AM PT

The biggest vendors of e-voting machinery are also among the largest vendors of voter-registration technology. Roughly speaking, there are four significant players in the e-voting market and three in the voter-registration arena. We follow our overview of those seven companies with capsule descriptions of other companies whose technology voters may encounter around the country.

E-VOTING VENDORS: THE MAJORS

Diebold Inc.

Not the largest e-voting vendor but certainly the most controversial, **Diebold** has repeatedly raised hackles with its aggressive responses to computer-security professionals who have demonstrated problems with the company's hardware and software. That's leaving out entirely the ill-advised 2003 promise by Diebold CEO and Republican fund-raiser Walden O'Dell to "[help] Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president." (O'Dell left Diebold in 2005 amid rumors of securities-fraud litigation and insider trading.)

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- E-voting state by state
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The company produces the AccuVote line of direct recording electronics (DRE), DRE/VVPAT (voter-verified paper audit trail) and optical scan machines. Diebold machines have figured in two high-profile tests that discovered multiple hardware and software vulnerabilities, and they compare poorly with contemporary Sequoia Voting Systems Inc. units in independent tests undertaken in Alameda, Calif. ([**download PDF**](#)).

ADVERTISING



Replay

As of October, various machines from North Canton, Ohio-based Diebold were certified for use in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi,

Missouri, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Massachusetts will evaluate several Diebold machines in the commonwealth's November elections.

Diebold is also involved with voter-registration database systems, having purchased Costa Mesa, Calif.-based Data Information Management Systems in 2003. The company has been criticized for its involvement in this summer's voter-registration controversy in Alabama.

Election Systems & Software Inc.

The world's largest elections company, responsible for half of the e-voting machines in the U.S. ES&S was known as American Information Systems until 1997, when the company merged with Business Records Corp. (BRC). Until 1996, its chairman was Chuck Hagel, who quit to run for and win a U.S. Senate seat for Nebraska. Omaha-based ES&S makes a variety of machines, including DRE, DRE/VVPAT and optical-scan versions. It also offers voter-registration database development services. The company produces the iVotronic line of DRE and DRE/VVPAT machines as well as optical scan units. (As part of its purchase of BRC, ES&S ended up with service responsibility for BRC's Optech optical scan machines; for antitrust-related reasons, however, new Optechs come from Sequoia.)

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As of October, various machines from **ES&S** were certified for use in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Massachusetts will evaluate several of the company's machines in its November elections.

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Hart InterCivic Inc.

Hart InterCivic's Web site nods at the continuing controversy over e-voting technology, promising to

"guarantee the best election you've never heard of." (Presumably, that was written before the name-truncation bugs spotted in Virginia and Texas late in the election cycle.) Hart's eSlate machines, unlike most of the competition's units, function essentially as dumb terminals. The user interface is distinguished by the Select Wheel positioning device, which eliminates the use of touch screens. eSlates are available in DRE and DRE/VVPAT models.

As of October, various machines from Austin-based Hart InterCivic were certified for use in California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington. Massachusetts will evaluate several Hart machines in its November elections. Hart is also involved with voter-registration database systems in conjunction with IBM.

Sequoia Voting Systems Inc.

By late October, Oakland, Calif.-based **Sequoia Voting Systems** was once again fending off rumors that the company has connections to the **Venezuelan government**.

According to information on the company's Web site, Sequoia's parent company, Smartmatic Corp., is privately owned, with a controlling interest held by founder and CEO Antonio Mugica. Mugica holds dual Spanish and Venezuelan citizenship. Sequoia offers AVC Edge and AVC Advantage DRE units, an AVC Edge DRE/VVPAT unit, and sells a Sequoia-branded Optech Insight optical scanner. (Election Systems & Software also offers an Optech line for reasons explained in the ES&S section.) Also in October, Sequoia figured at the center of tests on Alameda County, Calif., e-voting machines; results (**download PDF**) were generally positive compared with those for a contemporary Diebold unit, though the need for stronger network security and better handling procedures was emphasized.

As of October, various machines from Sequoia were certified for use in Arizona, California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

VOTER REGISTRATION: THE MAJORS

Accenture Ltd.

Florida used information from Bermuda-based Accenture that led to the state's disastrous 2004 registration purge. Until 1989, it was the consulting division of former accounting firm Arthur Anderson, **Accenture** changed its name during a final split from that firm in 2001. Since then, Accenture has gained and lost statewide voter-registration system (SVRS) contracts in Colorado, Kansas and Wyoming -- in the final case, the company was forced to refund the state's money in full. Accenture is working on databases for Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Both projects have been widely criticized, and Pennsylvania's is late. (Votingindustry.com has an **interesting overview** of Accenture's long history with e-voting technologies.)

Covansys Corp./Saber Corp.

Portland, Ore.-based **Saber** first built the Oregon registration database, then expanded to Mississippi, Montana, Maryland and Iowa. The latter states contracted with Maximus Inc. to deliver the technology for Missouri's database as well. The company acquired **Covansys'** SVRS projects when it purchased that branch of the Farmington Hills, Mich.-based company in February, though the development teams and products remain separate.

PCC Technology Group LLC

The Bloomfield, Conn.-based company that delivered the voter-registration system for Connecticut, Rhode Island and West Virginia, **PCC** has often partnered with Covansys, now part of Saber.

OTHER PLAYERS

AccuPoll Holding Corp.

This Newport Beach, Calif.-based company declared bankruptcy in January. **AccuPoll's** e-voting technology, which lets the voter make selections on a DRE touch screen and then printed a paper ballot, has been certified for use in Texas and Missouri.

Advanced Voting Solutions Inc.

Once upon a time, Frisco, Texas-based **AVS** was known as Shoup Voting Solutions, and it built lever machines. Company founder Howard Van Pelt's previous company, Global Election Systems, grew up to be Diebold. AVS e-voting machines are or have operated in Mississippi, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Aradyme Corp.

Orem, Utah-based **Aradyme** is subcontracted to handle data conversion on many states' voter-registration projects.

Arran Technologies Inc.

Roseville, Minn.-based **Arran**'s consultants advised Minnesota on the development of its SVRS.

Avante

Avante's Vote-Trakker 1 was the first DRE/VVPAT machine available; the latest version, Vote-Trakker 2, records votes to paper (kept behind a plastic panel, but viewable for voters to confirm before finalizing their votes) as well as to both flash memory and a hard drive. Princeton, N.J.-based Avante's machines are or have been operated in New Jersey and New York.

Automatic Voting Machine Corp.

Now defunct, Jamestown, N.Y.-based AVM built the lever machines now being phased out in New York and already retired in Louisiana and other states. It was established in 1896.

Business Records Corp. (BRC)

See **ES&S**, above.

Catalyst Computing Group Inc.

This company provides registration-database technology. Chicago-based **Catalyst** is contracted with Illinois to deliver a final version of its Help America Vote Act-compliant Illinois Voter Registration System in 2007.

Guardian Voting Systems

This is Danaher Corp.'s e-voting machines unit. States in which Gurnee, Ill.-based **Guardian Voting Systems**' machines are or have been certified are Arkansas, Delaware, Kentucky, New Mexico and Pennsylvania.

DFM Associates

As of September, Irvine, Calif.-based **DFM**'s election management software has been certified for use in California.

IVS LLC

Inspire Vote-By-Phone's e-voting technology was in wide deployment for the first time this year. Voters dial in via touch-tone phone to a computer system at a central location, monitored by election officials. The phones are situated at polling places, and a poll worker must key in his worker ID and a ballot-access ID, then hand the phone over to the voter. Louisville, Ky.-based **IVS** is certified for use in Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Oregon and Vermont.

MicroVote General Corp.

As of September, DRE machines from Indianapolis-based **MicroVote** were certified for use in Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Populex Corp.

This company offers e-voting technology that uses a stylus/touch-screen input to print a bar-coded ballot card that's then scanned to record the voter's choices. As of September, Elgin, Ill.-based **Populex**'s voting technology was certified for use in Illinois and Missouri.

Quest Informations Systems Inc.

Quest sells registration-database technology. Indianapolis-based **Quest IS** developed Indiana's voter-registration database and is contracted to do the same in Virginia via an arrangement with Unisys Corp.

Saber Consulting Inc./Saber Corp.

See the registration database technology of Covansys/Saber above.

UniLect Corp.

As of September, Dublin, Calif.-based **UniLect**'s e-voting technology was certified for use in Virginia.

Vote-PAD Inc .

The Voting-on-Paper Assistive Device is a paper-based voting system geared toward use by disabled voters. As of September, **Vote-PAD**'s technology was certified in Wisconsin.

Voting Technologies International

E-voting technology. As of September, Milwaukee-based **VTI**'s DRE machines were certified in Indiana, Kansas and Wisconsin.

For more information on voter registration systems and vendors, check out **Votingindustry.com**.

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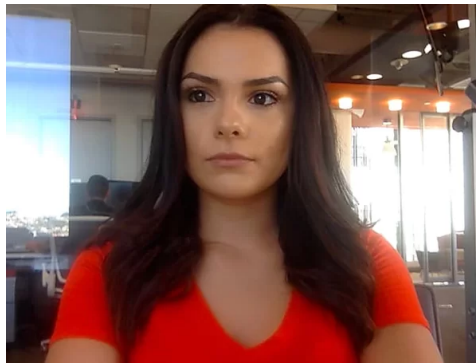
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