

E-voting: the great receipt deceiver

Will the use, misuse of electronic voting cause 'Hackergate'?



OPINION EDITOR
Ben Maras

Here in Oregon we are lucky enough to have a vote-by-mail system, but many other states are not so lucky. Rather, they are forced to use electronic voting machines, and therefore subjected to the wishes of any corporate executive or crooked hacker.

What's so bad about these machines? Nothing in theory, but there is one main problem—they are possibly the one machine on the planet that does not give a receipt. Every day we are bombarded with receipts for everything from food to gas (ironically enough many of the machines made by Diebold) except for the one place it really matters—the voting booth.

As the process goes now, a citizen walks up to the machine, authorizes themselves, and uses the touch-screen to select their candidate. A confirmation is displayed on the screen and the voter selects "OK." Now they walk away, secure in knowing their vote is safe on the hard drive of this machine. Or is it?

Since no paper trail is issued, neither the voters nor the precincts have any record of votes cast. The votes are now lost in cyber-space.

Sound like a big task to skew the vote? It isn't. According to www.blackboxvoting.org, vote-

tampering is frighteningly simple. The ways are too numerous to go into in detail, but among the most simple is applying a last-minute patch to the machine to fix some problem that was just uncovered. This patch could effectively give any individual with special interests complete control of the votes in that precinct.

Such an exploit could easily be hidden. One way is to embed it in a Microsoft Windows layer, which would be insulated from debugging. Diebold runs all their

machines on Windows XP Embedded. Independent studies have concluded that, even if a technician was given

access to the source code to such a machine, such a malicious code would be virtually undetectable.

Diebold, however, is closed source.

While the idea of a special-interests mastermind may seem like a far-fetched conspiracy, it is not necessarily so. Walden D. O'Dell, a chief executive of Diebold,

Inc., composed a well-circulated letter to top members of the Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the President next year. O'Dell said.

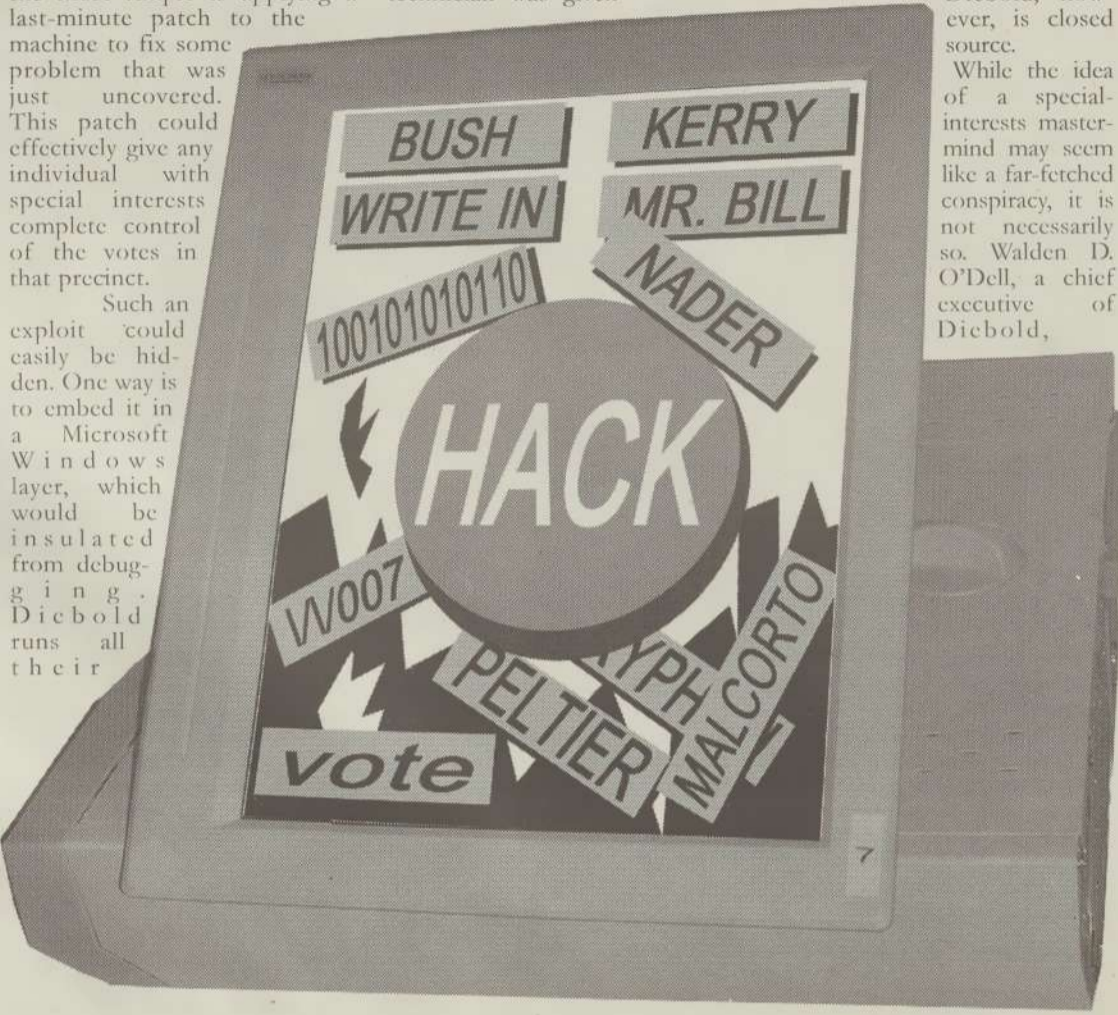
While this could definitely be an innocent comment, it makes one wonder what the makers of such machines may have.

Beyond the lack of security, machines are ridden with bugs. One such incident was reported in the Indianapolis Star, which claimed that one county's MicroVote (a Diebold company) machines returned 144,000 votes from 19,000 registered voters. After much panicking and fixing the bug, the actual number of votes turned out to be ... close enough.

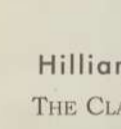
Another such incident occurred in Florida, according to www.slashdot.org, in which a Senate race was decided by mere twelve votes, but the register of 134 people who signed the register were not recorded on the machine.

What is the solution? No paper trail. Make the machine print out two receipts, the voter keeps one and signs the other before placing it in a locked box for use in a recount if necessary.

When we are constantly attacked by receipts, it's silly that we would not have where it is really needed. It doesn't end up with a "Hackergate" scandal.



Panhandling non-students: go waste someone else's time



Hilliary Ferguson
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Lo! and give thanks to the one place in the world where college students can escape the ignorance of the young, and intellectually converse with their peers—or can they?

Not anymore! Oregon City High School students have been popping up around campus of late and it is not only infuriating, but downright silly.

How will one recognize the incognito underclassmen? It's actually quite simple using these four easy steps.

One: Is the suspect wearing baggy black pants and a "hardcore" (Slipknot, Linkin Park, Mudvayne, etc.) band t-shirt? If so, the suspect is probably still in the stage of teenage angst and undoubtedly a high school student.

Two: Is there a group of youngsters standing around laughing like imbeciles over jokes that just make them look dumb? If this is the case, again they are high schoolers.

Three: Does one or more of them ritually bum cigarettes off unsuspecting

(and legitimate) CCC students? Ding-ding! We have a winner, ladies and gents. These are bona fide high school students.

Four: Are they shorter than the majority of the student body? You guessed it—the high schoolers strike again.

The funniest thing is, they skip school to go to a school. Instead of skipping school and going somewhere to smoke pot like everyone else, they walk their underage butts to the only place they can sit, smoke cigarettes and eat hamburgers without being pestered by those damned truancy officers. The "badasses" can't even drive! They come here because it's the closest place they can walk. Puh-lease.

Maybe they should focus their energies on something more productive—like choosing a good vocational school or finding a burger joint in which to work.

In fact, why do they even bother pretending to be high school students? They should just dropout now and save the tax dollars that pay for the education they're not receiving.

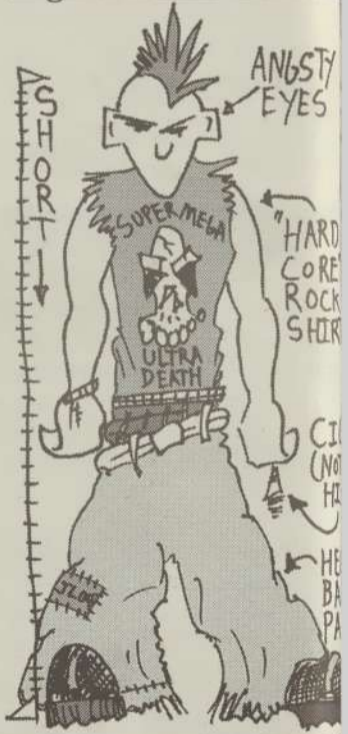
Not only are these high school students campus eyesores, but they could get some CCC students in real trouble. Since they're too young to buy their own smokes, they bum them off colleagues who don't stop to think that maybe the recipient is underage. If an officer were to see this, the college student could get slapped with a mighty fine, just for trying to be nice.

Ha ha ha! Here's an evil plan for y'all: let's join forces and call Oregon City High School! Let them know that we're sick of their jailbait stealing our air! Wouldn't that be a spectacle?

Imagine a dozen high school students taking cover from the truancy officer who's just spotted them. Then we can all sit back and laugh, reminiscing over the days when we ourselves were treated like inmates.



Identification of high school student 1



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