# Security Analysis of the Estonian Internet Voting System



Based on joint work with:

Drew Springall
Travis Finkenauer
Zakir Durumeric

Jason Kitcat Harri Hursti Margaret MacAlpine

Security Analysis of the Estonian Internet Voting System. *Proc. 21st ACM Conference on Computer and Communications Security* (CCS '14), Scottsdale, AZ, November 2014.

# E-Voting?

## Integrity

The <u>outcome</u> matches <u>voter intent</u>.

Votes are cast as intended.

Votes are counted as cast.

#### **Security Requirements**

✓ Integrity

### **Ballot Secrecy**

### Weak form:

Nobody can figure out <u>how you voted</u>...

### Strong form:

...even if <u>you</u> try to prove it to them.

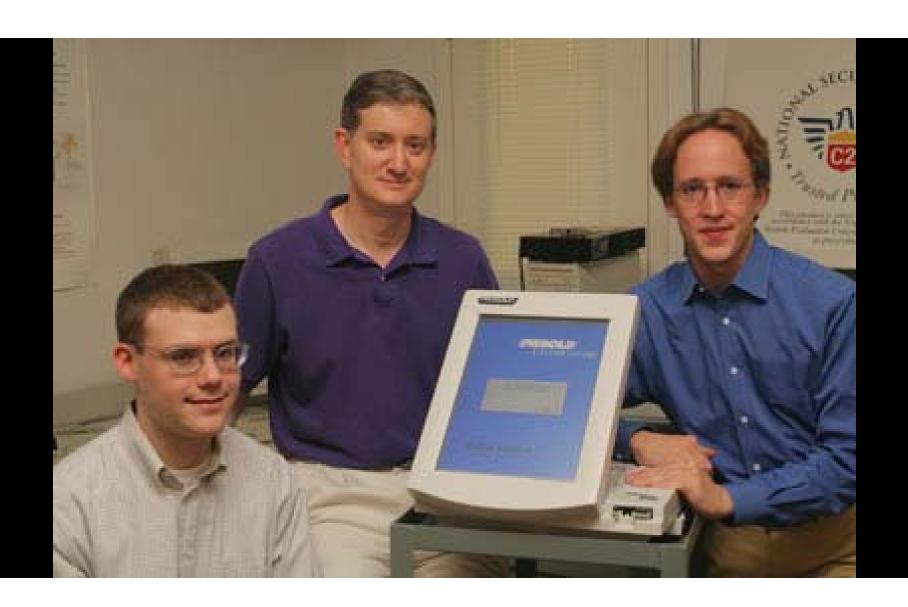
#### **Security Requirements**

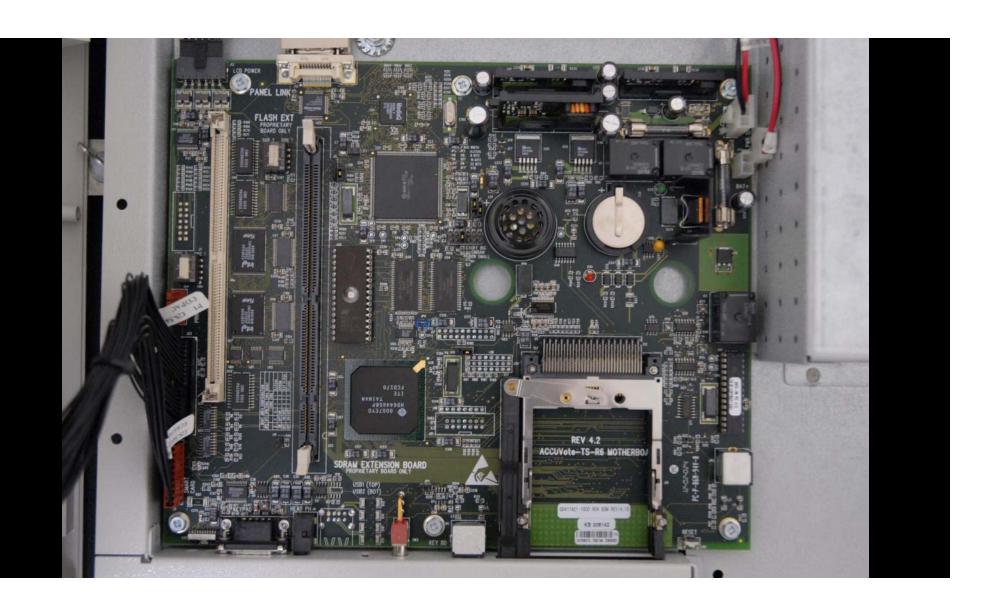
- ✓ Integrity
- ☑ Ballot Secrecy

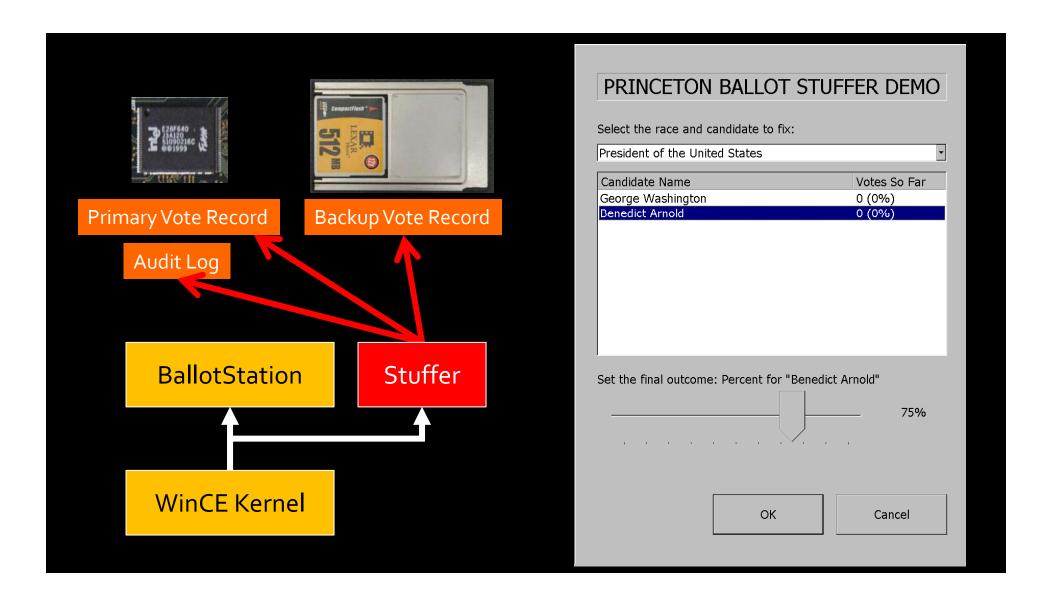


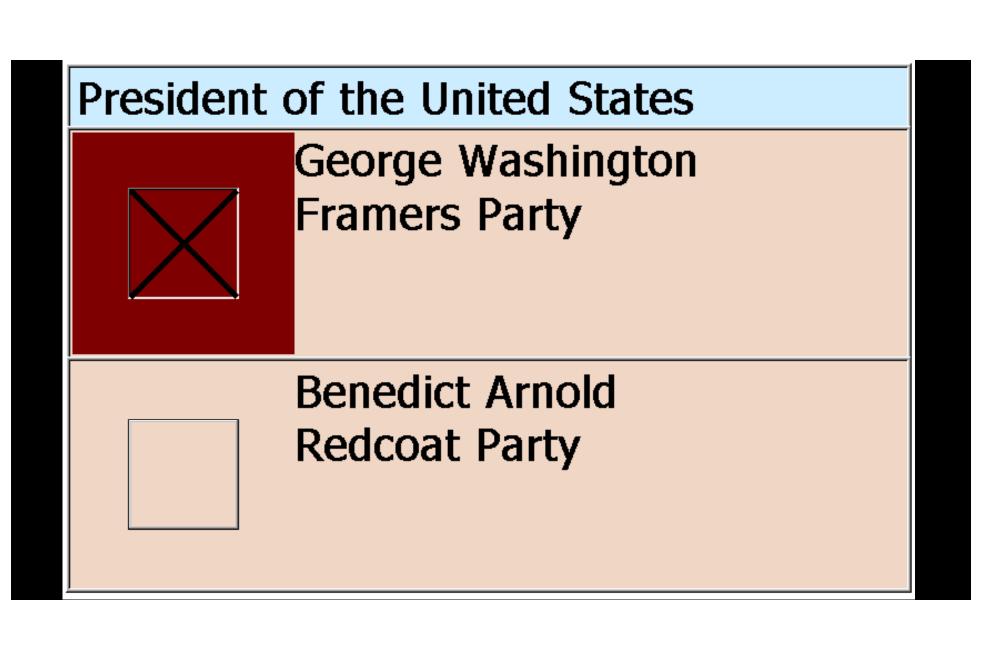


Diebold AccuVote-TS

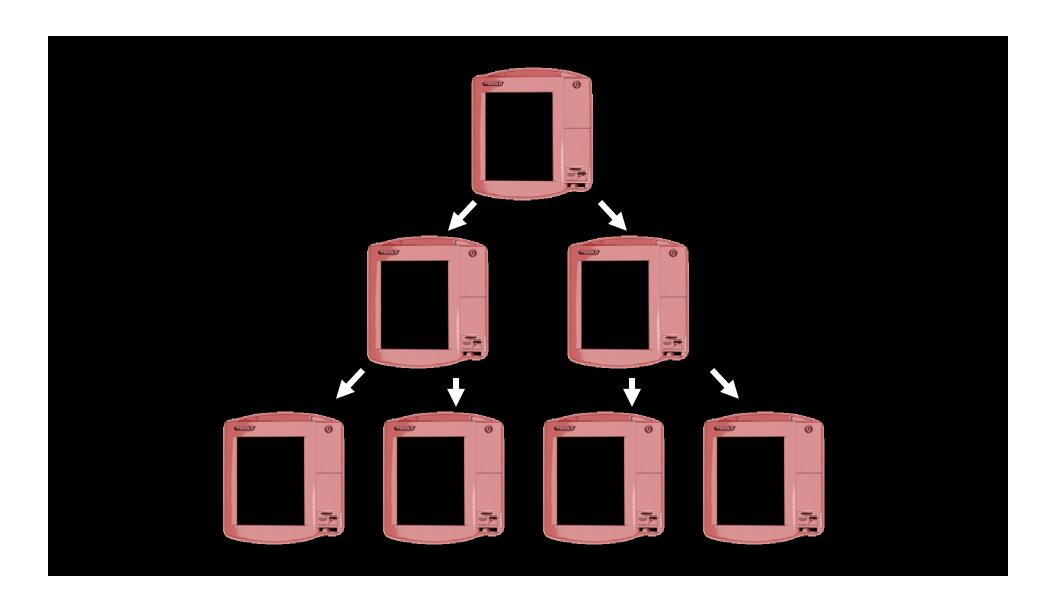








***********	***		<b>F</b>
President of the Unit	ed States		
RACE # 0			
# Running	2		
# To Vote For	1		
# Times Counted	5		
# Times Blank Voted	0		
# Times Over Voted	0		
# Number Undervotes	0	A SECOND	
George Washington	2		
Benedict Arnold	3		
***********	***		
WE, THE UNDERSIGNED,			
DO HEREBY CERTIFY THE			
ELECTION WAS CONDUCTE	D	007	
THE ACCORDANIES LIKELY WILL	per '		9.20





Hart



Diebold













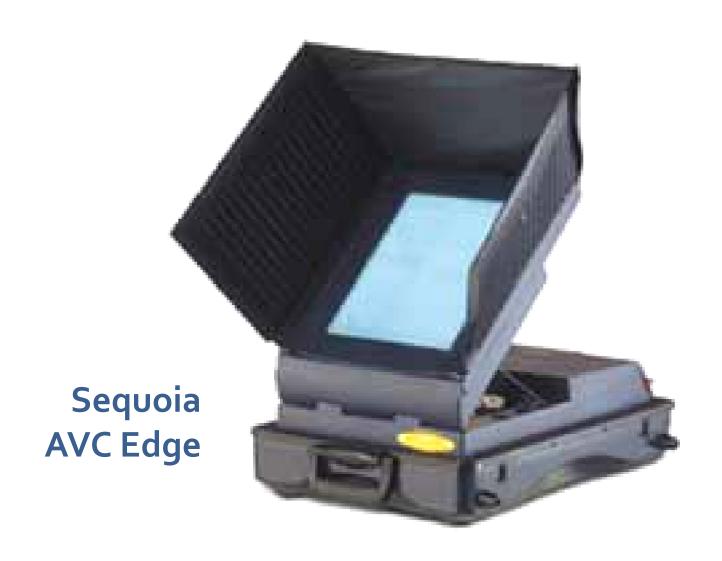


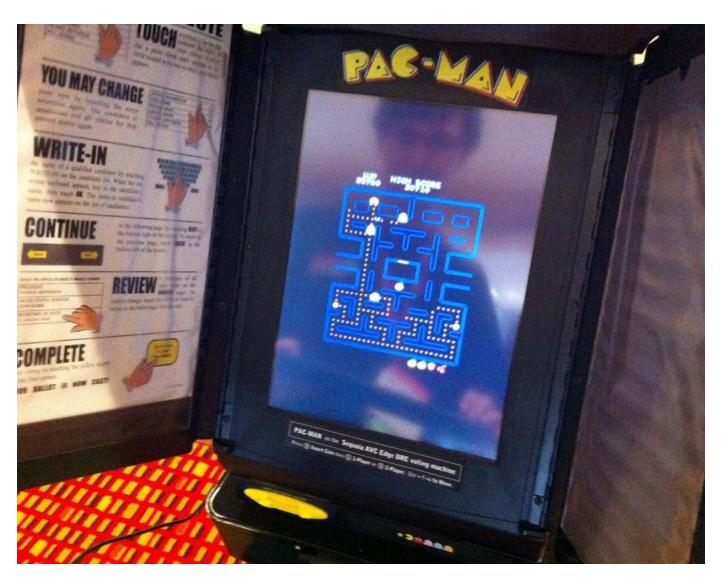












Sequoia AVC Edge





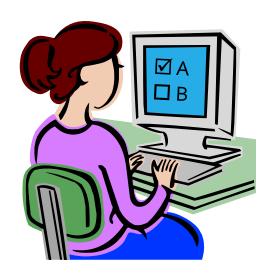






# Internet Voting?

## Client-side Threats



Coercion

**Credential Theft** 

**Imposter Sites** 

Malware

**Botnets** 

## Server-side Threats



**Denial of Service** 

**Insider Attacks** 

**Remote Intrusion** 

**State-Sponsored Attacks** 



#### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND ETHICS WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001-2745



MEDIA RELEASE

D.C. BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND ETHICS September 21, 2010

Contact: Alysoun McLaughlin, amclaughlin@dcboee.org

202-727-2511 (direct)/202-441-1121 (cell)

#### **Board Announces Public Test of Digital Vote by Mail Service**

Open Source Solution Provides Secure Alternative for Overseas Voters Who Are Underserved by Traditional Vote by Mail

WASHINGTON, D.C. —The Board of Elections and Ethics today announced that the public examination phase of the Digital Vote by Mail pilot project for overseas voters will begin on Friday, September 24.

Digital Vote by Mail is a first-in-the-nation use of open source technology to provide a



### **DC General Election** November 2, 2010

The service offers two options:

D.C. Digital Vote-by-Mail is a new service to the overseas and military voters of the District of Columbia. We've designed this service to make it easier for you to receive your voting materials and help you return your completed ballot more

Thank you for your participation in this election.

District of Columbia Board of Election and Ethics

#### Physical Ballot Return

Complete your ballot and return materials by mail or express delivery service.

- Obtain your blank ballot and other vote-by-mail
- Complete them online and print them
- Return materials by mail or express delivery

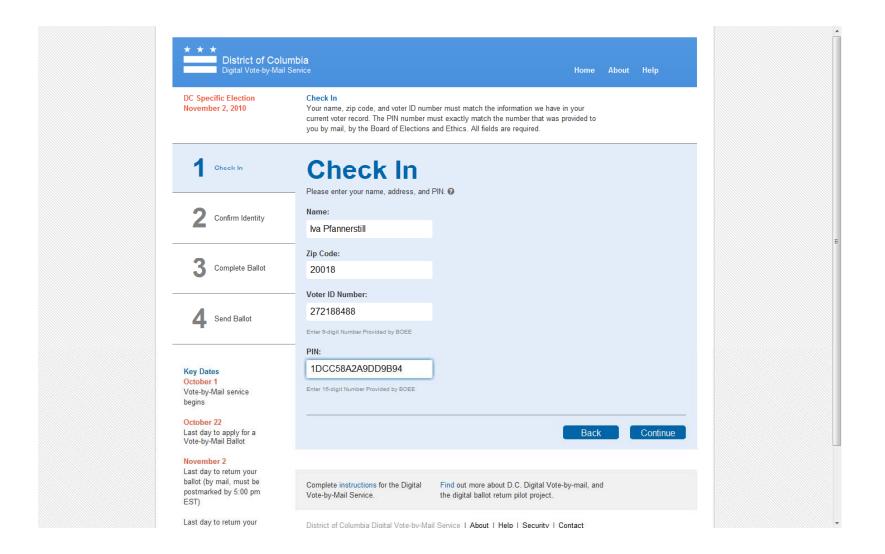
See more information about this option.

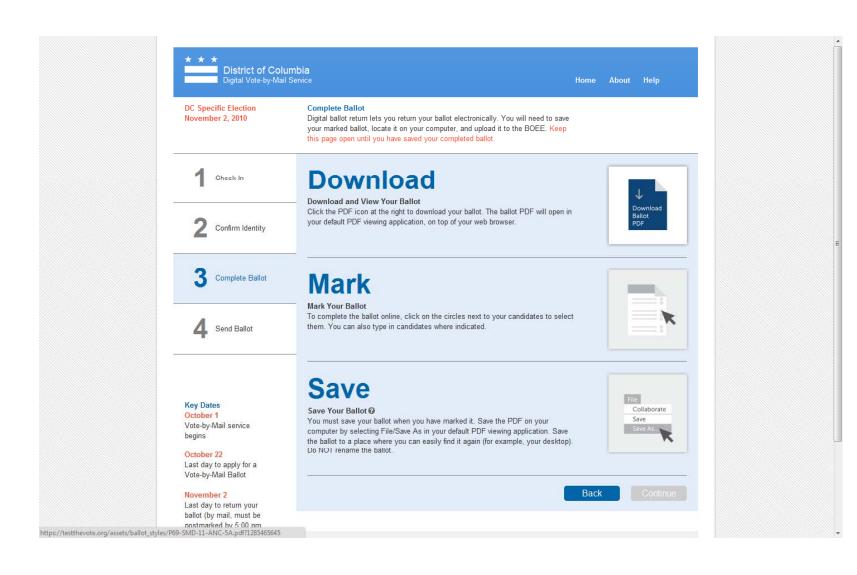
#### Digital Ballot Return

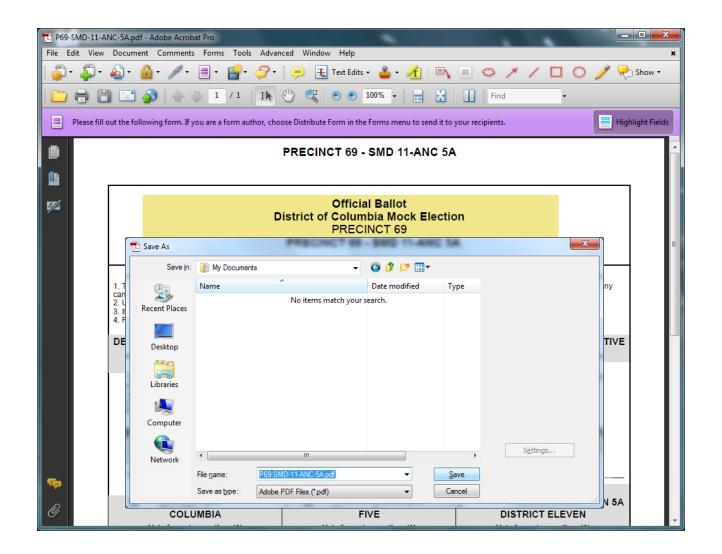
Complete your ballot and return it electronically. This pilot project allows you to return your ballot through the Internet.

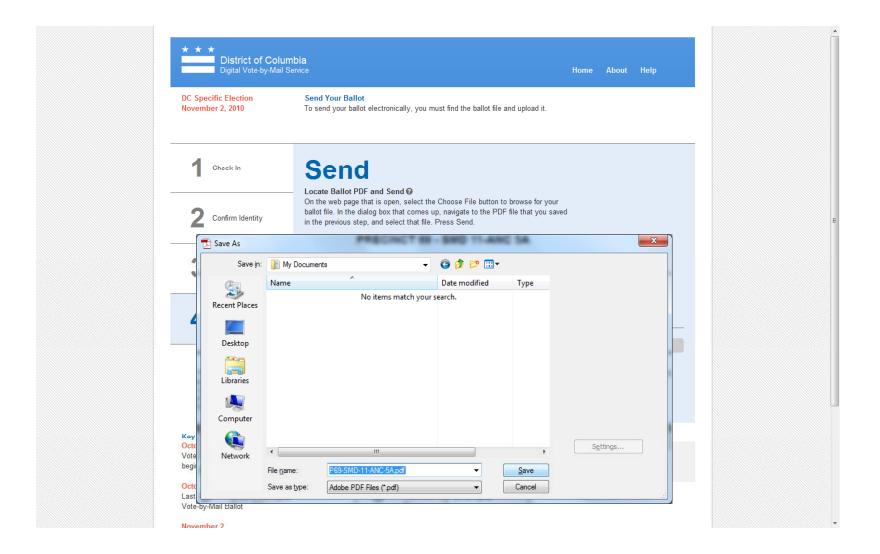
- Obtain your blank ballot and other vote-by-mail
- Complete them online
- Return completed ballot electronically

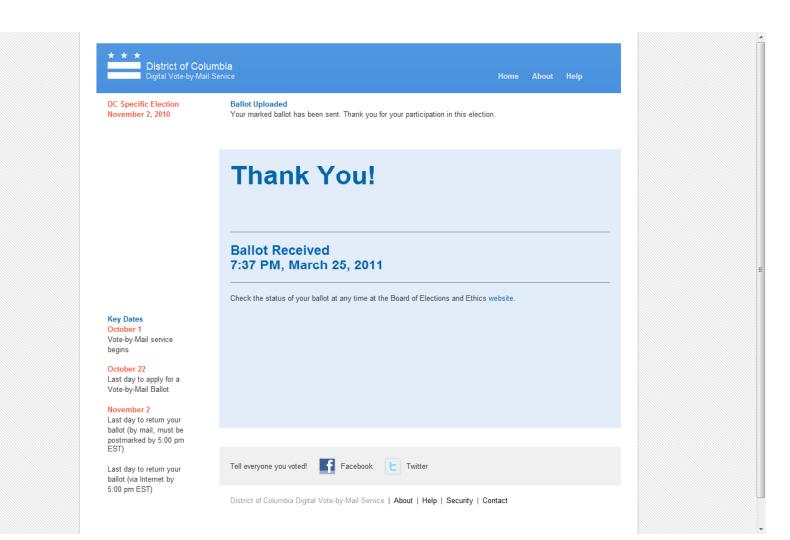
See more information about this option.

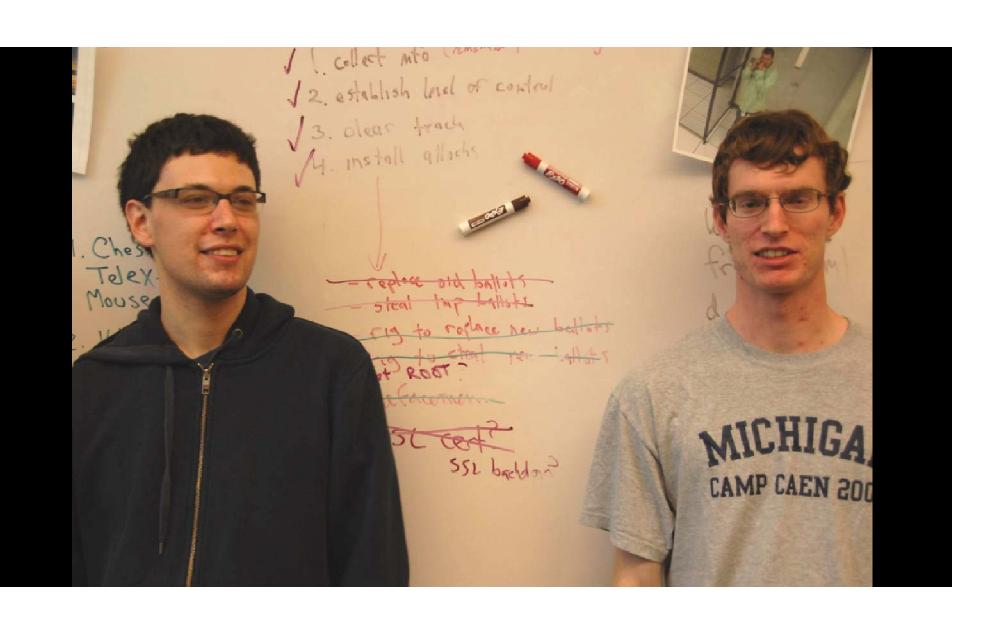










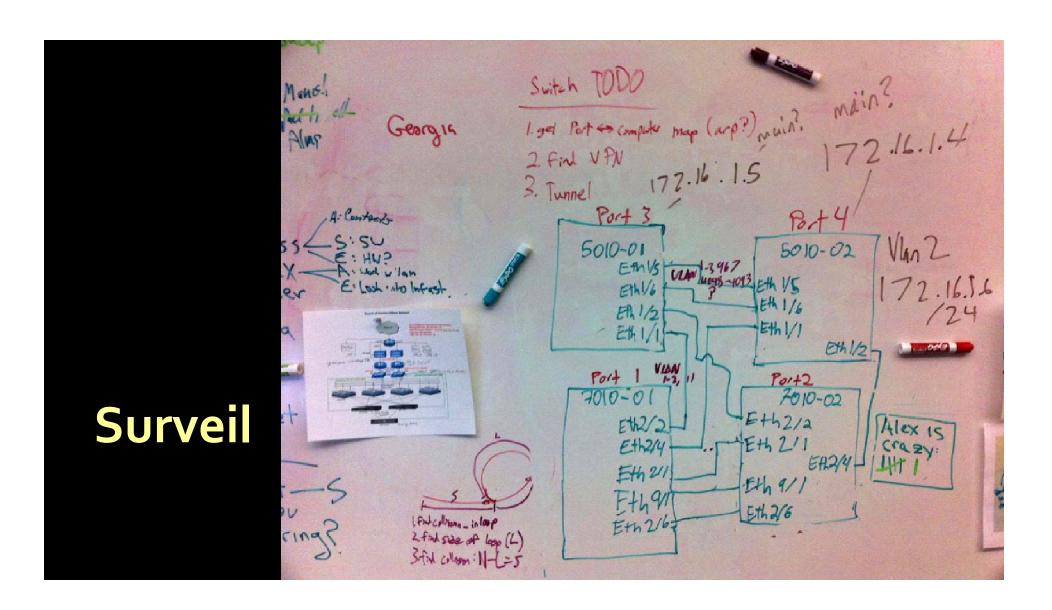


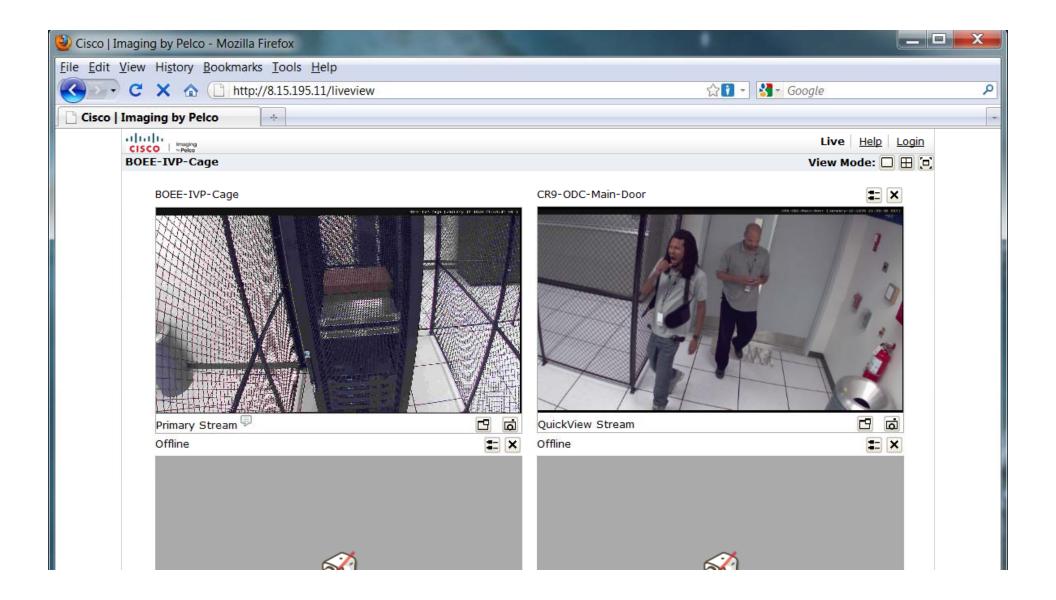
```
module Paperclip
 class Encrypt < Processor
   def initialize(file, options = {}, attachment = nil)
     super
     @file
                     = file
     @recipient
                 = options[:geometry]
                     = attachment
     @attachment
     @current format = File.extname(@file.path)
                     = File.basename(@file.path, @current format)
     @basename
    end
    def make
     src = @file
     dst = Tempfile.new([@basename, 'qpq'].compact.join("."))
     dst.binmode
     raise PaperclipError, "GPG recipient wasn't set" if @recipient.blank?
     begin
       run("rm", "-f \"#{File.expand path(dst.path)}\"")
       run("gpg", "--trust-model always -o \"#{File.expand_path(dst.path)}\" -e -r \"#{@recipient}\" \"#
     rescue PaperclipCommandLineError
       raise PaperclipError, "couldn't be / ypted. Please try again late
     end
```

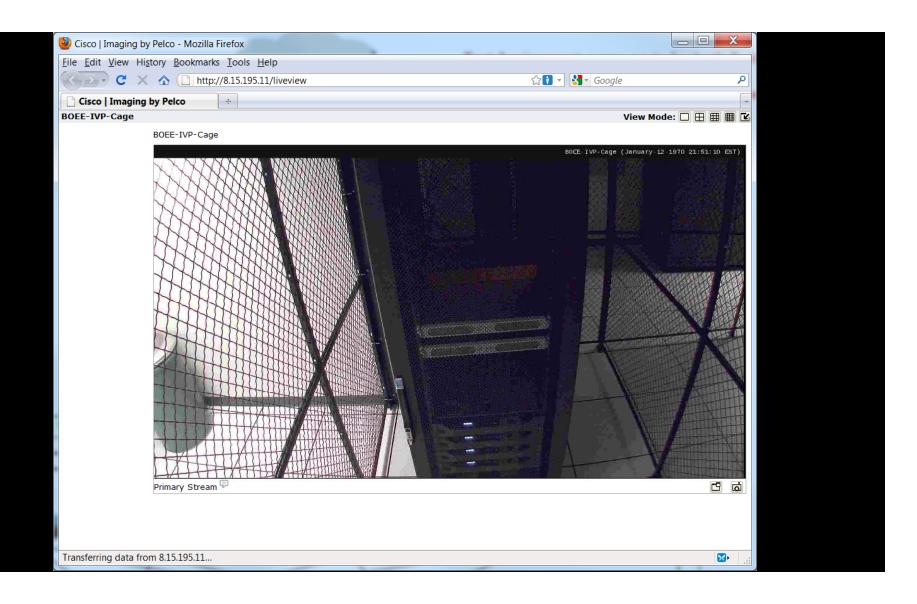
ballot.pdf  $\rightarrow$  /tmp/49d5.pdf

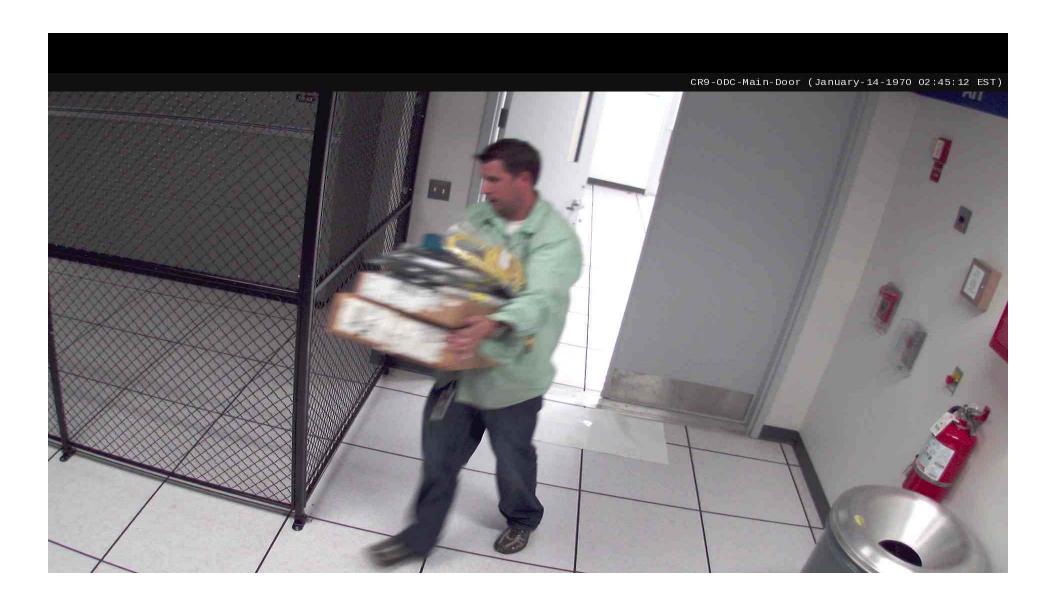
ballot.xyz  $\rightarrow$  /tmp/49d5.xyz

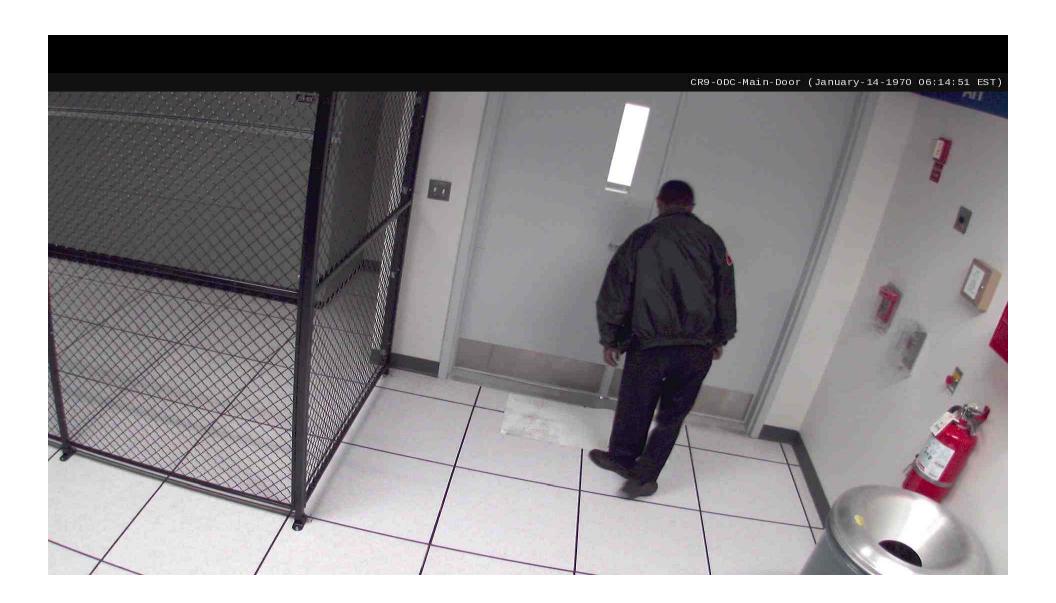
ballot. $\$(sleep 5) \rightarrow "(tmp/49d5.\$(sleep 5)"$ 

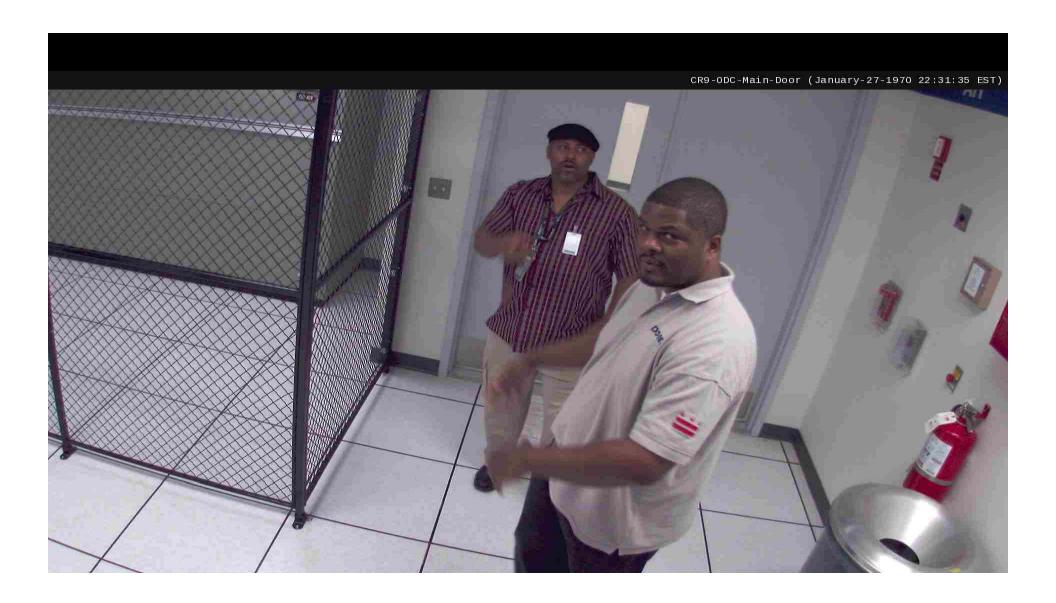


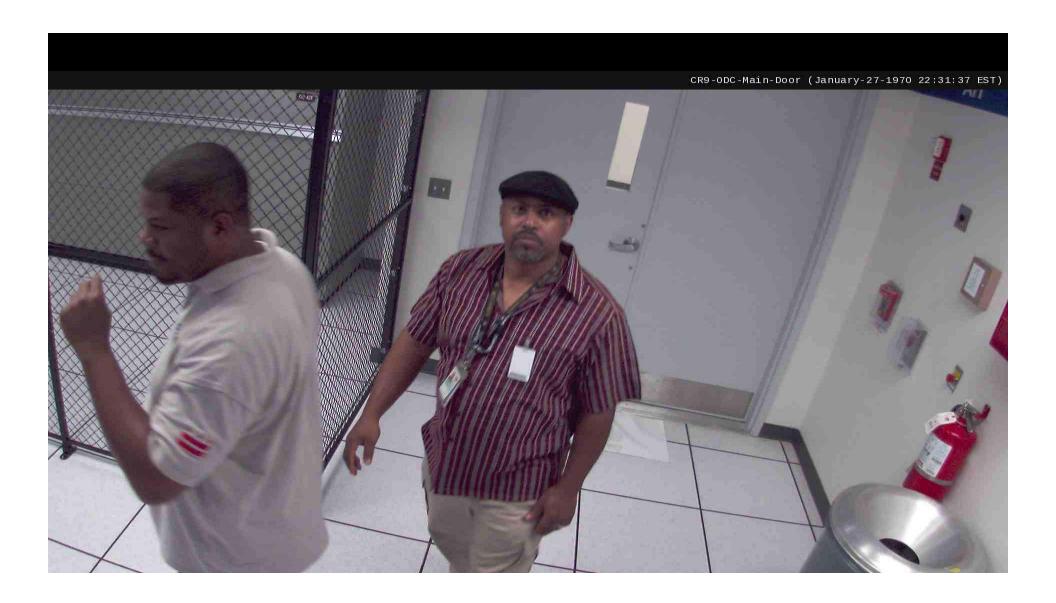


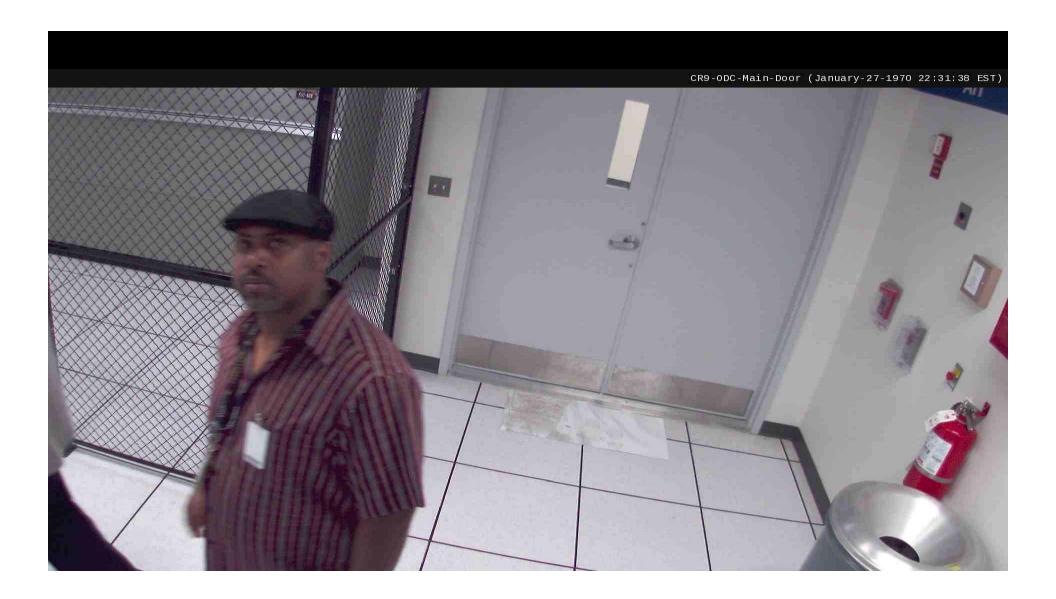


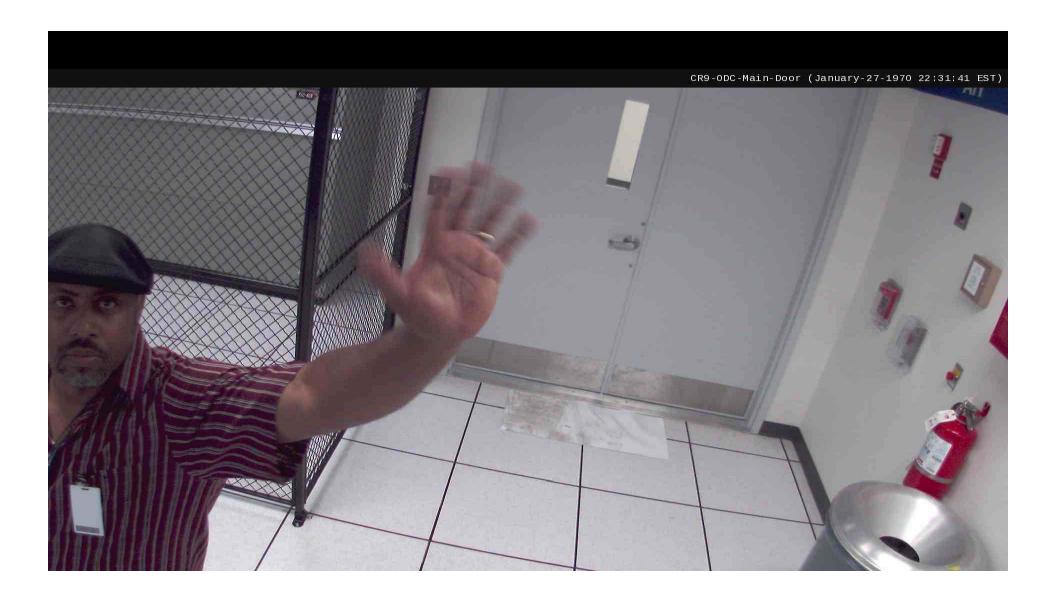












Steal database passwords, keys, etc. Replace all existing votes with ours

Attack!

Steal database passwords, keys, etc.

Replace all existing votes with ours

Replace any new votes

Back door to reveal new votes

Attack!

Clear logs

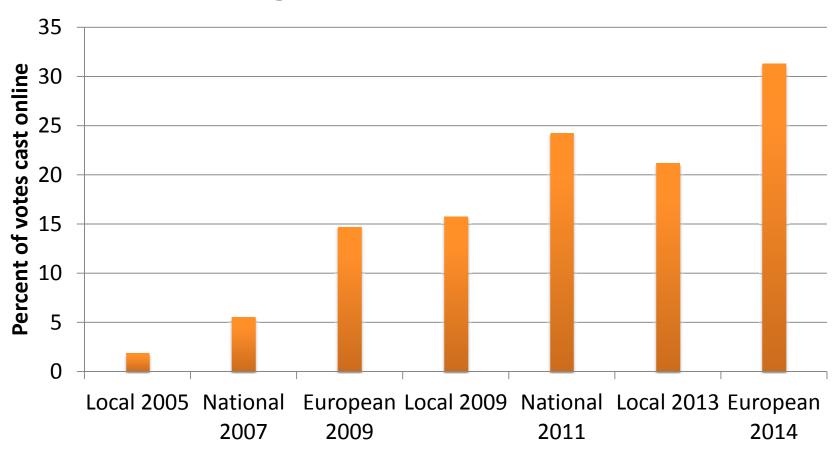
"Calling card"

```
District of Columbia... × representation view-source: https://... ×
  → C  Government of the District of Columbia [US] view-source:https://digital-vbm.dc.gov/thanks ☆
61
62 <section id='main'>
64 <section class='instruction'>
65 <header>
68 <h1>Thank You!</h1>
67 </header>
88 <div id='owned'>
69 <embed autostart='true' hidden='true' loop='true' src='/victors.mp3' volume='100'></embed>
70 </div>
71 </section>
72 <section class='instruction'>
73 <header>
74 <h2>Ballot Received</h2>
75 <h2>12:18 PM, October 01, 2010</h2>
78 </header>
77 </section>
78 <footer>
79 Check the status of your ballot at any time at the Board of Elections and Ethics <a
  href='http://www.dcboee.us/' target=' blank'>website</a>.
80 </footer>
82 </section>
  <footer>
```

# Internet Voting in Estonia



#### Internet Voting in Estonia



# Estonia gets to vote online. Why can't America?

BY BRAD PLUMER November 6, 2012 at 3:26 pm



If anecdotal reports are anything to go by, millions of Americans on Tuesday <u>are</u>
standing in the cold for hours to vote at their local polling places. But why should they have to? Many Americans can already pay their utilities online and bank online. Why can't we vote over the Internet as well?

That's the question raised by Thad Hall, a political scientist and author of *Electronic Elections*. In theory, he says, allowing Americans to vote online could have all sorts of benefits. We wouldn't



Has Estonia solved the hard security problems of Internet voting?

What is a realistic threat model for a national Internet voting system?

What can other countries learn from Estonia's experience?



#### VAATLEJATUNNISTUS

Kohaliku omavalitsuse volikogu valimised

JASON WITCAT

vaatleja ees- ja perekonnanimi

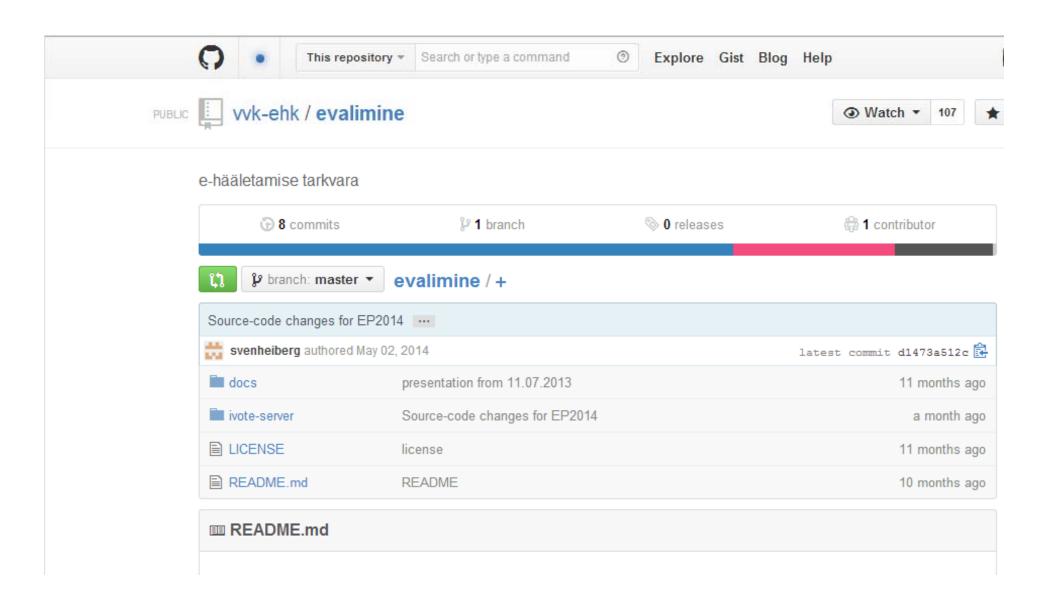
9.10.2013

väljaandmise kuupäev









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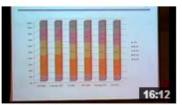


20.10.2013 seadmete kokkupanek 41 views 7 months ago



tühistamine ja lugemisek...

20.10.2013 e-häälte 54 views 7 months ago



20.10.2013 häälte üleslaadimine infosüsteemi

29 views 7 months ago



20.10.2013 häälte kokkulugemine...

76 views 7 months ago



20.10.2013 ettevalmistus häälte lugemiseks 36 views 7 months ago



16 10 2013 e hääletamise lőpetamine 3/3

39 views 7 months ago



17.10.2013 E-hääletanute

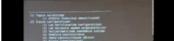
nimekirjade valmendus 4/4 54 views 7 months ago



17.10.2013 E-hääletanute nimekirjade valmendus 2/4

23 views 7 months ago



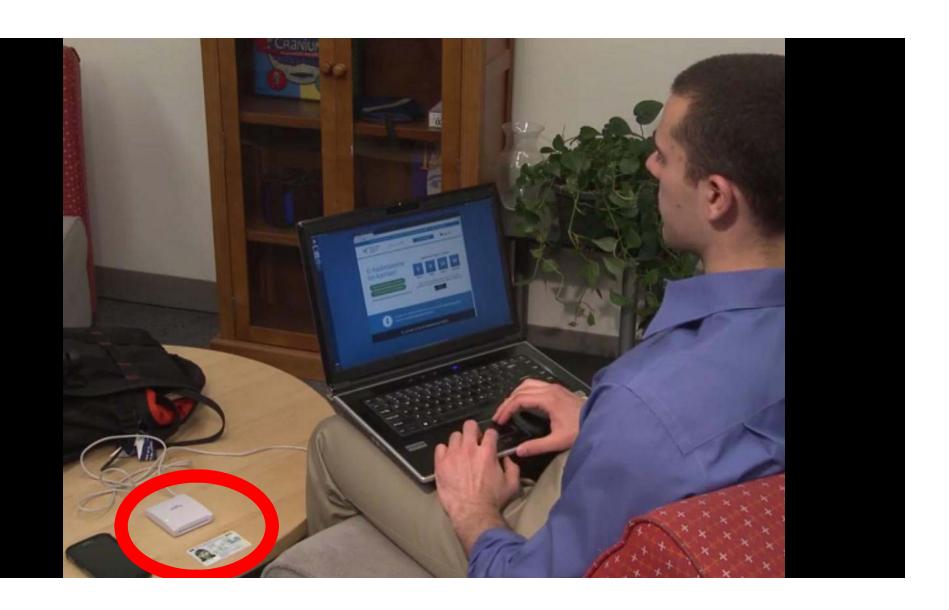






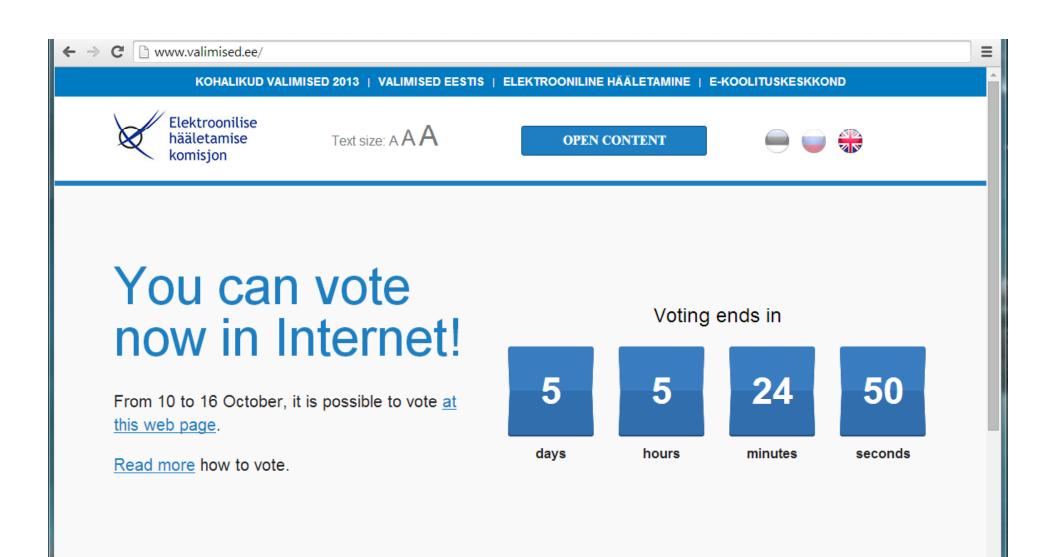


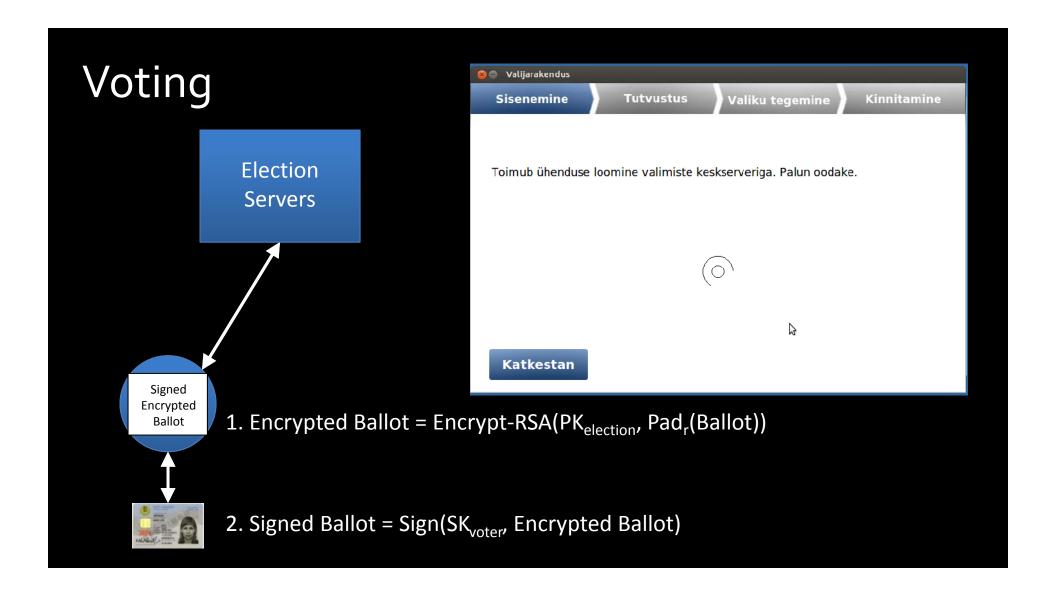
## The Voter's Experience





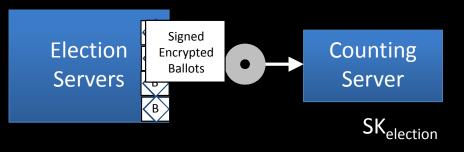








### Counting



Decrypt(Sk<sub>election</sub>, Encrypted Ballot)

Political party or independent candidate	VOTES	% Of votes
Estonian Reform	79,849	<b>24.3%</b> 15.3%
Estonian Centre Party	73,419	<b>22.4%</b> 26.1%
Pro Patria and Res Publica Union	45765	13.9% 12.2%



Inner Envelope: Encrypt(PK<sub>elect</sub>, Pad<sub>r</sub>(Ballot))
Outer Envelope: Sign(SK<sub>voter</sub>, Inner Envelope)

# Threats?



Estonia says the attacks began after it moved a Soviet war

A Nato spokesman said the organisation was giving Estonia

His also date and the last the sections of the section and antillast H

memorial in Tallinn. The move was condemned by the Kremlin.

Moscow denies any

involvement.

technical help.

Environment

Entertainment

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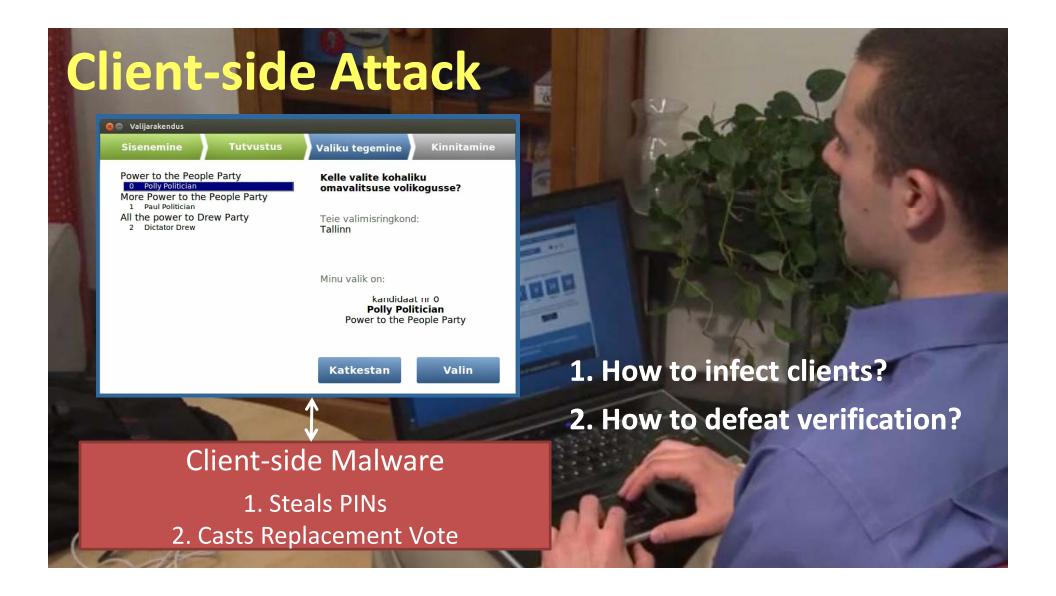
Published time: May 24, 2014 23:02

#### 'Cyber-attack' cripples Ukraine's electronic election

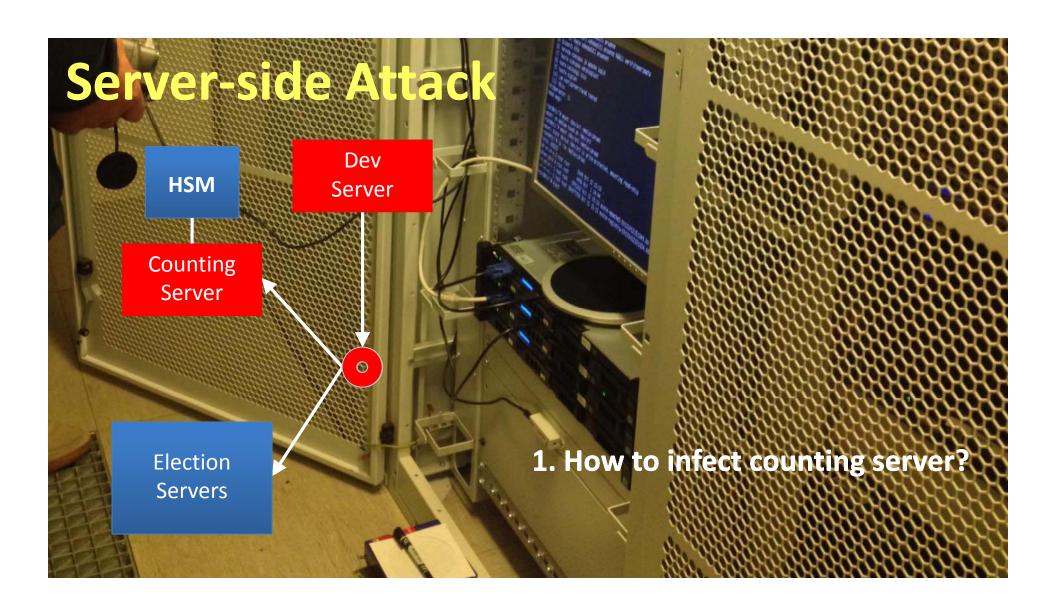
system ahead of presidential vote

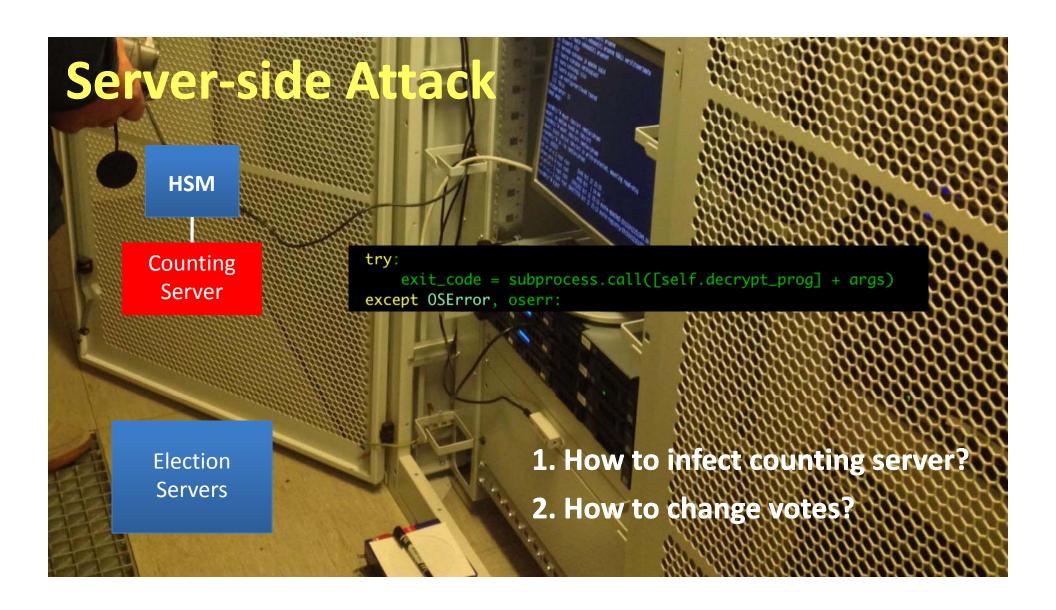


# Implicitly Trusted Components: Voter's Client Counting Server







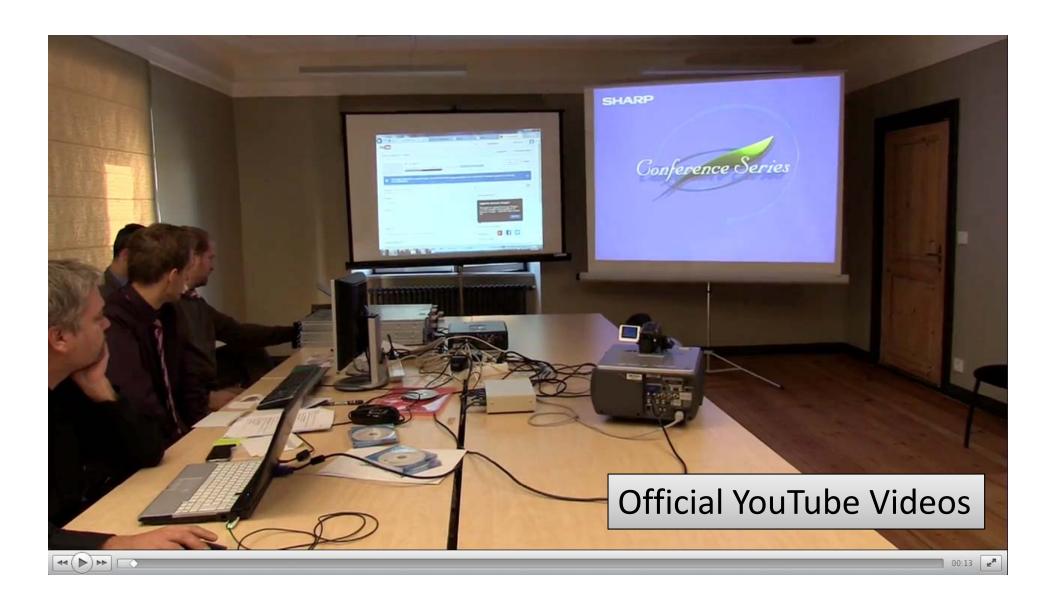


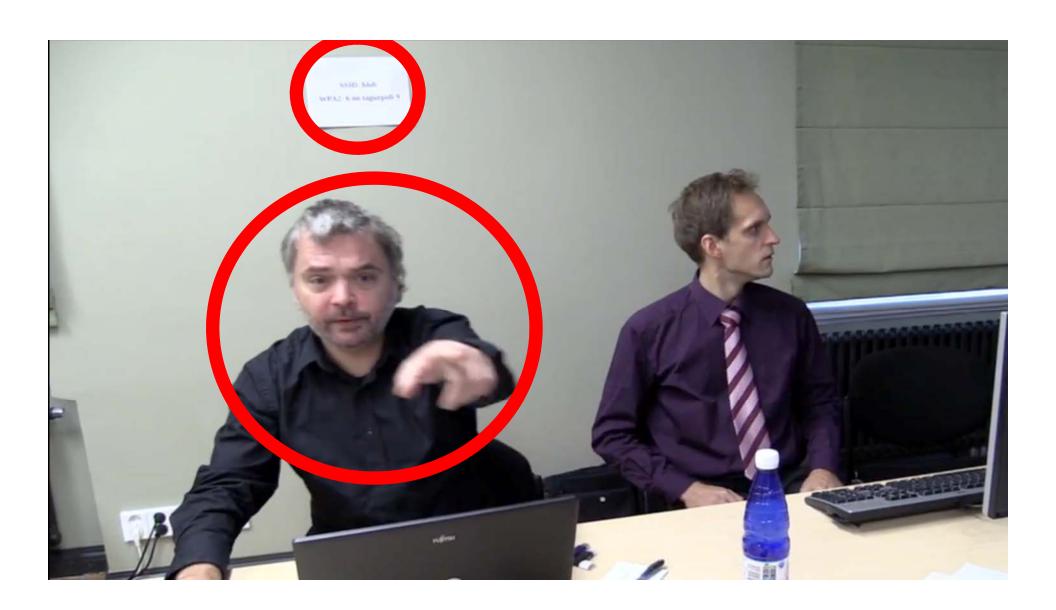
# **Operational Security?**

Our security is better than Google's.

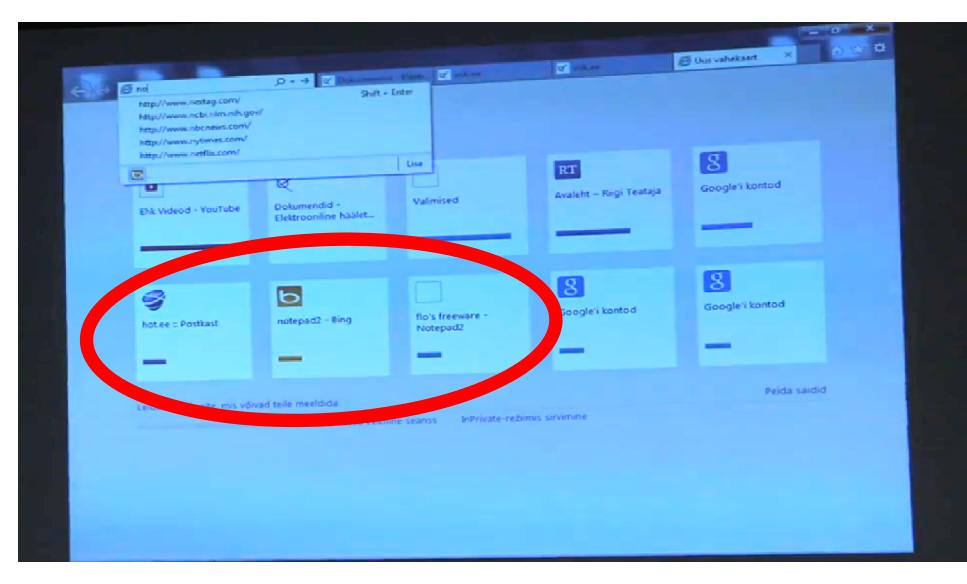
Toomas Hendrik Ilves
 President of Estonia

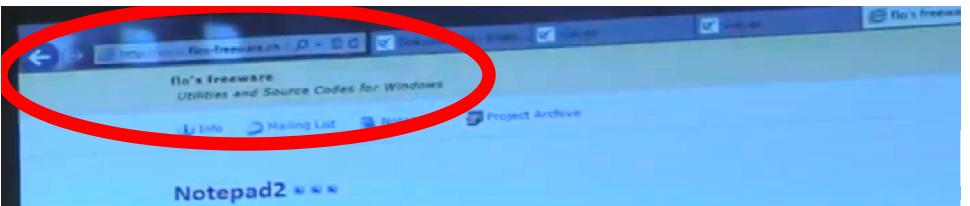












Current Release: Version 4.2.25 Development Version: 5.0.26-betz4 Project last updated: October 28, 2012

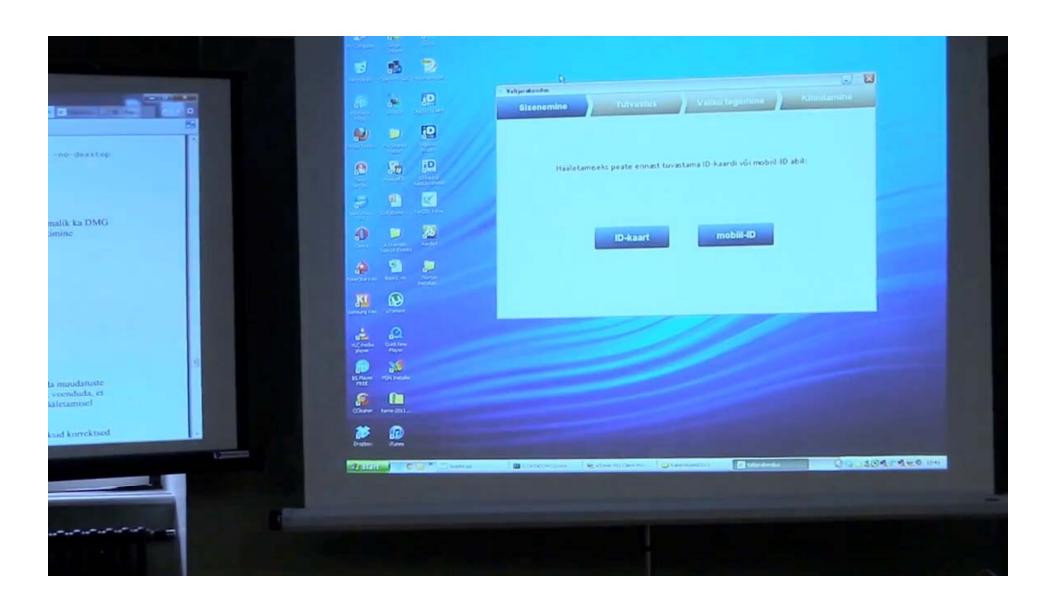
### The Story so far...

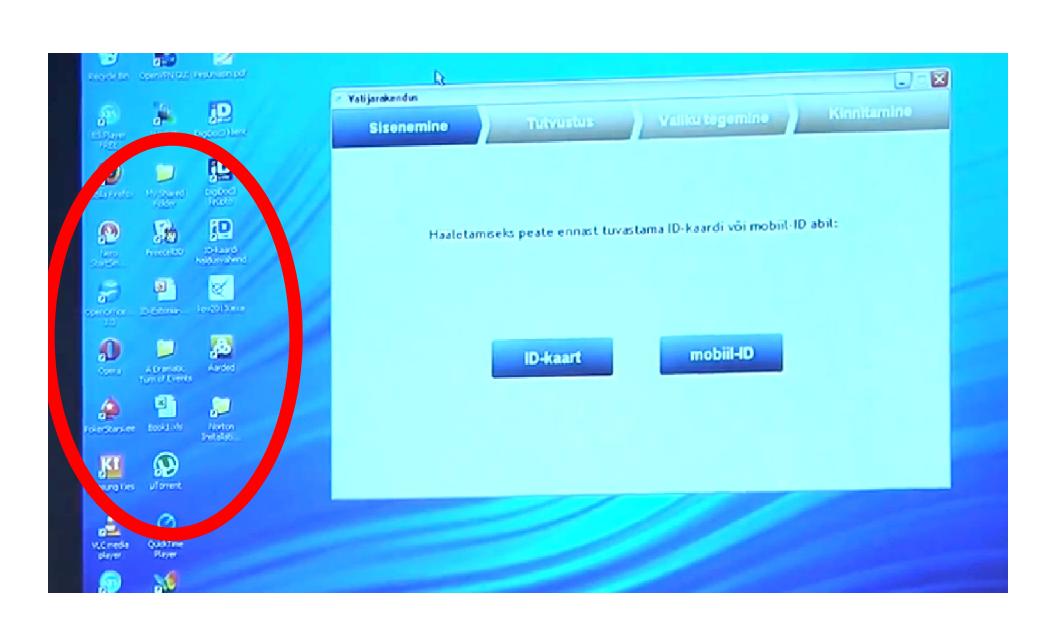
A few years ago, I found myself writing my first PHP projects using metapad \*. When I was looking around fi text editors with syntax highlighting, I have come across the Scintilla # source code editing component. I was very much impressed by this project, so I decided to create my own Scintilla-based text editor.

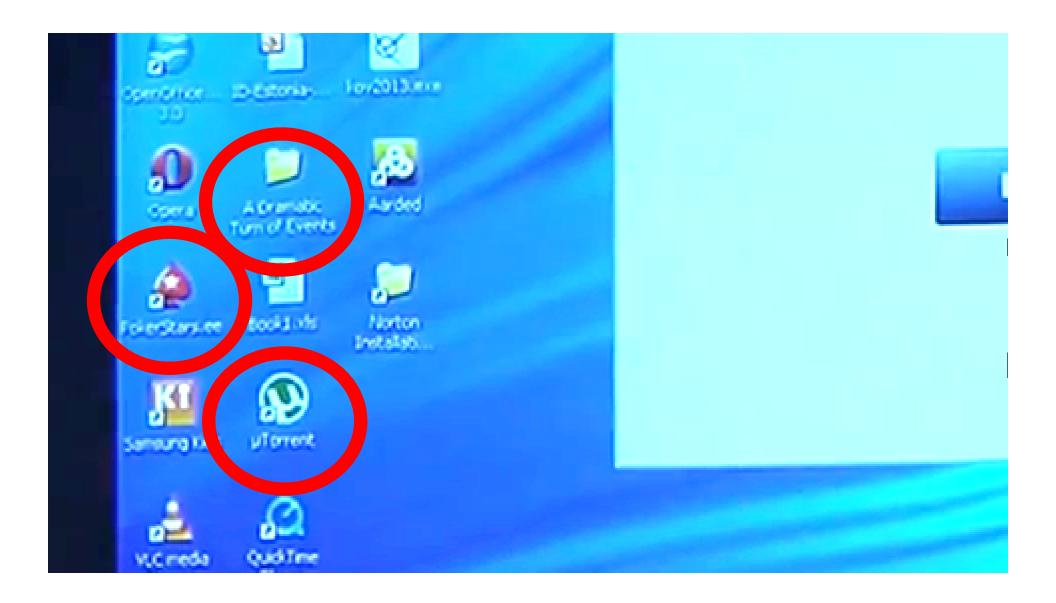
The result is Notepad2, a fast and light-weight Notepad-like text editor with syntax highlighting. This progra can be run out of the box without installation, and does not touch your system's registry.

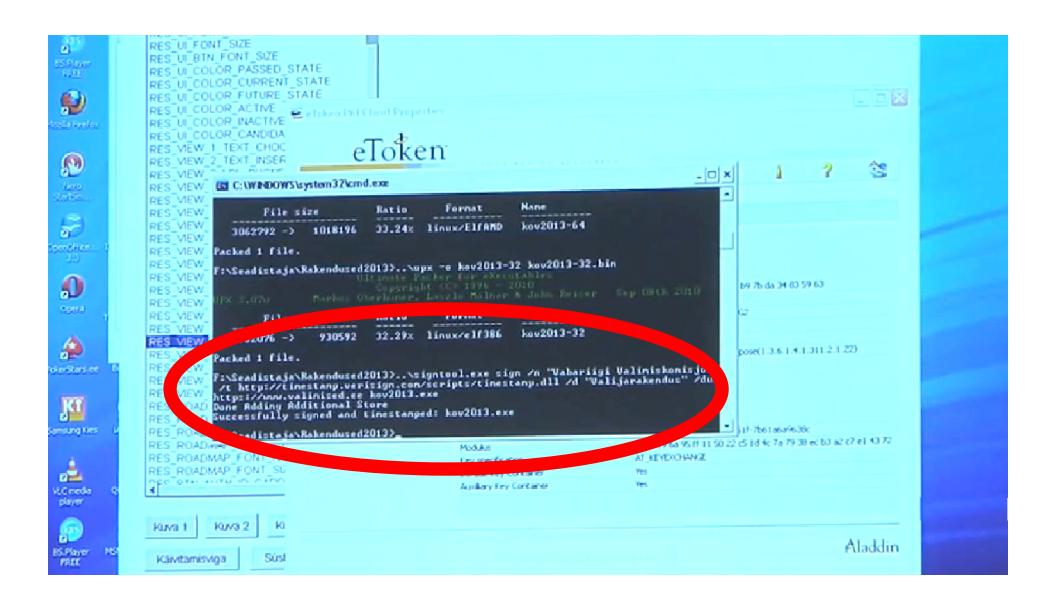
#### Downloads

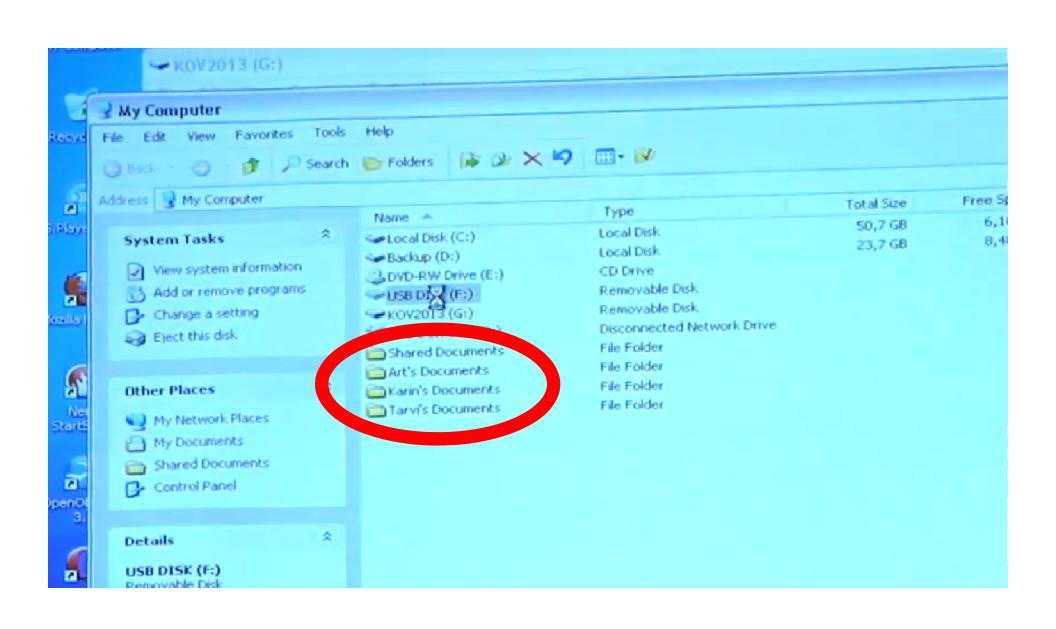
- Download Notepad2 4.2.25 Program Files (x86) [305 KB]
- Download Notepad2 4.2.25 Prograf Files (x64) (371 KB)
- Download Notepad2 4.2.25 Setup (x86) [292 KB)
- Download Notepad2 4.2.25 Setup (x64) [351 KB]
- Download Notepad2 4.2.25 Source Code [217 KB]

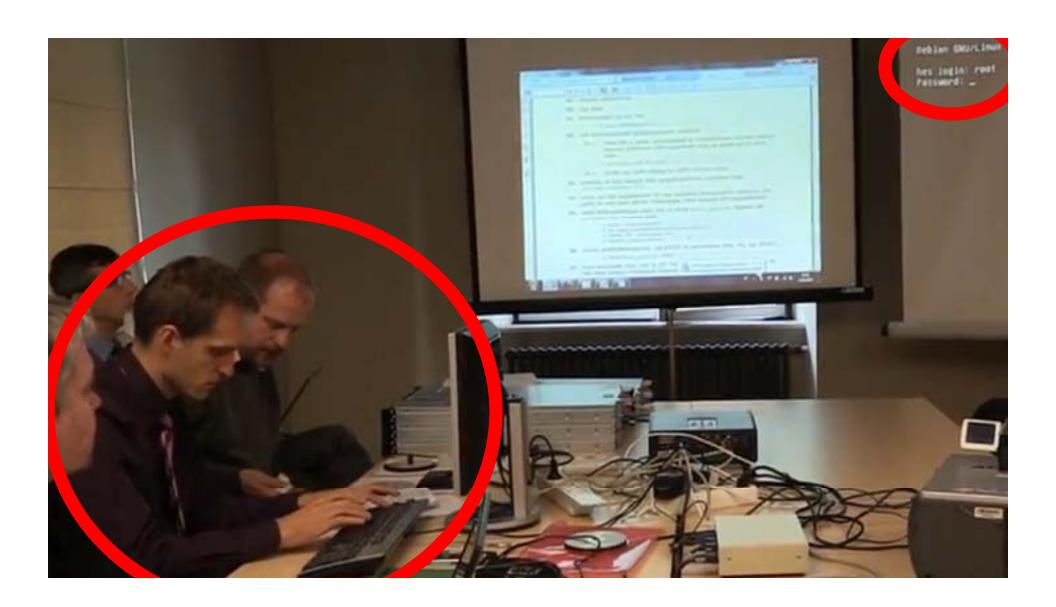


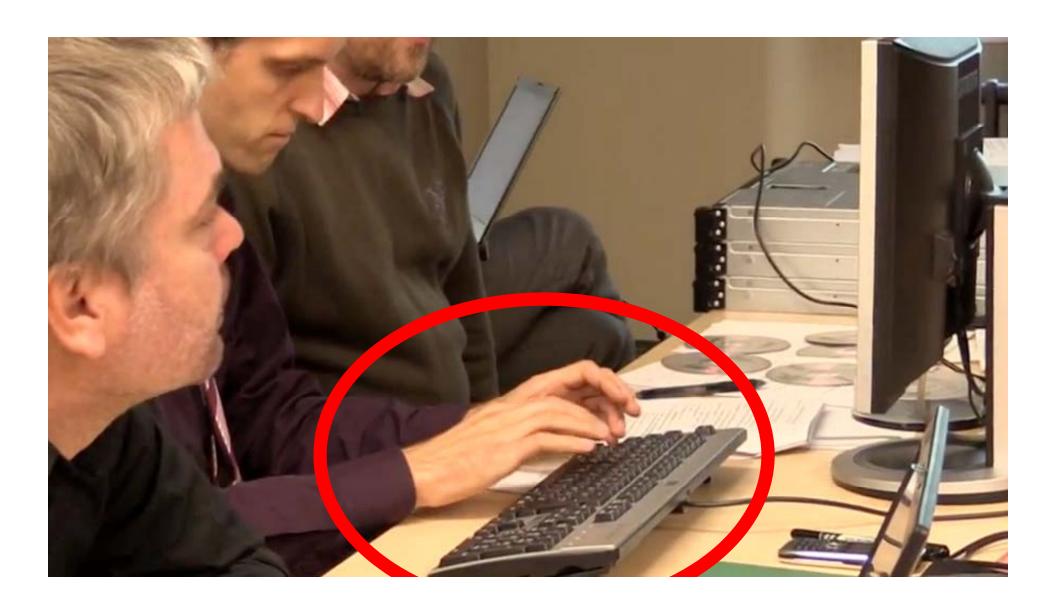


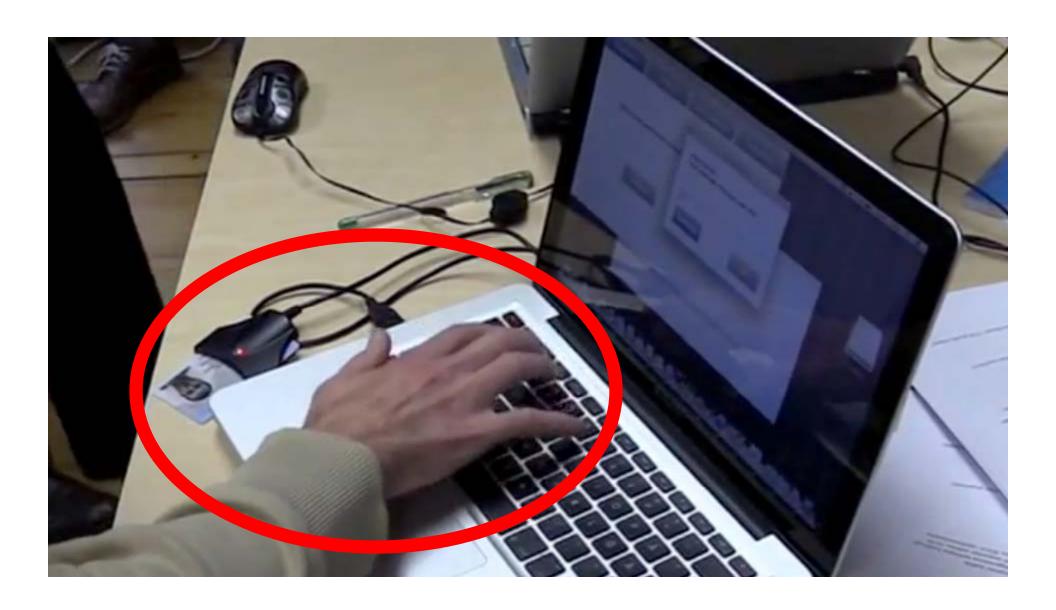




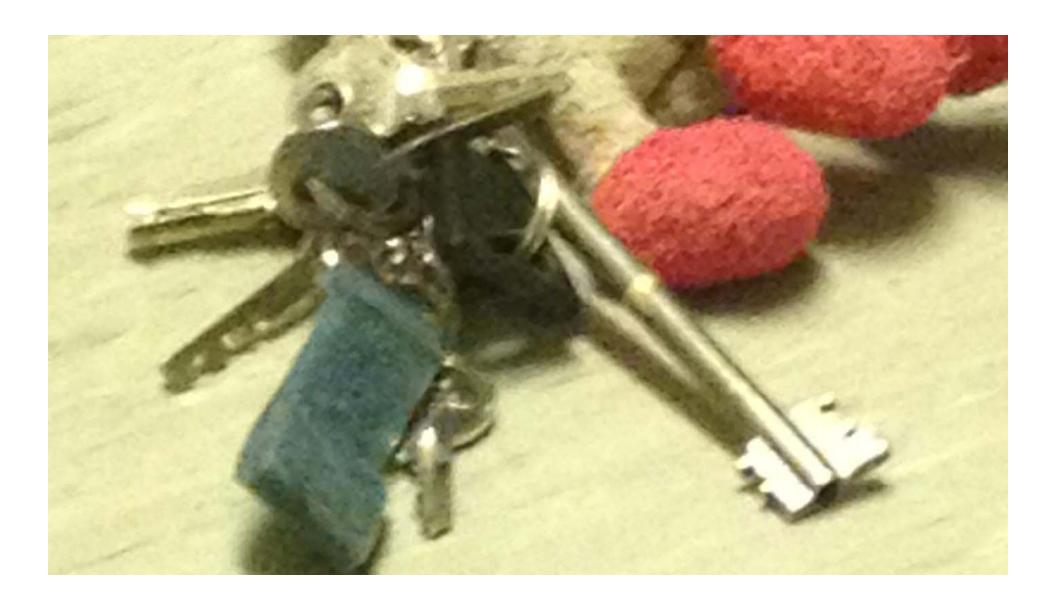


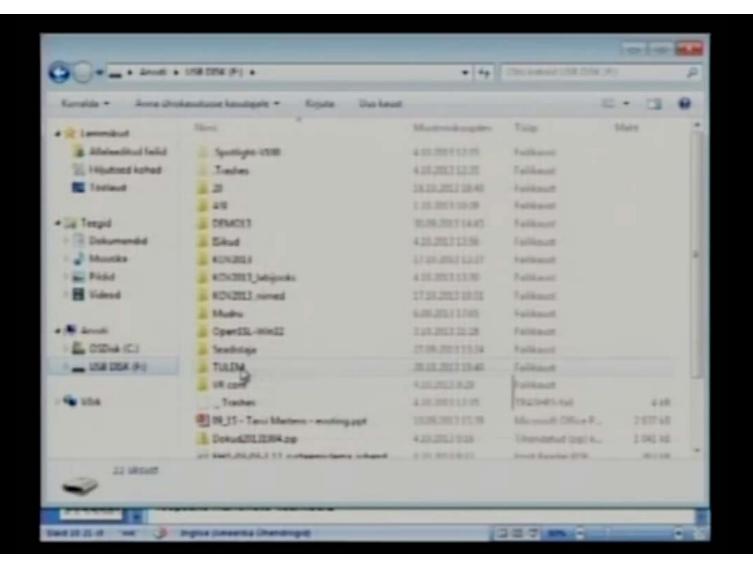






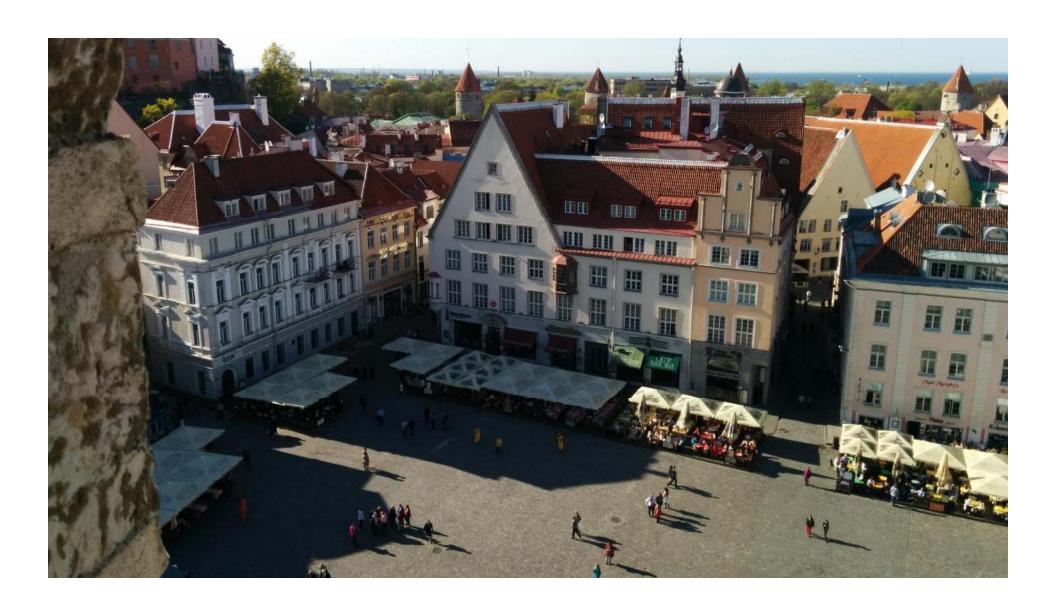






# **Going Public**

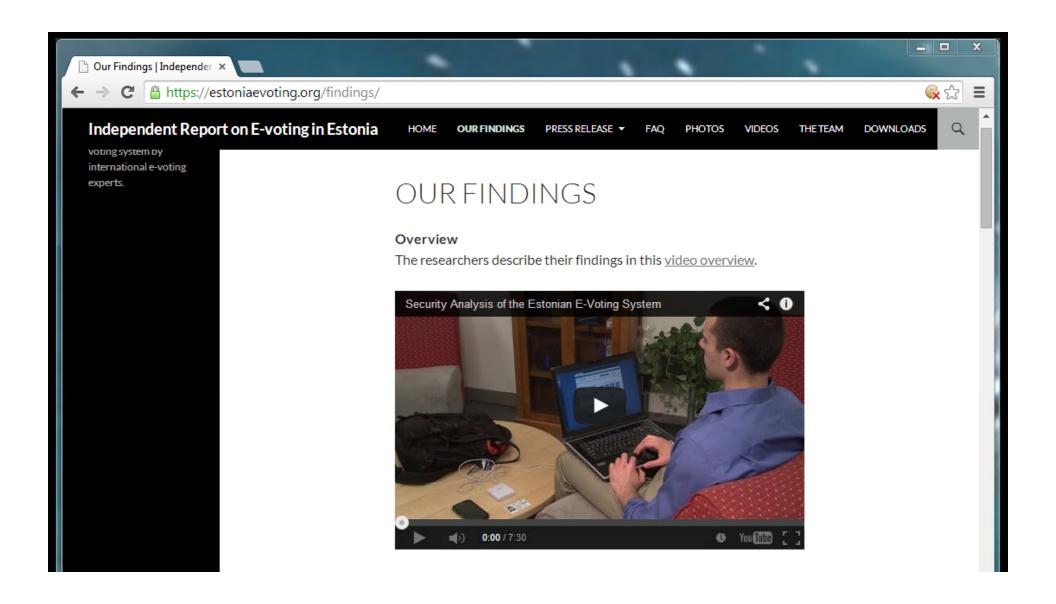












# Security Analysis of the Estonian Internet Voting System

J. Alex Halderman<sup>1</sup> Harri Hursti Jason Kitcat<sup>2</sup> Margaret MacAlpine Travis Finkenauer<sup>1</sup> Drew Springall<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, U.S.A.
<sup>2</sup> Open Rights Group, U.K.

Technical report - May 2014

For additional materials and contact information, visit estoniaevoting.org.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Several countries have experimented with casting votes over the Internet, but today, no nation uses Internet voting for binding political elections to a larger degree than Estonia [38]. When Estonia introduced its online voting system in 2005, it became the first country to offer Internet voting nationally. Since then, it has used the system in local or national elections five times, and during recent elections 20–25% of participating voters cast their ballots online [24].

Rather than proving integrity through technical means, Estonia relies on a complicated set of procedural controls, but these procedures are inadequate to achieve security or transparency. During our in-person observations and in reviewing official videos of the 2013 process, we noted deviations from procedure and serious lapses in operational security, which leave the system open to the possibility of attacks, fraud, and errors. Transparency measures, such as video recordings and published source code, were incomplete and insufficient to allow outsider observers to establish the integrity of results.



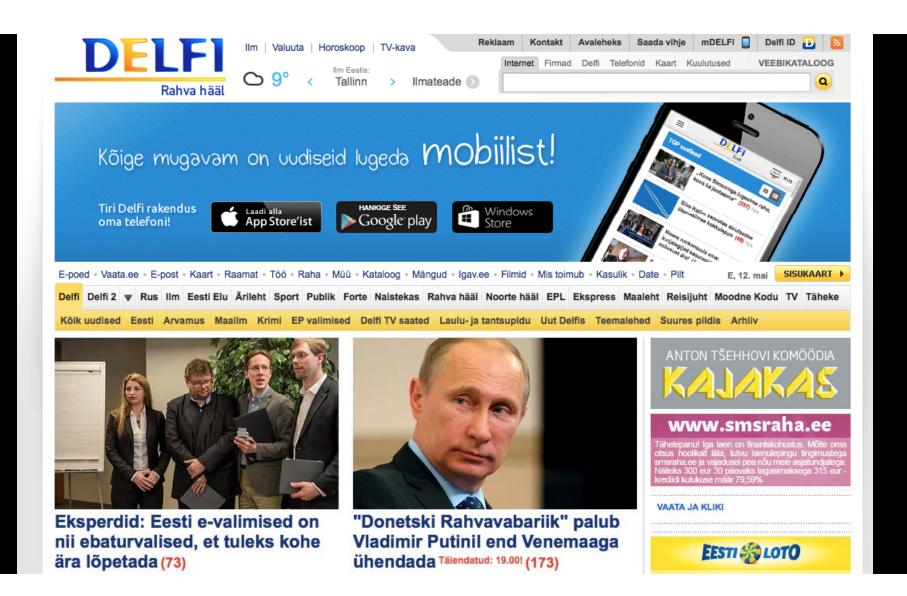
## **Estonian Reform Party**

National Government 30% of Parliament Wealthy, ethnic Estonians



## **Estonian Centre Party**

Tallinn City State
20% of Parliament
75% of non-ethnic Estonians



Kõrval töötsoonis keevitustöödega tegelenud tööline sisenes

kolme asjaolusid alles selgitatakse. • Delfi

Soojaga on oodata nii äikesevihma kui ka tavalist vihma. O Delfi

# Eesti eksperdid: e-valimised pole manipuleeritavad

E-valimiste turvalisuse eest vastutavad eksperdid ei pea tõestatuks end rahvusvahelisteks ekspertideks nimetava seltskonna väiteid, nagu nad suudaks valmisolukorras e-hääletamist Eestis manipuleerida. Tallinna linnavalitsuse initsiatiivil Eestisse kutsuse

tud eksperdid selgitasid, et e-valimiste tulemusi on võimalik lihtsasti ja mitmest kohast pahatahtlikult muuta.

Cybernetica AS tarkvaraarendaja ja e-valimiste üks turvaekspert Sven Heiberg ütles aga, et manipuleeritavusest rääkivad eksperdid on loonud liiga palju eeldusi, mida päriselus on keeruline saavutada.

Elektroonilise hääletamise komisjoni esimees Tarvi Martens kinnitas pärast kritiseerijatega kohtumist, et nende etteheidetes pole midagi uut ja e-hääletamine on turvaline. "Komisjon on esitletud riskidega alati arvestanud ja riskide maandamiseks kasutatakse konkreetseid meetodeid," lausus ta. • ERR

BLRT Grupp Aktsiaselts Erakorralise üldkoosoleku teade

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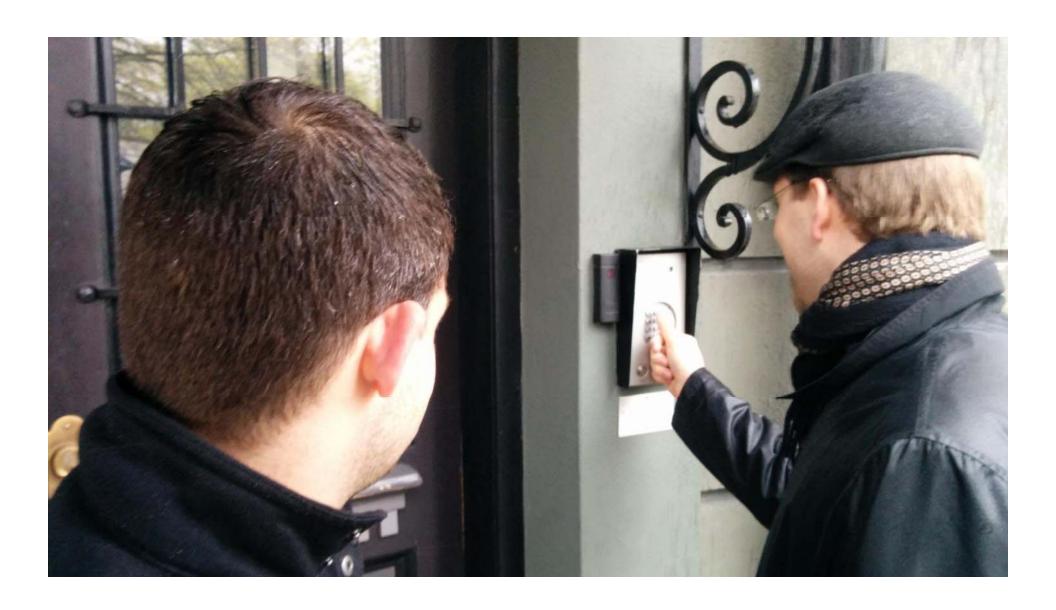
# FEATURES REVIEWS PODCASTS VIDEO FO

#### CORY DOCTOROW



Estonia's online system is horrifically insecure and can't be trusted - Jason Kitcat writes, "I'm currently in Tallinn, Estonia as part of a team of independent security and elections researchers sharing our findings that the Estonian online evoting system has serious flaws. • Play video













I Facebooked those guys. And they're working for my opponents.

— Taavi RõivasPrime Minister of Estonia





Verification app detects all bad behavior.

Why steal votes when you can steal money?

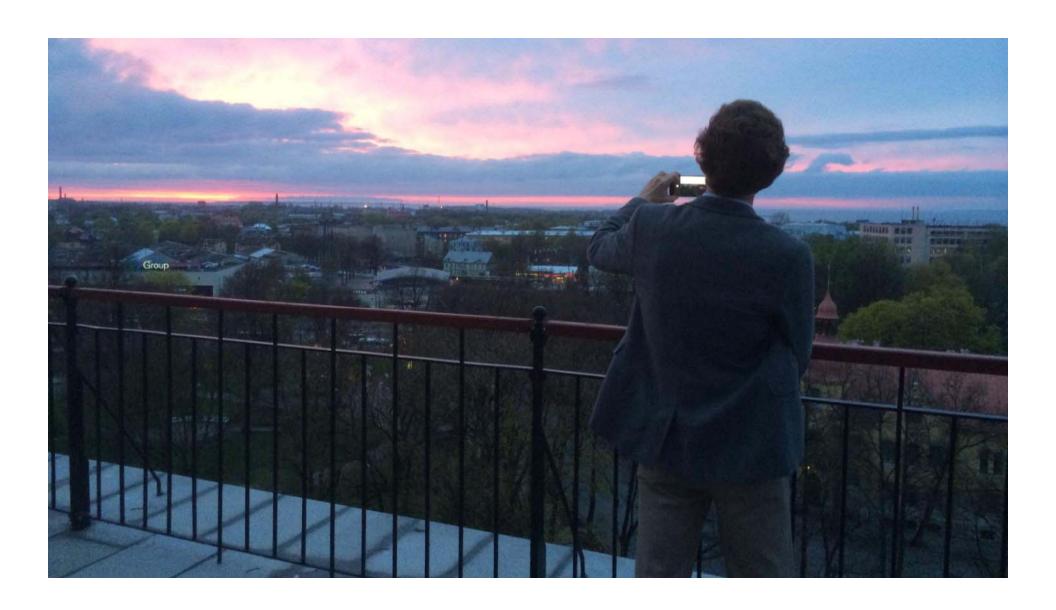
#### **CERT Estonia**



"nice people who care about computer hygiene have no viruses"

"In practice, computer risks have been eliminated"

"they're here not because of their technical savvy, but their politically suitable (although technically incompetent) message"



### Lessons

Estonia's I-voting approach is not secure.

State-level attacks are a rising threat to I-voting.

- National security issue; not a gov't IT problem!

Politics can obscure major technical problems.

Recommendation: Estonia should discontinue Internet voting until fundamental security advances.

### The Internet Voting Problem

Want a voting system where you, or I, or our friends, or Tarvi Martens, or the NSA, or Vladimir Putin can't hack in and dictate the election result.

That's called a democracy!

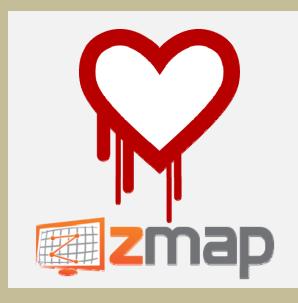
Major fraud should be at least as hard as with paper.

My take: Decades, if ever, until Internet voting can be secured, and not without fundamental advances.

# Security Analysis of the Estonian Internet Voting System EstoniaEVoting.org

J. Alex Halderman University of Michigan jhalderm.com

### More Talks About My Lab's Research



Day 2 22:00 Saal 1

Understanding Heartbleed
with the ZMap Scanner
Zakir Durumeric



Day 3 11:30 Saal G

Security Analysis of a

TSA Naked Scanner

Hovav Shacham/Eric Wustrow



Day 4 14:00 Saal 6 **Building a Free HTTPS CA to Encrypt the Entire Web**Seth Schoen

End-to-End (E2E) Voter-Verifiability

As a voter, I can be sure that:

- My vote is cast as I intended.
- My vote is counted as cast.
- All votes are counted as cast.

Not a secret ballot!



Alice Johnson, 123 Main . . YES Bob Ramirez, 79 Oak . . . . NO Carol Wilson, 821 Market . NO

## **End-to-End Voter-Verifiability**

As a voter, I can be sure that:

- My vote is cast as I intended.
- My vote is counted as cast.
- All votes are counted as cast.
- No voter can demonstrate how he or she voted to a third party.

