

Electronic Voting
Who (or what) will Elect the next US President?

Abstract

The US presidential election occurs one month after this conference. Technology is increasingly used to manage elections around the world and in the US. The last US Presidential election was a disaster of paper technology and human systems. Will technology make democratic elections more or less corruptible? What technologies are available, and what are their strengths and vulnerabilities? Rebecca Mercuri, Research Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, is an expert on electronic voting auditability and security issues; Barbara Simons, Past ACM national President, is an expert on the subject of problems with Internet voting; and Kim Alexander, President of the California Voter Foundation, is an expert on the subject of affecting technology public policy on elections.

The panel will include a moderator plus 2-3 panelists. It will be from 60-90 minutes, consisting of short presentations, moderated discussion, and finally audience Q&A.

Participants

Kim Alexander (invited, not yet confirmed panelist), President of the California Voter Foundation (kimalex@calvoter.org, kimalex@calvoter.org)

Rebecca Mercuri (confirmed panelist), Research Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (mercuri@acm.org, notable@mindspring.com)

Barbara Simons (confirmed panelist), Past ACM national president and an independent technology policy consultant (simons@acm.org)

Amy Pearl (confirmed moderator), Software technology and management consultant

Participant Biographies

Kim Alexander is the president of the California Voter Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization she founded in 1994 to advance new technologies to improve democracy. Alexander's work with CVF has been recognized with several awards and honors. In 2001, she was named one of the "25 People Changing the World of the Internet and Politics" by Harvard University, the American Association of Political Consultants and Politics Online. CVF's web site, www.calvoter.org, won the prestigious Webby Award in 1999, and was also inducted into the Smithsonian Institution's permanent research collection that same year. In 1996 and 1997, Alexander and CVF received the James Madison Freedom of Information Award from the Society of Professional Journalists, Northern California chapter, for efforts promoting online disclosure of campaign contributions. In 1997, she was awarded a Gerbode Fellowship to support her further development as a non-profit director.

Alexander's expertise in the Internet and politics has led to her involvement with studying new voting technology. In 1999, she served on the California Secretary of State's 1999 Internet Voting Task Force, and helped author the task force's 2000 report which has become one of the most valued studies on Internet voting ever produced in the world. She served on the Computers, Freedom and Privacy 2002 Conference Program Committee, and as a judge for the 2001 and 2002 Webby Awards. Alexander has served as the Government and Law category chair for the Webby Awards since 2002. Prior to founding the California Voter

Foundation, Alexander's political experience included three years with California Common Cause, where she researched the role of money in California politics. Alexander has also worked in the California State Capitol and has experience working on political campaigns in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Alexander is a 1988 graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara, with degrees in political science and philosophy.

Rebecca Mercuri is an internationally recognized expert on electronic voting. Her 14 years of study on this subject include her present research affiliation with Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and prior work at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Engineering where she earned her Ph.D. Dr. Mercuri was requested to provide testimony in Florida's infamous Bush v. Gore case and was cited in one of the briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court. She has also given formal comment on voting technology to the U.S. House Science Committee, the Federal Election Commission and the U.K. Cabinet. In her spare time she serves as an emergency (Ham) radio operator and received a commendation for her work with the Red Cross during the 9-11 crisis. For over a decade, Rebecca has also participated in educational events to encourage women's involvement in the computer field.

Barbara Simons, an independent technology policy consultant, a 10-person peer review group assigned to identify potential flaws in the Secure Electronic Registration and Voting Experiment (SERVE) system being built for the U.S. Department of Defense's Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP). The system is being developed as part of a government initiative to make it easier for U.S. armed force personnel, the Merchant Marines and overseas civilians to vote. of the team that analyzed SERVE, full report at <http://www.servesecurityreport.org>.

Amy Pearl, a software technology and management consultant, has over 15 years experience in software research and development in distributed computing. Her areas of responsibility have included software R&D, technical strategy, cross-company technical liaison, and development practices. Other contributions include organizational structuring, and evaluating standards groups, technologies, and companies. Ms. Pearl spent 12 years in R&D at Sun Microsystems. Highlights of her career at Sun include managing Sun's Java 1.0 engineering team through its first product shipment, and spearheading Sun's innovative HotJava Browser effort. Ms. Pearl has been the Director of Internet Engineering at Remedy Corporation and more recently Director of PalmOS Engineering at Palm, Inc. In 1999, Ms. Pearl co-founded and was CEO of an Internet startup, Maketi Corporation. She is currently consulting on software management and innovation with Archer Consulting. Ms. Pearl holds 3 patents and a Masters in Computer Science from Stanford University.

Ms. Pearl's professional activities include Program Chair and General Chair of the Grace Hopper Conference; former Chair of ACM's committee on status of women; Board Member of USACM; National executive committee of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility; Program committee member for ACM's CSCW and Hypertext conferences; and Member of the Dexter Group, a twice-yearly research workshop of early hypertext innovators.