



Pre-Election Audit of Memory Cards for the November 5, 2013 Connecticut Elections

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Summary

The University of Connecticut Center for Voting Technology Research (VoTeR Center) performed pre-election audit of the memory cards for the Accu-Vote Optical Scan (AV-OS) tabulators that were used in the November 5, 2013 elections. The cards were programmed by LHS Associates of Salem, New Hampshire, and shipped to Connecticut districts.

Cards were submitted for two reasons per instructions from the SOTS Office (a) one of the four cards per district was to be selected randomly and submitted directly for the purpose of the audit, and (b) any card was to be submitted if it appeared to be unusable. Given that cards in category (a) were to be randomly selected, while all cards in category (b) were supposed to be submitted, and that the cards were submitted without consistent categorization of the reason, this report considers all unusable cards to fall into category (b).

The VoTeR Center received 62 memory cards from 53 districts. This is a relatively small sample of cards. Among these 62 cards, 41 (66.1%) fall into category (a). All of these 41 cards were correct. There are 21 cards (33.9% of all cards) that were found to be unusable by the AV-OS, thus falling into category (b). In particular, 19 cards contained apparently random (or ‘junk’) data, 2 cards were unusable by AV-OS, but did not contain random data (this requires further investigation). All these cards were unreadable by the tabulators and could not have been used in an election. Given that such cards were not selected randomly, we estimate that for pre-election audit the percentage of unusable cards is between 0.6% and 9.9% and this range is consistent with the results for prior audits.

Cards that fell into category (a) contained valid ballot data and the executable code on these cards was the expected code, with no extraneous data or code on the cards. Overall the audit found no cases where the behavior of the tabulators could have affected the integrity of the elections. We note that the adherence to the election procedures by the districts has improved compared to prior years, however the analysis indicates that the prescribed procedures are not always followed; it would be helpful if reasons for these extra-procedural actions were documented and communicated to the SOTS Office in future elections.

The audit was performed at the request of the Office of the Secretary of the State.

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1 Preface

The University of Connecticut Center for Voting Technology Research (VoTeR Center) conducted pre-election audit of the memory cards used in the Accu-Vote Optical Scan (AV-OS) tabulators in the November 5, 2013 primary elections in the State of Connecticut. The audit was performed at the request of the Office of the Secretary of the State of Connecticut.

The memory cards were programmed by LHS Associates of Salem, New Hampshire, and provided by LHS to the districts in Connecticut. The pre-election audit was performed on the set of 62 memory cards that were shipped to the VoTeR Center by the towns, where the cards should have been randomly chosen for pre-election testing. The cards are tested as they arrive. All pre-election cards arrived at the Center during October and November of 2013. If noteworthy irregularities that might affect integrity or security of ballot tabulation are detected, they are reported to the SOTS Office without delay. Preliminary results were reported to the SOTS Office during the audit.

The memory cards were subject to several integrity tests. A comprehensive overview of the procedures followed by the Center personnel in conducting such technological audits is presented in prior reports^{1 2}. We do not repeat here the description of the engineering that was performed to enable the audit, including the log analysis, and the technical setup used in the tests. For the compilation of the technological audit results for the years 2007 to 2012 please consult our prior reports³.

In this report, we present the objectives of the pre-election audit and the audit results. The audit process included testing, comparison, and analysis of the data collected during the audit. The procedures followed in this audit include a strict chain of custody policy with regard to handling the cards, maintaining a log of all transactions and activities, and safekeeping (both physical and electromagnetic) of the memory cards. This report is a high-level, non-technical presentation of the audit results and it omits technical details. We also note that we did not use any vendor documentation regarding the design and the internals of the AV-OS terminal.

We conclude the report with several observations based on what was learned during the audit process. We believe that technological audits are crucial in maintaining the integrity of the electoral process.

2 Introduction

We start by briefly describing the electronic election system used in Connecticut. We then review the goals of the pre-election memory card audit, and present a preview of the audit results.

2.1 Brief Description of the Election System

The State of Connecticut uses an election system that consists of two main components: the Accu-Vote Optical Scan voting terminal (AV-OS terminal) and the ballot design and central tabulation system called GEMS (Global Election Management System). We point out the following characteristics of these components:

- The AV-OS systems currently in use in the state of Connecticut contain the firmware version 1.96.6. This model is equipped with an optical scanner, a paper-tape dot-matrix printer, a LCD display, a serial communication port, and telephone jacks leading to a built-in modem.

¹ Pre-Election Audit of Memory Cards for the November 2007 Connecticut Elections. UConn VoTeR Center, Version 1.0, January 24, 2008. Available online at <http://voter.engr.uconn.edu/voter/Reports.html>.

² Automating Voting Terminal Event Log Analysis. UConn VoTeR Center, EVT09, Montréal, Québec, Canada, August 2009, available at <http://voter.engr.uconn.edu/voter/wp-content/uploads/evt09.pdf>.

³ Audit and Analysis Reports, URL (<http://voter.engr.uconn.edu/voter/reports/>).

- The GEMS software is installed on a conventional PC (or a laptop). It includes a ballot design system and a tabulation system. Connecticut does not use GEMS for central aggregation of the election results.
- Once the election data is entered into the GEMS system, the specifications of the election are downloaded into a memory card via an AV-OS system connected to GEMS by a serial line cable.
- The memory cards are 40-pin, nominally 128KB cards. The memory card is installed into the 40-pin card slot of the AV-OS. Older (pre-2012) memory cards use an on-board battery to maintain the data on the card. Once the battery charge is depleted, the cards lose their data. This affects memory card reliability, and it is a source of ongoing concern. Recently, non-volatile cards (that do not require a battery) became available. These cards are undergoing testing, and a pilot deployment of such cards started in 2012.

For election deployment the system is secured within a ballot box so that no sensitive controls or connectors are exposed to the voter and unauthorized personnel. Each memory card contains executable code that is used for printing the reports. The code, called *bytecode*, is originally written in a proprietary programming language (AccuBasic). The installation of the GEMS software on a PC system contains several databases that include the data and ballot layout corresponding to each district, as well as the bytecode for AV-OS. See our report for additional details on this election system.⁴

2.2 Goals of the Pre-Election Memory Card Audit

The VoTeR Center prepares for and implements memory card audits at the request of the SOTS.

The pre-election audit has three primary goals: (i) determine whether or not the memory cards are properly programmed for the specific district and specific election, (ii) determine whether or not proper pre-election procedures are followed by the election officials, and (iii) determine whether or not any technical failures occurred.

The memory cards contain the data and the ballot layout for the elections. The memory cards used in the AV-OS terminals also store the tally of the ballots cast and report the results of the election. In this sense the memory cards are the electronic analogue of a physical ballot box. The data, layout, and the functionality of the memory cards are loaded onto each memory card using the AV-OS terminal from the GEMS database. The election-specific GEMS database is also provided by LHS Associates prior to the election to be used as the baseline for the audit.

Prior to the election, each polling center receives four programmed memory cards from the external contractor, LHS Associates. According to the instructions from the SOTS Office, each district is supposed to perform pre-election tests of the four cards. After the testing is complete, they are asked to select randomly one memory card per district and send it to VoTeR Center for the pre-election technological audit. The procedure for random selection of memory cards applies to district-based tabulators and does not include central absentee ballot tabulation. (Sometimes the cards are submitted for the audit before the pre-election test, and sometimes after the pre-election test. This should be made consistent in the future). When the cards are submitted for the audit after they undergo pre-election testing and preparation for the election, such memory cards should be in “election mode” with all counters set to zero.

As the cards arrive from the districts at the Center, the contents of each card is examined to determine whether the data and code on the cards are correct for the given district and election, and whether the pre-election testing was performed and the cards are set for election. This is done by

⁴Security Assessment of the Diebold Optical Scan Voting Terminal, UConn VoTeR Center, October 30th, 2006. Available online at URL: (<http://voter.engr.uconn.edu/voter/Report-OS.html>).

comparing the card contents to the known baseline data received from the external contractor, and by checking the status of the card and its audit log that should contain the timestamped events that correspond to the cards being programmed, tested, and set for election. The analysis of the card data is semi-automated, where the basic analysis is done automatically, and then any noteworthy issues cause additional manual analysis. Any discrepancies or deviations from the baseline are logged and analyzed. Specifically, the memory cards are audited for any deviations in the ballot data/layout, and any deviations in the bytecode (executable). Additionally the state of the counters and the content of the event logs are analyzed for consistency with the expected election procedures. The event logs contain significant events in the life of a card since the last time it was formatted, allowing for such an analysis to be performed.

This audit also includes the analysis of the cards that were submitted by the districts because the cards were unreadable/unusable per instructions from the SOTS Office.

3 Summary of the Pre-Election Audit Results

We now highlight pre-election audit results for the cards that were received and analyzed by the VoTeR Center.

We received 62 memory cards. These cards correspond to 53 distinct districts in Connecticut (for the purpose of this audit, the name ‘district’ denotes any polling or tabulation place for which specifically programmed memory cards are produced). All cards were received during October and November of 2013.

Cards were submitted for two reasons per instructions from the Secretary of the State (SOTS) Office: (a) one of the four cards per district was to be selected randomly and submitted directly for the purpose of the audit, and (b) any card was to be submitted if it appeared to be unusable. Given that cards in category (a) were to be randomly selected, while all cards in category (b) were supposed to be submitted, and that the cards were submitted without consistent categorization of the reason, this report considers all unusable cards to fall into category (b).

We note that the audits did not detect any cards whose data raised concerns about the integrity of tabulation, although high failure rates of memory concerns remains a reliability concern.

Additional details concerning pre-election audit are given in Section 4.

Category (a): Correctly Programmed Memory Cards. For the purpose of this audit we consider a card to be *correct* if it contains the correct election data for the corresponding district, its bytecode is the expected bytecode, and it does not contain any unexplained or extraneous data or code. We note that some correct cards were involved in card duplication; such cards are grouped together with all correct cards, but we note the number of cards that were involved in duplication.

Among the 62 cards received for the pre-election audit, 41 (66.1%) were correct. That is, these cards contained correct election data. This category includes both 39 (62.9%) cards programmed according to the correct procedure, and also the 2 (3.2%) cards whose event logs contain duplication events. All of these cards (including those that were involved in duplication) contained valid ballot data and the executable code on these cards was the expected code.

Category (b): Unusable Cards. The SOTS Office instructed the districts to submit any cards that were found to be unusable by the tabulators to the VoTeR Center. Since these cards were not selected randomly for the audit, and these cards were not identified as the cards submitted in addition to the random audit, they appear in disproportionately high numbers.

The audit identified twenty-one (21) cards, 33.9%, that were unusable by the tabulators.

We estimate that for the pre-election audit the percentage of unusable cards is between 0.6% and 9.9% within the overall card population (this estimated range is broad due to a relatively small number of cards submitted for the audit). This range is consistent with prior observations⁵ and represents a high failure rate. The estimation calculations are given in Section 4.1.

Event log analysis. The pre-election technological audit includes the analysis of the event (or audit) logs on the memory cards. AV-OS records in these event logs certain events that occur during the use of the tabulator. Table 1 presents the action types recorded by AV-OS in the event log along with a brief description. The event log has *action-time* entries and *date* entries. Most action-time entries contain the action name and the time of occurrence (no date). Some action-time entries, i.e., INITIALIZED and SESSION START also add the date.

Event Name	Event Description
AUDIT REPORT	Appears when an Audit Report is printed.
BAL COUNT END	After the ender card is inserted in an election, this action appears.
BAL COUNT START	Appears when the first ballot is cast in an election.
BAL TEST START	Records the beginning of a test election.
CLEAR COUNTERS	Appears when the counters are set to zero.
COUNT RESTARTED	Appears if the machine is reset during an election, after at least one ballot is cast.
DOWNLOAD END	Record the end of data load during the programing of the card using GEMS.
DOWNLOAD START	Recorded the start of data load during the programing of the card using GEMS.
DUPLICATE CARD	Appears when a card duplication takes place (in both the master card and the copy).
ENDER CARD	Records when an ender card is inserted, signifying the end of an election.
INITIALIZED	The 1st action in the Event Log; this action records date.
MEM CARD RESET	A memory card reset returns a card in 'not set' status, if it was set for election.
OVERRIDE	Records an override by a poll worker. Used for overvoted ballots in CT.
POWER FAIL	If the machine is unplugged or a power failure occurs, this action is recorded.
PREP FOR ELECT	Recorded when the card is set for election.
SESSION START	Date action. Appears every time you reset the machine.
TOTALS REPORT	Appears when a Totals Report is printed.
UNVOTED BAL TST	Appears when an unvoted ballot test is performed.
UPLOAD END	When an upload is completed, this action is recorded.
UPLOAD ERROR	Appears when an upload error is detected.
UPLOAD STARTED	Marks the beginning of an upload.
VOTED BAL TEST	Appears when an voted ballot test is performed.
ZERO TOT REPORT	Appears when a Zero Totals Report is printed.

Table 1: Audit log action types

The audit log is analyzed using a program developed for this purpose. The analysis examines the sequence of events reported in the audit log and checks that such sequences are consistent with the expectation of a properly conducted election. For example, one rule is that a zero counters report must precede the election. The report that documents our approach and the log analysis tool is in preparation⁶

The rules implemented in the audit log checker do not cover all possible sequences, and the Center continues refining the rules as we are enriching the set of rules based on our experience with the election audits. For any sequence in the audit log that is not covered by the rules a notification is issued, and such audit logs are additionally examined manually. For the cases when the audit log

⁵For examples consult our report *Technological Audits of Optical Scan Voting Systems: Summary for 2007 to 2010 Connecticut Elections*, VoTeR Center, 2011, at <http://voter.engr.uconn.edu/voter/wp-content/uploads/VC-TechAudits-2007-2010c.pdf>.

⁶L.D. Michel, A.A. Shvartsman, N. Volgushev. *A Systematic Approach to Analyzing Voting Terminal Event Logs*, *Journal of Election Technology and Systems*, to appear, 2014.

is found to be consistent with a proper usage pattern we add rules to the audit log checker so that such audit logs are not flagged in the future.

Some results of the event log analysis are included in the presentation summary earlier in this section. Additional details of the event log analysis are presented in the next sections.

Bytecode analysis for the readable cards. The readable/usable cards include an executable program in the form of *bytecode* that is originally written in the proprietary AccuBasic language. The bytecode governs the printing of the reports. Incorrect bytecode may results in erroneous reporting of the election results.

We have analyzed the bytecode that is loaded into each programmed memory card. Based on the analysis we conclude that the bytecode provided by LHS Associates for the elections is safe to use. The bytecode performs the expected reporting functions. Note that it is not possible to overwrite the contents of the card with the AccuBasic bytecode.

When, and if, a new version of GEMS and the AV-OS firmware will be used in Connecticut, the AccuBasic bytecode analysis support will need to be updated to correspond with the new version.

4 Pre-Election Audit Results: Additional Details

We now present additional details for the pre-election audit. The high level breakdown of the received cards is as follows.

- 62 cards were received for the pre-election audit
- 41 cards were correct (this includes 2 cards that were involved in duplication)
 - 36 cards were set to be used in the elections
 - 5 cards were not set to be used in the elections
- 21 cards were unusable (by AV-OS)
 - 19 cards contained apparently random data ('junk' data)
 - 2 cards were unusable (but the data was not random)

4.1 Overall Card State Analysis (Part a, Card Format)

Table 2 shows the frequency of various states observed on the 62 audited memory cards.

All Cards (62)		
(a) Card Format	Number	% Total
Correct Cards	41	66.1%
Unusable (Junk) Data	19	30.7%
Unusable (Not Junk)	2	3.2%
Totals:	62	100%

Table 2: Memory card analysis summary for all cards received: (a) Card Format.

(a) Card Format: Among the 62 audited cards, 41 cards were readable by AV-OS and usable for elections. These cards were correctly formatted, and contained correct data and code for the specific districts for which they were prepared.

Among these 41 cards, 39 cards (62.9%) were programmed directly using GEMS and contained data matching the baseline. These involved no duplication. 2 cards (3.2%) were involved in duplication, otherwise they contained correct data, matching the baseline.

21 cards (33.9%) were unusable and did not contain data that can be used by the tabulators in the elections. Such cards do not present an immediate security concern. 19 cards (30.7%) contained apparently random ('junk') data and are readily detected through pre-election testing by poll workers, thus they could not have been used in the election. 2 cards (3.2%) were unusable by the AV-OS. Similar to 'junk' cards such cards are readily detected through pre-election testing by poll workers, however the contents are not random data. Such cards are retained for a follow up evaluation.

Estimation of Unusable Cards Percentage: Given that unusable (unreadable by AV-OS for the purpose of elections) cards were not selected randomly, we estimate that for pre-election audit the percentage of unusable cards is between 0.6% and 9.9%. This estimate is made on the basis of the following calculation. We received cards from 53 districts out of the total 820 districts that participated in this election (this includes absentees), where there are four cards per district. The number of unusable cards in the audit is 21. Thus the minimum percentage is calculated as $21/(820 \cdot 4) = 0.6\%$, given that unusable card data does not contain district information. Performing similar calculation for the 53 participating districts, we obtain the maximum percentage as $21/(53 \cdot 4) = 9.9\%$. This estimated range is broad and is not very precise due to the relatively small sample of cards submitted for the audit, however the range is largely consistent with the results from prior audits.

4.2 Analysis of the Readable/Usable Cards (Parts b, c, and d)

We now present the details of the audit for the 41 cards (among the 62 audited cards) that could be used in the elections.

Usable Cards 41		
	Number	% Total
(b) Card Status Summary		
Not Set for Election	5	12.2%
Set for Election	36	87.8%
Totals:	41	100%
(c) Card & Counter Status		
Set For Elections, Zero Counters	36	87.8%
Not Set, Non-Zero Counters	5	12.2%
Totals:	41	100%
(d) Card Duplication (2)		
Master Card	2	100%
Totals:	2	100%

Table 3: Memory card analysis summary: (b) Card Status, (c) Card Record of Electoral Procedure, and (d) Card Duplication.

(b) Card Status Summary: Here status refers to the current state of the memory card, for example, loaded with an election, set for election, running an election, closed election, and others.

36 cards (87.8%) were in Set For Election state. This is the appropriate status for cards intended to be used in the elections.

5 cards (12.2%) were in Not Set for Election state. This status would be appropriate prior to preparation for an election, but not prior to an election. This suggests that the corresponding districts sent these cards for the audit without first finalizing the preparation for the election. This is not a security concern, but an indication that not all districts submit cards at the right time (that is, after the completion of pre-election testing and preparation of the cards for the elections).

(c) Card and Counter Status: Here additional details are provided on the status of the counters on the usable cards. The expected state of the cards following the pre-election testing is Set for Elections with Zero Counters.

All of the 36 cards (87.8%) that were found in Set For Election state had Zero Counters. This is the appropriate status for cards intended to be used in the elections.

5 cards (12.2%) were in Not Set for Election state and had Non-Zero Counters. This is not an expected state prior to an election. This suggests that the cards were subjected to pre-election testing, but were not set for elections prior to their selection for the audit. This situation would have been detected and remedied if such cards were to be used on Election Day as the election cannot be conducted without putting the cards into election mode.

Taking the above percentages together, it appears that all districts (87.8% + 12.2% = 100%) performed pre-election testing as required before submitting the cards for the audit.

(d) Card Duplication: The only authorized source of the card programming in Connecticut is the external contractor, LHS Associates. The cards are programmed using the GEMS system. Card duplications are performed using the AV-OS voting tabulator; one can make a copy (duplicate) of a card on any other card by using the tabulator's duplication function. SOTS polices do not allow the districts to produce their own cards by means of card duplication.

Card duplication is a concern, as there is no guarantee that duplication faithfully reproduces cards, and it masks the problem with card reliability. Additionally, it is impossible to determine with certainty who and why resorted to card duplication.

There were 2 cards involved in duplication. All 2 cards (100%) were *master* cards used for duplication.

Given the SOTS polices, the districts must not be producing their cards locally. If a district finds it necessary to duplicate cards, they need to make records of this activity and bring this to the attention of the SOTS Office.

4.3 Event Log Analysis Results

Here we present the result of the event log analysis for all the usable cards. Out of the 41 correct⁷ cards, 41 (100.0%) cards were flagged because their event logs did not match our sequence rules.

The event log analysis produced 48 notifications. Note that a single card may yield multiple notifications. Also recall that not all notifications necessarily mean that something went wrong – a notification simply means that the sequence of events in the audit log did not match our (not-all-inclusive) rules. We next present the details of the analysis.

⁷Correct cards are those that contain correct programming for the current election. Usable cards exclude those containing data unreadable by the tabulators, unprogrammed cards, and cards programmed for different elections.

4.3.1 Out-Of-Bounds Dates

This notification indicates that an event sequence in the log contains events that occurred outside of the expected chronological boundaries. For our analysis we dated the following chronological stages of an election: (a) Election Initialization, (b) Test Election, and (c) Preparation for Election.

The notification statistics for each stage appear in Table 4.

Out-of-Bounds Dates	Cards Usable for the Election			
	# Warn.	% Warn.	# Cards	% Usable
Sequence: Initialization	41	85.4 %	41	100%

Table 4: Pre-Election Event Log Analysis Results – Out-of-Bounds Dates

(a) **Initialization: 41 cards contained unexpected initialization times.**

Card initialization is performed by LHS. We expect this process to start and complete no more than two months and no less than two weeks respectively before the election day. Thus, for these elections we expected initialization to be performed between 09/05/2013 and 10/22/2013. Our assumptions for the sequencing of events are based on the SOTS documentation⁸.

We discovered that the initialization date of the correct cards (100%) fell outside of the assumed period. We have determined that this is apparently due to the fact that the AV-OS machine used for initializing these cards at LHS does not have its date/time set correctly because the clock component was removed from the LHS tabulator(s). The result is that the date of initialization appears as 00/00/127 in the even log of all correct cards. We reiterate that it is important that all AV-OS tabulators have the date/time set correctly as this continues to be an issue from the previous election. The SOTS Office requested that LHS restore the clock in their tabulators and set the time/date correctly.

(b) **Test Elections: No cards were tested at unexpected times.**

(c) **Preparation for Election: No cards were prepared for elections at unexpected times.**

4.3.2 Many Instances of Events

The log analysis sets certain bounds on the number of events. Some of these bounds are ad hoc, for example, the analysis flags any card whose event log contains more than 30 Session Start events. (These indicate that a tabulator was reset; such action does not interfere with ballot counting.) Other bounds are determined by the policies and procedural rules, such as that no card duplication events are allowed, thus one or more duplication events result in a notification.

Table 5 lists such events along with the expected number of appearances and suggested maximums. The statistics for all such notifications appear in Table 6.

(a) **2 cards contained event “DUPLICATE”:** This event indicates that the cards were produced not by the expected process (i.e., programmed from GEMS), but rather by duplication of another card. These cards appear in Table 7. We already discussed card duplication in Section 4.2.

⁸ For example, “Marksense Voting Tabulator”, Section 9-242a-5, states that memory cards should be tested “as soon as ballots and ballot cards are available and not later than the tenth day before the election or primary”. Hence, the testing of the cards must be completed no later than the tenth day before the election, and the initialization at least two weeks in advance. The document can be found at http://www.ct.gov/sots/lib/sots/legislativeservices/regulations/12_opscanusereg.pdf.

Event Name	Expected No.	Suggested Max.	Description
SESSION START	≥ 3	30	Tabulator is turned on (e.g., 3 times: for initialization, testing, and election)
POWER FAIL	0	10	Tabulator switches to backup battery as the result of a main power failure
AUDIT REPORT	0	5	Audit report is printed
COUNT RESTARTED	0	0	Tabulator is restarted while in election mode and counting is resumed
MEMORY CARD RESET	0	0	The card is reset to a pre-election state following/during an election
DUPLICATE	0	0	The contents of the memory card are copied to another card

Table 5: Events in an election timeline that may indicate a problem.

Flagged Number of Instances	Cards Usable for the Election			
	# Warn.	% Warn.	# Cards	% Usable
DUPLICATE (none allowed)	2	4.2%	2	4.9%

Table 6: Event Log Analysis Results - Many Instances of Events

Card Name	Observed
CHESHIRE-DISTRICT_7-0003027	1
GREENWICH-DISTRICT_9-0002532	1

Table 7: Cards involved in duplication.

4.3.3 Miscellaneous Warnings

Table 8 reports the notification that were issued for cards caused either by unexpected events appearing in some event log sequences, or when an event occurred beyond the scope of rules covered by the current audit log analysis. In the latter case additional events appear in the log, after all the rules are satisfied.

The following cards resulted in such warnings:

Card Name	No. of Warnings
DURHAM-DISTRICT_1-0002393	1
ENFIELD-DISTRICT_1-0001783	1
ENFIELD-DISTRICT_2-0001795	1
ENFIELD-DISTRICT_3-0001799	1
ENFIELD-DISTRICT_4-0001812	1

The (manual) examination of the event log did not reveal security or integrity issues. All 5 cards were not prepared for election. We expect all cards to be in the Set For Election state prior to an election. This is a deviation from the election procedures.

Sequence Inconsistencies	Cards Usable for the Election			
	# Warn.	% Warn.	# Cards	% Usable
Action Missing	5	10.4%	5	12.2%

Table 8: Pre-Election Event Log Analysis Results – Sequence Inconsistencies

5 Addressing Memory Card Reliability

We estimated the overall percentage of the cards that are not usable in the election to be between 0.6% and 9.9% for the pre-election audit. None of these cards are readable by the tabulators, and as such they do not pose a security concern: such cards are detected as unformatted cards by the tabulators and they cannot be used in the election. However, this high failure rate, consistent with prior observations⁹, is a reliability issue.

Our earlier investigation determined that the primary reason for memory card failures is depleted batteries. Once the battery’s store of energy is depleted, the cards lose their data. The electrical properties of the batteries are such that the battery voltage output can decrease precipitously as the battery reaches the end of its service life. Therefore one cannot expect to rely on the low battery warning system built into the AV-OS. Battery depletion may happen within days after a card was programmed and tested. Thus even if a card is successfully programmed, it can fail before it is tested prior to an election, or at any time after it is successfully tested.

New non-volatile (battery-less) memory card was recently developed by the vendor. Our preliminary analysis of this card confirmed that it is compatible with AV-OS systems deployed in Connecticut. A pilot deployment of the new cards in April, 2012 was done in the Town of Vernon using 12 of the new cards. The cards performed well, no failures were detected, and no such cards lost their data. However this is a very small sample of cards. We are currently performing in-depth testing of the non-volatile cards and as of this writing the results are encouraging.

A broader pilot is being planned by the SOTS Office to occur in the near future. The use of the new card should eliminate the major cause of memory card failures.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall the audits did not detect any cards whose data raised concerns about the integrity of tabulation. However we note that the number of cards submitted for this audit is small relative to prior years. We make the following concluding remarks and recommendations.

- The SOTS Office should continue publicizing proper procedures and continue offering training. In particular, to reinforce the need to prepare all cards for election prior to the election day and prior to the pre-election audit.
- Fewer cards are being duplicated at the districts, and it is important to continue reiterating that cards must never be duplicated. Any cases of duplication should be recorded in the moderators’ logs and be brought to the attention of the SOTS Office with a documented explanation of why this is necessary.
- It is important for the districts to report any problems during pre-election testing (and any card problems) to the SOTS Office as soon as possible upon completion of the tests. In particular,

⁹ See the summary of pre-election audits performed from 2007 to 2010 at: <http://voter.engr.uconn.edu/voter/wp-content/uploads/VC-TechAudits-2007-2010c.pdf>.

if a tabulator offers to format a card (this happens when the card is unusable), the district should not format the card, but contact the SOTS Office.

- It is important for the districts report to the SOTS Office any unexpected behavior of the tabulators that seem to necessitate a restart or a memory card reset. It would be helpful if moderators' logs contained records of machine restarts, perceived causes, and reasoning for the restart or reset. There was at least one documented case of a tabulator malfunction during this primary election. In such cases it is strongly recommended that the problematic tabulator is tested by the Center personnel (either at the district or in our laboratory).
- The current number of cards with unreadable data (junk data) continues to be high. Previously we have determined that weak batteries are the primary cause of this (although there appear to be a few cards that fail despite having fresh batteries). The vendor developed a new non-volatile, battery-less memory card, and our ongoing evaluation continues to confirm their compatibility with the AV-OS machines used Connecticut. A limited pilot using the new cards was successfully performed. It is expected that a broader pilot deployment of the new cards by the SOTS Office will occur in the near future. The use of the new card should eliminate the major cause of memory card failures.
- It is important that cards sent for the pre-election audit are selected at random. One card randomly selected from four cards in each district is to be randomly selected for the audit. While the districts are encouraged to submit all malfunctioning cards to VoTeR Center, all such cards need to be identified separately from the cards randomly selected for the audit.

When a sufficiently large collection of cards is selected randomly for audit, the results of the audit meaningfully represent the overall State landscape and help identify technological and procedural problems that need to be solved. Should the selection not be at random, for example, by avoiding sending duplicated cards in for audit, the results are less representative, and may lead to masking technological problems. Therefore training should continue stressing the need to submit appropriate cards for the pre-election audit.

- Lastly, it is important that the date and time of the AV-OS tabulators are set up correctly at LHS and at the districts. If this is not done correctly, the appearance may be created that the cards were not used consistently with the proper conduct of an election. We have determined that the clock was removed from the LHS tabulators used to program cards for Connecticut. This is the main cause of incorrect dates/times in the memory cards. The SOTS Office addressed this issue with LHS and LHS responded that this will be rectified in time for future elections.

[End]