# Electronic Voting Project Announcement

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## 1 Silicon Valley Computer Scientists Team Up To Demonstrate Free Voting Machine

Scientists and engineers from the Silicon Valley have started a project aimed at developing a PC based voting machine they claim will be easier to use, more tamper-resistant, and cheaper than commercially available voting machines.

The target for completion of the demonstration project is mid-October. If successful and fully funded, certified ready-to-use software could be available in about a year.

Computerized voting offers many advantages over traditional systems, including,

- The ability to easily handle multiple languages

- Meeting the needs of voters with disabilities

- Eliminates problems such as overvoting and other voter intent issues.

High quality refurbished PC's that are only one generation old exist in great abundance and have more than enough power to make great voting machines. More than 25 million such PCs are retired annually in the United States alone. Less than 10 percent of these PCs would be needed for all the voting booths in the U.S.

The concept has already been demonstrated in Australia where, in 2001, the Australian Capital Territory government commissioned the development of open source software to run on trailing-edge PCs set up in polling places as voting machines.

The current open source software development project, known as EVM, includes participants from around the United States as well as developers from overseas. EVM will differ from the Australian system in several ways. Most importantly, the machine will include a printer from which a completed paper ballot will be produced. It will work with either a touch screen PC monitor or a regular PC monitor and mouse.

The project developer, Alan Dechert, got EVM going with help from Stanford computer scientist David Dill, who referred several people to him. Arthur Keller, a UC Santa Cruz computer science professor, recruited one of his former students, Adrianne Yu Wang of San Jose, to be the Team Lead. Along with Ed Cherlin of Cupertino and Jack Walther of Santa Cruz, they chose to use the Python computer language for development of the demonstration system. Douglas W. Jones, a University of Iowa computer science professor and world-renowned expert on voting technology, is taking a very active role as advisor and mentor.

Other volunteers include Dr. David Mertz of Massachusetts, a well-known writer on computer programming issues, who has also taken a very active role. Additional key people include QA Lead Matt Shomphe of Los Angeles, and Lead Developer Anand Pillai of Bangalore, India. Van Lindberg (Utah), Skip Montanaro (Illinois), Dennis Paull (California), and Matteo Giacomazzi (Italy) are all contributing their expertise to the project.

Jay Tefertiller, Ben Strednak, and Steve Gardner of ISIS Technology (Oklahoma City) are developing the non-proprietary hardware design, and working on establishing a trade association, tentatively called the "Open Voting Consortium," that will establish and maintain high standards for the open voting hardware.

The EVM project is using the services offered at SourceForge.net, the world's largest Open Source software development web site, to store source code and documentation, track issues, and manage the project. Developers want to demonstrate a voting system where all components are open for public inspection and debate. Consistent with this idea, all aspects of the development of the software are open to the public also. The direct URL for the project is at,

http://sourceforge.net/projects/evm2003

The demonstration standalone voting machines will be set up at strategic locations, for example, in the Silicon Valley area and Sacramento. A web based version will also be available so that anyone with Internet access can try out the look and feel of the system.

EVM project proponents hope that this successful demonstration project will lead to a very large well-funded academic study that will capitalize on other efforts to bring about a modern, reliable, affordable, uniform, and fully auditable voting system. While designed to be certified in the United States first, it will be built from the ground up as an international voting machine. The larger study will include not only the development of voting machine software, but all software necessary for election administration, and an Election Rules Database that will document all election rules in effect in all jurisdictions in the United States.

## 2   More background information can be found here:

http://home.earthlink.net/~adechert

### 2.1   If you want to help with the EVM project, contact,

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### 2.2   To receive updates about EVM via email, write to

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