

# A Complete Approach to Understanding Election Security and Integrity

BROUGHT TO YOU BY SOCH

# A Complete Approach to Understanding Election Security and Integrity

When building a skyscraper, you don't start constructing it from the top down. That would be impossible and absurd at best. We all know that in order to build a strong and secure structure, you need to start at the bottom; you have to establish a strong foundation in order to have a structure with integrity. Skyscrapers require a very deep foundation; in some cases, the foundation is nearly half the size of the building that is above ground. These enormous buildings can be seen from over three miles away at ground level and the closer you get to one, the larger and more complex it becomes with every detail.

Similarly, with the designation of elections as critical infrastructure, elections have caught the eye of our country. The process of conducting an election can no longer happen behind closed doors (nor should they). A country that once largely trusted the process has had many powerful leaders, organizations and laypersons sow many seeds of doubt, discord and distrust. As a result, election administration can no longer operate under the radar, and the closer someone gets to the process, the greater the intrigue with every nuance encountered along the way.

Even though a strong foundation is what allows a building to be resilient to external forces such as wind, rain and the earth's movement (and if not properly established the entire structure could ultimately fail) that isn't what the vast majority think about when they walk by a skyscraper. Passerbys see the magnificent structure that is above ground and their perception of the building is based on what they see. We will unpack "perception" later, but first we must deeply understand that on which the foundation of election security depends.

A strong security posture should incorporate, at a minimum, all the critical and high priority protections as identified by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) that are vital for establishing cyber and physical security resiliency. Further, since the backbone of our elections fundamentally rests on two variables, those that participate (our voters) and the votes that are cast by those participating, it is imperative that we focus on protecting systems currently in place that manage both our voters and the votes they cast. These two variables depend completely on the strength of our cyber and physical security posture.

## Generally, there are two ways to get started.

# 1

The first is using what you probably already know. You've likely heard of the free services offered by the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), such as cyber hygiene scans. Start by working with CISA to implement those scans. Or, everyone should know by now that multi-factor authentication is a strong security measure. Implement multi-factor authentication on your critical election management systems, and any other connected system as soon as reasonably possible.

# 2

The second way to get started is to build on what you already know by conducting a self-assessment that will likely bring to light security components you have not thought of yet. For example, do you have Malicious Domain Blocking and Reporting (MDBR) in place? And, did you know that the Center for Internet Security (CIS) offers MDBR as a free service? If not, work with CIS to get MDBR implemented.

Keep in mind that you can continue to move forward with what you know and a self-assessment simultaneously. The self-assessment will help to identify other areas that need attention. Most states and localities rely on standards developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to develop their baseline, but there are other tools available that will assess, and help you strengthen, your security posture.

**Conducting a self-assessment will ensure you're aware of every potential vulnerability in your physical and cyber security infrastructure. Self-assessments will bring to light critical areas such as:**

1. Do you have an incident response plan in place?
2. Are vulnerability detection and protection software being utilized?
3. Are your voting system storage locations under 24hr surveillance?
4. Do you have restricted access to your voting system storage locations and at the polling sites on election day?

“

**It is imperative that we focus on protecting systems currently in place that manage both our voters and the votes they cast.**

**Addressing foundational issues** in your election security posture can be implemented without having to overhaul your election processes currently in place. **Being honest** about your security posture may seem frightening, but once you **establish your baseline**, no matter how grim it may seem, you can implement a path forward that will better insulate your election processes from the ground up. As a former state election director, one of the more difficult feats was gaining visibility into how our localities were doing with their physical and cybersecurity posture. **Self-assessments bring awareness and visibility** so you can strategically target areas needing the most immediate attention.

Once our foundation has been established, we can now focus on the perception. And, arguably, the **perception may be more critical**, certainly as it relates to increasing voter confidence and trust in our democracy.

## **WE WANT OUR CITIZENS TO TRUST OUR ELECTION OFFICIALS AND OUR DEMOCRACY.**

### **Perception - When Seeing is Believing**

As already discussed, the foundation of election security is our physical and cyber security posture. However, security has many facets to it and should not be misconstrued as only being associated with physical and cybersecurity resiliency.

Though the physical and cybersecurity components are the backbone and critical to the foundation of election security, it is specific to the actual systems and data and its integrity, protection and recovery. There are other aspects that are likely more important to the public.

The last two presidential election cycles proved our nation's trust in democracy rests on our belief in the integrity of the electoral process by which our nation's leaders are elected to represent their citizenry.

Even though national security experts have said that the 2020 election was the most secure election in our nation's history, and the 2022 election was even more secure, trust in our elections has continued to erode.

“**Seeing is believing, and security, integrity, and trust ebb and flow together as if they are all a part of the same 3-sided coin.**”

# Why?

“  
**When trust in the accuracy of our elections is high, the belief that they are secure and conducted with integrity are shared.**  
 ”

Therefore, if we can show our fellow citizens that our elections are secure, then we can restore trust and agree that our elections have integrity. Seems simple, right? Wrong! If it were easy we wouldn't have the narratives still swirling about today advocating for the removal of voting machines and a return to paper ballots, or that voting by mail is an unstoppable gateway to rig an election. These topics only touch the tip of the iceberg as it relates to the depths in which these narratives dive, but in the age of disinformation, these narratives are easier to believe than one might realize. Though these opinions have their own “merits” and are used to justify changes to policy, they are based on information that is contrary to what the election administrators, national security experts, and the intelligence community are saying.

We believe what we see. Do you remember the kid in elementary school who said he could do a flip off the swing set and land on his feet? To which you reply, “I'll believe it when I see it.” Whether we are children or adults, the statement, “I'll believe it when I see it” rings true. We need to show our voters why our elections can be trusted. They need to see with their own eyes. How are our elections being conducted? How are our voter rolls, voting systems, ballots, election results being made secure and protected throughout each election cycle? If they never see the answers to those questions, they will start believing what they hear if it supports their hunches, suspicions, and opinion. If we as election administrators are unable to answer these questions and show the public our process, they will look elsewhere for the information and unfortunately, what is largely being heard as it relates to election integrity are a plethora of fallacies and half-truths.

## **How can we “prove” that our elections can be trusted? Where do we begin? It starts with saying “yes”!**

- Yes, our machines have been tested and certified by an accredited Voting System Test Laboratory (VSTL).
- Yes, we conducted our Logic and Accuracy (L&A) tests and each machine adjudicated with 100% accuracy.
- Yes, we have a chain of custody log for our machines detailing each pick up and drop off.
- Yes, we have an inventory of our ballots and chain of custody log tracking their transportation and every ballot has been accounted for.
- Yes, we conducted a post-election audit and yes, it confirmed the official results as reported.
- And, finally, yes, I'd be happy to show you and talk to you about it.

# Oftentimes, big wins start from small wins.

The ripple effect of one person who grabs ahold of the truth and spreads it to their family, friends and neighbors shouldn't be understated or underestimated. You never know when saying "yes" will be the tipping point in your community for trust in your elections to become greater than the distrust.

There are those that will not be convinced; those that have formulated a belief about the election process that is stronger than any fact could refute. However, the large majority of intellectuals are open to seeing and hearing factual information when formulating their beliefs about any issue, including elections. It is to the later that these two parts of a secure election process will be persuasive.



2023

# About US



At Soch, we are driven to come alongside government sector employees to leverage technology to reduce mundane and complex tasks. Our products are designed BY government officials FOR government officials with state-of-the-art technology.

## Contact Us

Visit us online: [Soch-Inc.com](https://soch-inc.com)

Email us: [info@soch-inc.com](mailto:info@soch-inc.com)

Give us a call: (800) 210-6213