

Why a Town Clerk Would Prefer Electronic Voting over Hand Counts (from a conversation with our excellent and helpful SWH Town Clerk; see note below)

1. **The method for getting ballot counters:**
 - a. People sign up at party caucuses
 - b. They are the first ones asked to help
 - c. Then recruitment of other likely possibilities kicks in.
2. **State requirements:**
 - a. Counting teams consist of 2 people, who must be of different parties.
 - b. At least one team must consist of a Dem and a Rep
 - c. After that, teams consist of one Dem or Rep and one Green or unenrolled
 - d. This complicates recruiting and organizing a counting group.
3. **Hard to find counters --**
 - a. Some work
 - b. Some go away for early vacations
 - c. Young people don't seem interested
4. **Cost --** \$10/hour for each counter
5. **Complicated --**
 - a. YES/NO issues are easy -- just sort into two piles
 - b. Multiple candidate races get more complicated, especially with more than one race on a ballot
 - c. When you have 1000+ ballots with candidate races, it takes a lot of time
 - d. The longer it takes, the later it gets.
 - e. Mistakes happen late at night, and if they are caught, correcting them takes more time.
6. And we don't have as much trouble in Maine as some of the larger states.

[Dick note: I provide this page as representing an "other side" of the e-voting issue. I have a great deal of sympathy with the problems of Clerks trying to round up and budget for volunteers and manage elections -- particularly when elections get long and hence more complicated. So I can understand their enthusiasm for electronic voting systems. However, looking at the larger picture of our having always previously been done this by paper-plus-handcounts, and the fact that other countries like Canada and the U.K. manage to do it, and that in a very real sense our democracy is at risk, it may be necessary to be hard-nosed about the Clerks' problems as "part of their job." Returning to the old way would provide more incentive to push to educate the public on the importance of participation in democracy beyond simply showing up to vote.]