



Guide "Open Source Technology in Election Administration"

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5th review meeting of Council of Europe

Recommendation Rec(2004)11

October 28, 2014

Lochau/Bregenz, Austria



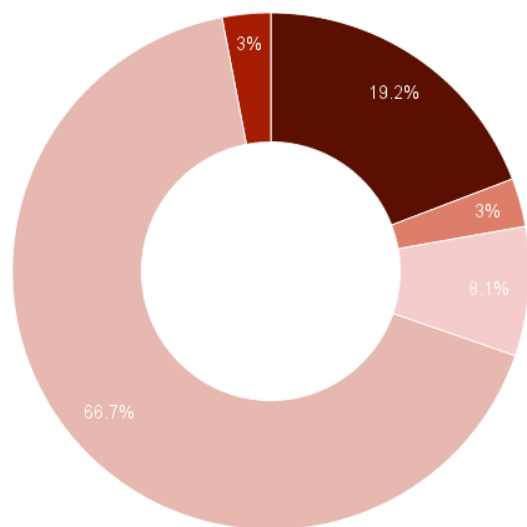
Choice of Topic

- ❖ Many potential benefits of OST
- ❖ Recurring demand for more implementation or more information by stakeholders
- ❖ Few available OST systems and implementations in elections

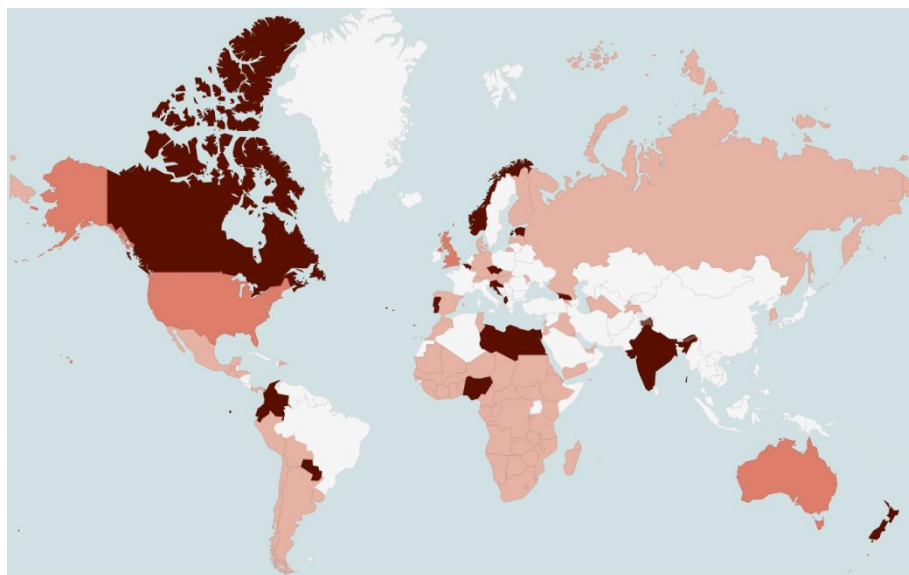


Global Survey

Preliminary results from 99 countries



- OST in use
- OST under consideration
- OST considered, but not in use
- OST not in use
- OST usage in selected locations





Perspective Captured in Guide

- ❖ Election Management Bodies
- ❖ Academics
- ❖ Civil society
- ❖ Vendors
- ❖ Open source developers





Potential and Benefits

- ❖ **Transparency**
- ❖ Culture of openness
- ❖ Lower cost and financial sustainability
- ❖ Culture of sharing and learning





Misconceptions

- ❖ OST is insecure and immature
- ❖ No professional support for OST
- ❖ Conflict OST vs. intellectual property



Barrier #1: Supply

- ❖ no global election OST community
- ❖ worry about intellectual property
- ❖ successful closed solutions
- ❖ vendors' "closed" business models
- ❖ OST "surcharge", higher up front costs
- ❖ few incentives to change



Barrier #2: Demand

- ❖ More from civil society than from EMBs
- ❖ Limited demand from EMBs
- ❖ Limited awareness, misconceptions among EMBs
- ❖ Few successful examples
- ❖ Less openness – less exposure to criticism
- ❖ OST considered a technical detail



Conclusions

- 1. Elections should be transparent. Thus, voting technology should be transparent, which in turn requires the source code of voting technologies to be accessible and transparent.**
- 2. The decision on whether to adopt OST for elections should not be left to vendors or technical experts, but rest with the EMB, which is responsible for the transparency of the electoral process.**
3. Intellectual property associated with voting technology can be protected without endangering the transparency of elections. The protection of intellectual property is not in violation of open source licences.
4. There is a need to define an open source licence for voting technology that is readily understandable, deployable and usable in the electoral context.
5. More widespread use of OST in elections would require vendors to adopt flexible business models that incorporate OST.
- 6. Awareness must be raised among EMBs.** EMBs, decision-makers, political parties, civil society and the media should be encouraged to build capacity on the benefits of the use of OST in elections, which in turn will create increased demand for accessible and transparent source codes in election technologies.
- 7. OST considerations must play a more prominent role in feasibility studies, which weigh alternative options for voting technologies, and must subsequently be properly reflected in the procurement process. This will give the use and development of OSTs in elections a critically required impetus.**
8. Open source voting technology would greatly benefit from the establishment of a global electoral OST community. Such a community would make releasing existing and newly developed voting technology under an open source licence more feasible.



Related sections in Rec 2004(11)

Procedural safeguards/Transparency

- *20. Member states shall take steps to ensure that voters understand and have confidence in the e-voting system in use.*
- *21. Information on the functioning of an e-voting system shall be made publicly available*

Procedural safeguards/Verifiability and accountability

- *24. The components of the e-voting system shall be disclosed, at least to the competent electoral authorities, as required for verification and certification purposes.*

Operational Standards/Audit

- *59. The e-voting system shall be auditable.*

Technical requirements/Interoperability

- *66. Open standards shall be used to ensure that the various technical components or services of an e-voting system, possibly derived from a variety of sources, interoperate.*



A new recommendation?

Possibly similar to Recommendation 67

Technical requirements/Interoperability

- *67. [...] EML shall be used whenever possible for e-election and e-referendum applications. The decision of when to adopt EML is a matter for member states. [...]*

"The adoption of Open Source Technology shall be considered for e-election and e-referendum applications. The decision of whether to adopt Open Source Technology is a matter for member states, but should be taken by those responsible for the transparency of the electoral process."



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