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E-voting leaves much to be desired

Your Feb. 21 editorial regarding Ohio's position on voting technology ("Stuck in the past") completely missed the point. The real issue is verification and the trustworthiness of the entire system. So-called obsolete technology has some advantages when it comes to voting, not the least of which is the ability to go back and verify voter selections in a believable way.

Your editorial stated that the General Assembly reacted "out of wildy overblown fears of cyberskulduggery." Really? Just recently, ChoicePoint in California announced that as many as 500,000 people's private information may have been stolen, permitting widespread identity theft. I would run out of ink before I run out of similar

frightening examples of dangerous software faults. As a cybercrime expert (and an expert hacker), I know that the risks associated with touch-screen electronic voting - in its current incarnation - are significant.

Another scary observation is that the people charged with the responsibility of selecting voting technologies have no significant technical background (an attribute shared by far too many citizens). If you had a physical ailment, would you go to your garage mechanic? Conversely, if your alternator were acting up, would you see a physician? The answers are obvious. So why then do we trust the opinions of any nontechnical person regarding electronic voting technologies?

Your editorial stated that electronic voting worked fine in other parts of the country. How do you know? What verification did you do? What tests were run and how were the results confirmed? Are these results repeatable in all applicable conditions?

The bottom line is that the author of the editorial doesn't know and therefore can't be believed.

As the CEO of a high-technology software company that recently completed a successful IPO, I am an expert on software reliability, cyberdefense and cybercrime issues. I have also testified as an expert witness in federal courts across the United States on these and related technology issues. Right now, the available voting system technologies have not been tested sufficiently by trustworthy groups. The few that have been examined show less than 100 percent reliability.

The bottom line is that a good voting technology, properly engineered, tested and independently verified, will work fine. We are not there right now.

The most valuable real estate in the world is the U.S. voting booth. Previous generations have died to protect it. Guard it well.

Steve G. Belovich
CEO, SmartData Inc.
Brecksville