

## Use of Windows 10 Devices for Polling Place Ballot Marking

### Use Case – Win10 Device as an Accessible Ballot Marking System

Over thirty-five million voters in the U.S. have a disability that limits their ability to cast a private and independent ballot. These voters typically cannot vote a traditional ballot at the polls, or at home due to an array of disabilities. To meet federal and state laws requiring equal access to the ballot, elections officials are required to deploy accessible machines in each voting location. Accessible voting systems currently in the market are nearing their shelf-life and often rely on outdated, proprietary equipment. A big reason voting locations still deploy more expensive, proprietary equipment is COTS, or *commercially off-the-shelf*, devices did not exist when many of the polling place machines were first purchased.

In 2018, the States of Vermont and New Hampshire deployed a Windows-based COTS ballot marking computer to fully comply with HAVA accessible ballot marking requirements.

### Accessible Windows Devices in the Polls

Technology companies have invested heavily in accessible hardware and software. Over 200 million Windows devices and printers have been deployed with the highest levels of accessibility built into each device. The Win10 ballot marking system deployed in Vermont and New Hampshire utilizes current off-the-shelf technologies to ensure voters with disabilities receive the same level of access in the polls as they do in the home using their home computers.

### Cost Savings

Traditional ballot marking devices, DRE's or other polling place voting machines can cost between \$4,000-\$5,000 per machine. By using off-the-shelf devices for accessible ballot marking, the State of Vermont saved more than 40-50% over traditional proprietary polling place machines.

### Win10 & Accessibility

For polling place accessible ballot marking, a key requirement was offering the same, universal ballot to all voters at polling places. The goal is that every voter, regardless of disabilities, shall vote by casting the same form of ballot. The Win10 product is a fully accessible ballot marking device able to print the voter's selections by simply marking the ovals directly on the same pre-printed ballot used by all voters. Ballots are cast and tabulated along with all other ballots – further ensuring the privacy of ballots cast by voters with disabilities.

### Accessible polling place and vote by mail

The State of Vermont was able to fully comply with polling place and accessible vote by mail accessibility requirements with a one-stop balloting platform. Vermont is the first

State in the nation to use one software solution deployed on both commercially off-the-shelf (COTS) polling place system and the cloud to deliver fully accessible ballots for voters with disabilities.

The ballot marking devices are loaded with the required ballot styles for each election via a USB. All ballots are loaded on each tablet for easy transport to polling locations. The voter, or poll worker, simply selects the correct ballot for the voter. The voter uses accessible, audio navigation tools to listen, mark and print the marks directly onto their ballot. For security purposes, the Win10 polling place system was not connected to the Internet at any time.

#### Real World Experience

For the 2018 Election cycle, the Win10 solution was deployed on Dell devices in over 700 locations. It is the first accessible balloting system that allows for the same software to be used for accessible polling and accessible vote by mail.

Democracy Live and the States of Vermont and New Hampshire worked with disability groups and advocates to incorporate feedback from voters who regularly use assistive technology. Much of their feedback was incorporated into the system to ensure the highest levels of accessibility for voters with disabilities.

#### Conclusion

The Democracy Live system deployed in 2018 offered an all-in-one ballot marking, accessible, audio-enabled electronic absentee ballot, and accessible online sample ballot all under one software solution. Both New Hampshire and Vermont saved significant resources, both time and money, with its deployment of the Win10-based ballot marking system. More importantly, Vermont and New Hampshire provided voters with disabilities with an easier, more universally accessible method of casting their votes, privately and independently.

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