

Issue

In Monmouth County, the outcome of one race in the 2022 November General Election – a local, nonpartisan race – was affected due to USB flash media being loaded twice into the results reporting module. This isolated incident occurred due to a human procedural error. An audit of the system yielded this information.

Cause

In July of 2022, upon request, ES&S technicians were sent to Monmouth County to investigate reports of slow performance on the county's internal network. During troubleshooting, technicians uninstalled and reinstalled the county's election management software. A human procedural error during reinstallation excluded a step, which optimizes the system database and ensures USB flash media cannot be read twice during the results loading process. Because the database was not optimized, the user was not notified when the USB flash media were loaded twice into the results reporting module.

Discovery

A review of the election database provided detailed information, noting that USB flash media were loaded twice during post-election results compilation. There are reports in the system which document these types of actions, and duplication of results can be detected during reporting and canvas procedures. The USB Status Load Report identifies any USB flash media that have been loaded more than once. Additionally, pollbook data cross-referenced with the ballots cast also shows issues with the number of ballots cast.

Mitigating Action

ES&S will reinstall the election management system which will ensure the system is optimized to detect and block duplication of USB flash media results.

ES&S pledges to work with Monmouth County to ensure all necessary steps are taken to ensure election accuracy.