

Election Assistance Commission Accessibility Roundtable Discussion Questions

August 5th, 2010
U.S. Access Board
Washington, DC

The twelve questions listed below are introductory discussion questions. The purpose of the questions is to spur conversation among the roundtable participants regarding the various accessibility issues the EAC is exploring with its work with the revision to the 2005 Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG). These questions are based on public comments EAC received and the policy decisions that arose from these public comments.

It is the EAC's hope that these discussion questions will supply the framework for a discussion that will provide the EAC with tangible suggestions on how to approach the various policy decisions. If other questions or issues arise during the discussion that roundtable participants believe it is important for the EAC to hear that is also a positive outcome of this roundtable. The goal of the roundtable is to provide the EAC with relevant information and implementable suggestions that the Commission can use as it attempts to make these policy decisions.

1. The disability community is diverse. The accessibility issues faced by voters are varied and the solutions to these issues require input and review from a large number of constituencies. Given the representation at this roundtable, are there viewpoints and experiences that are absent?
2. In the most recent elections (2008-2010), have accessibility issues arisen that were not anticipated by the 2005 VVSG or contemporary voting system design?
3. Are there explicit or implicit expectations of HAVA regarding accessibility that have not been addressed in contemporary voting systems?
4. Are there recent examples of transferrable technologies in other applications that should be explored for implementation in Accessible Voting Systems (AVS)?
5. Accessible Voting Systems must provide a method by which the voter can verify the content of their ballots before casting if verification is provided to other voters. What issues apply to verification for voters with:
 - a. Dexterity issues
 - b. Poor vision

- c. Blindness
- d. Cognitive disabilities
- e. Other

6. The testing of Accessible Voting Systems requires the development of metrics and protocols to measure the extent to which the candidate system complies with the standard. How can the EAC improve the development of measurements for voting system conformance to accessibility criteria?

7. The VVSG requires voting system manufacturers to “conduct summative tests” of their AVS to demonstrate its ability to accommodate voters who lack fine motor skills or use of their hands. How can voting system manufacturers improve this testing process in terms of completeness, reliability and cost reduction? How can these same improvement goals be reached in regards to vision-related disabilities? Cognitive disabilities?

8. As technology innovation creates more customized and one-off adaptive solutions for voters requiring accommodation, it is possible that individual voters will have better and more appropriate adaptive devices than those provided by the jurisdiction. What issues arise from permitting voters to bring their own adaptive devices? Should the scope of the voting system stop at the device interface or should it envelope the adaptive device?

9. Voting systems are submitted and tested as a complete system. If voting systems can be submitted and certified without an accessibility component, it could not be used to meet the HAVA requirement for an “accessible voting station” in a jurisdiction. Would this option of submitting a system without an accessibility solution improve time-to-market and cost-to-market for vendors? Could it encourage specialization and bring new vendors into the marketplace to meet the accessibility requirements? Are there unintended consequences for permitting this separation?

10. Currently, most fielded voting systems are legacy systems that have been in the field several years. These legacy systems contain components that are carried over from prior versions of the system and are incorporated into the current version. Once a component is no longer capable of upgrading to the new requirements, it is retired and replaced with one or more new components, better designed to fulfill the new functionality requirements of the system. In the past, the EAC has attempted to minimize changes to existing, certified voting systems components. In regards to accessibility functionality, should existing system components be required to undergo modification for accessibility compliance, or should these criteria be applied only to new systems and new system components?

11. To meet the accessibility requirements a voting system must provide synchronized audio and video. Telephone voting systems do not meet this requirement. Do telephone

voting systems in general, fulfill the functional accessibility requirements? Are there accessibility concerns with this implementation strategy?

12. The current standard requires that voters verify a paper ballot in the same style and manner in which it was generated, e.g. large font, audio, etc. Does this standard support the concerns of disabled voters? Are there unintended consequences? Does this limit or encourage hardware/software innovation?