

Advisory Committee on Standards for Voting Technologies

Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2023, 9:00am – 2:30pm

Microsoft Teams

Committee Attendees:

- Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Committee Chair
- Dr. Mkabi Walcott, CEO Appointee
- Dr. Nicole Goodman, Academic Advisor
- Michael Crase, Political Party Appointee – Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
- Dan Duncan, Political Party Appointee - Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
- Karla Webber-Gallagher, Political Party Appointee - New Democratic Party of Ontario
- Milton Chan, Political Party Appointee – Ontario Liberal Party
- Christine McMillan, Political Party Appointee - Ontario Liberal Party
- Craig Cantin, Political Party Appointee - Green Party of Ontario
- Fiona Mackintosh, Executive Director of the Advisory Committee
- Mike Stockfish, Assistant Executive Director of the Advisory Committee
- Amanda Tieber, Research Coordinator for the Advisory Committee
- Jennifer MacLean, Administrative Assistant for the Advisory Committee

Invitees:

- Greg Essensa, Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, Elections Ontario
 - Fiona Murray, Deputy City Clerk, City of Toronto
 - John Meraglia, Director of Election Services, City of Toronto
 - John Poulos, CEO, Dominion Voting Systems
 - Hans Wobbe, President, Datafix
 - Warren Helland, Vice President, Datafix
 - Geoff Day, Chief Technology Officer, Datafix
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Opening Remarks and Chair Comments

- The Chair, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, outlined the agenda and meeting objectives for the meeting.
- The Chair welcomed Mike Stockfish as the Assistant Executive Director. Mike will be responsible for the development of the Management System Standards alongside the Chair.
- The December 9, 2022, meeting minutes were adopted.

Elections Ontario – The Adoption of Technology in Ontario Provincial Elections

- The Chief Electoral Officer, Greg Essensa, provided a presentation on the adoption of technology in Ontario provincial elections, and provided a review of the implementation process and post-election evaluation of the technology.
- The Chief Electoral Officer discussed the importance of developing standards for vote tabulators and electronic poll books in Canada. The Chief Electoral Officer went on to explain the differences between legislation and standards and noted that standards cannot override legislation or infringe on the independence of the Chief Electoral Officer or Returning Officer.

- An Advisory Committee member noted that the implementation of technology should not compromise the level of detail of reporting the election result. The Advisory Committee member went on to state that there is a solution, for how the strike-off information is generated that can be implemented by the technology vendors, that could improve the system. The Chief Electoral Officer noted that in order to provide an additional level of detail in the reporting of the results, Elections Ontario would have to produce a significant number of ballot styles for each of those polls and that this would not be operationally feasible in the current 28-day election calendar.

Administrative Updates & Management System Working Group

Product Standards

- The Advisory Committee Executive Director, Fiona Mackintosh, provided an update to the Advisory Committee members on the Product Standards for vote tabulators and electronic poll books. The CIOSC will be holding an additional onboarding session for the CIOSC Technical Committee on January 19th to discuss the standards development process, project status update, the role of the Technical Committee, and next steps.
- The Executive Director stated that the CIOSC Drafting Team will begin to review comments on January 31st and the Advisory Committee will receive an update on the draft Product Standards at the March 7th Advisory Committee meeting.

Management System Working Group

- The Advisory Committee Assistant Executive Director, Mike Stockfish, outlined the scope and mandate of the Management System Working Group. The Assistant Executive Director reminded the Advisory Committee that they will be responsible for developing Management System recommendations for vote tabulators and electronic poll books. This work will be completed in parallel to the work of the Product Standards.
- The Assistant Executive Director outlined the Management System Standards Workplan and noted that the first working session will be held on March 7th. The Assistant Executive Director went on to provide the Advisory Committee an example of the content and clauses that will be used in the Management System Standard. The Advisory Committee will be provided an initial document for review by late February.

City of Toronto

- The Deputy Clerk for the City of Toronto, Fiona Murray, and the Director of Election Services for the City of Toronto, John Meraglia, conducted a presentation on the use and operation of voting technologies in Toronto municipal elections. The Deputy City Clerk and Director of Election Services outlined the history of voting technologies in Toronto and the type of voting technologies that are currently used in Toronto municipal elections. The Deputy City Clerk discussed the security, control/chain of custody, and logic and accuracy testing of the technology.
- An Advisory Committee Member asked for clarity regarding the City of Toronto's auditing mechanisms for the technology, such as risk limiting audits, and what testing is essential when deploying tabulators prior to an election. The Deputy Clerk noted that the *Municipal Elections Act* does not enable risk limiting audits to be conducted in Ontario. The Deputy City Clerk highlighted that the chain of custody of the voting technology is critical to ensure the integrity of the election and the voting materials.

- The Chair asked if all the procedures relating to the voting technology are publicly available. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that several procedures are posted on the City of Toronto website under 'By-election'.
- The Advisory Committee Assistant Executive Director asked how the City of Toronto found the appropriate balance between passwords and complexity. The Director of Election Services outlined that the City of Toronto uses two-factor authentication and utilizes unique passwords for the unit. One challenge faced was the operational implementation of complex passwords in the field and ensuring that adequate help lines are in place to provide guidance to field staff who are experiencing issues with the passwords.
- An Advisory Committee Member asked if the City of Toronto has ever considered introducing an additional field on the ballots that would provide additional details regarding sub-polls in the results reporting. The Deputy City Clerk confirmed that the City of Toronto has not considered or implemented any additional fields on the ballots due to concerns of voter privacy and ballot secrecy.

[The Committee recessed at 11:00 a.m. and reconvened at 11:30 a.m.].

Dominion Voting Systems: Vote Tabulators

- The CEO of Dominion Voting Services (DVS), John Poulos, provided a high-level presentation on the vote tabulator system and outlined the existing certifications and standards on vote tabulators, the accountability split between the election official deploying technology and the technology vendor, and considerations for the development of Canadian vote tabulator standards.
- An Advisory Committee Member asked if DVS has considered introducing an additional field on the ballots that would provide additional details regarding sub-polls in the results reporting. The CEO noted that there are three options that could provide additional details regarding the sub-polls in the results report.
- The first option would be to have an election official manually fill in an additional field on the paper ballot. DVS piloted this concept at the Ontario municipal level in 2003-2006. However, this initiative was phased out and has not been implemented by other clients due to the high risk of human error from poll workers. These errors would often lead to candidates challenging the election results due to confusion over the report's data. The second option would be to pre-print a significant amount of ballot styles with the sub-poll information present on the ballot. This may be challenging due to the 28-day election calendar and is costly for election administrators. The last option would be to implement additional technology such as a ballot marking device.
- An Advisory Committee Member noted that the CEO indicated that providing an additional level of detail in the reporting of the results could be operationally implementable but would require additional cost and time. The Advisory Committee Member went on to ask if the CEO could outline what would be required to implement the proposal of multiple ballot styles. The Chair confirmed that the question can be raised to the CEO.

[The Committee recessed at 12:30 p.m. and reconvened at 1:15 p.m.].

DataFix: Electronic Poll Books

- The President of DataFix, Hans Wobbe, the Vice President, Warren Helland, and the Chief Technology Officer, Geoff Day, provided an overview of electronic poll books and the services provided by DataFix, the security and privacy of the electronic poll books, and the considerations for technical standards on electronic poll books.
- The Chair asked how the electronic poll book system and records track any claims of impersonation and proxy voting. The Chief Technology Officer noted that this would be dependent on the jurisdiction's legislation and procedures.
- An Advisory Committee Member asked for clarification regarding the network and connectivity issues experienced in the 2022 Ontario General Election with the electronic poll books. The Chief Technology Officer clarified that the software of the electronic poll books did not experience any interruption. This was not an issue with the pollbook software provided by Datafix but rather an issue with the network infrastructure to which the e-poll book is connected for synchronization purposes. DataFix noted that poll workers could have continued to use the e-pollbooks and the system would have automatically synchronised when connectivity was restored.

Closing Remarks

- The Advisory Committee approved the workplan for the Management System Standards.

The meeting of the Advisory Committee adjourned at 2:30 p.m.