Terminology

There are many related terms that we will need to discuss risks and barriers in remote voting systems. We suggest the following terms and working definitions for this workshop.

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| **People.** Important user groups involved in remote ballot marking. | |
| Voters | The key user of a remote ballot marking system. |
| Election officials | A general term for the people who manage an election. There are different types of election officials, including election administrators (who set up an election) and poll workers (who work at a polling site). |
| Vendors | Someone who create technology used in the remote ballot marking process, such as a website or smartphone app. |
| Adversaries | An individual or group who is trying to disrupt the election (e.g., denial of service attack), alter the outcome (e.g., change votes to their preferred candidate), coerce voters, or do other illegal things. |
| Public | Anyone concerned about the outcome of the election. Public perception, media coverage, and community discussions on how the election was conducted is important. |

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| **Secret ballot.** Elections in the United States have a secret ballot. HAVA also requires that voters can vote in a private and independent manner. | |
| Secrecy | A **voted ballot** is secret: it cannot be traced to a specific voter.  Ask: Does the ballot include information that makes it possible to identify the voter who cast it? |
| Anonymity | A **voter** is anonymous: they cannot be identified from the ballot.  Ask: Does the system reveal the identity of the voter before, during, or after marking and casting the ballot? |
| Privacy | A **voter** has privacy while voting  Ask: Can anyone tell how the voter is voting while marking and casting their ballot? |
| Independence | A **voter** has **i**ndependence: they can voter without assistance?  Ask: Can the voter complete the entire voting process without assistance that is not provided to all voters? |

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| **Eligibility.** Election systems, and remote ballot marking systems, include ways to be sure that they are only used by eligible voters. | |
| Identity  Identification | A **voter’s** identity is who they say they are, for example by entering a name or account ID.  Ask: How (and when) does a voter identify themself? |
| Authentication | A **voter** authenticates themselves by confirming their identity, for example by entering a password.  Ask: How (and when) do voters show they are the person they say they are? |
| Authorization | The **system** authorizes a **voter** to do something, for example, enter a system based on their authentication of their identification.  Ask: What authorizations does the system include? When must voters authenticate their identification. |

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| **Legal.** Election security includes several different concepts related to legal actions. | |
| Integrity | An **election system** has integrity if its process and results can be trusted.  Ask: Does the system architecture allow the ballot, voters, or voter information/voter history to be changed inappropriately? |
| Fraud | Fraud is the use of the election system by a person with a false identification.  Ask: Does the system allow someone to impersonate a voter, for example by guessing at identifying information |
| Coercion | A **voter** can be coerced by being forced to vote in a particular way.  Ask: Does the system protect the voter from outside influence (for example, by making it easy for them to vote their own intent without being discovered) |

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| **Adversarial tactics.** Ways that adversaries could disrupt or change an election | |
| Client Side Malware | Software on a voter’s device which denies service, changes votes, reveals ballot choices, confuses voters or does other illegal things. |
| Denial of Service | Prevention of voters from using websites to learn information, download apps, etc. |
| Server Hacking | Gaining access to data on servers to change, add, or delete votes; modify information; etc., either on the server or in transmission. |

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| **Barriers.** There are several broad groups of barriers that can affect a voter’s access to an election | |
| Perception | Barriers that prevent or make it difficult for voters to read instructions or ballot content because the system does not present the information in a way that they can perceive it. |
| Operation | Barriers that prevent or make it difficult for voters to interact with the system to navigate, make selections, or cast a ballot. |
| Mobility | Barriers that prevent or make it difficult for voters to travel to a specific location, to navigate within a physical location, or to reach all interactive parts of an election system. |
| Cognitive | Barriers that prevent or make it difficult for voters to understand the purpose or meaning of instructions, labels, or tasks. |
| Digital access | Barriers based on technical skills, availability of technology/personal devices, or access to the internet. |
| Assistive technology | Barriers related to assistive technology include incompatibility or mismatches between devices voters use in their daily lives and the election system. |

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| **Election terminology.** Election terminology varies around the country. Here are some words relevant to remote ballot marking systems and some closely related terms or concepts. | |
| Vote by mail | Absentee voting, no-excuse absentee voting, early voting |
| Ballot question | Ballot measure, referendum, constitutional question |
| Contest | Any decision to be made on a ballot, including ballot questions or candidates |
| Poll worker | Election judge, polling place staff |
| Polling place | Precinct polling place, vote centers |
| Poll book | Voter roster, election roll, list of electors |
| Ballot style | Ballot configuration |
| Remote voting | Conducting some part of the voting process outside a polling place |