

Voter check-in is easier, faster, and less expensive with mobile pollbook solutions

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Election Systems & Software (ES&S) needed a new version of its ExpressPoll® Electronic Pollbook to market quickly. It ported its application to a Windows-based Toshiba tablet within 60 days, enabling the company to get a new product to market quickly and capture customer orders for thousands of new tablet-based pollbooks. Thanks to the easy-to-use Windows interface, poll workers reduce waiting times and increase voter information accuracy. And using consumer off-the-shelf hardware with built-in peripherals reduces device costs by a third.

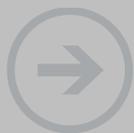
Reduce cost of voting equipment

The 2000 United States presidential race ended in a swirl of controversy over who won the election due to problems with older punch-card voting systems. As a result, the US Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, which infused US\$3.2 billion into the election industry to fund new, more standardized voting technology.

Election Systems & Software (ES&S) of Omaha, Nebraska, a longtime provider of election management systems, watched demand for its electronic pollbooks and ballot marking devices rise steeply as states rushed to modernize their voting systems. The company's ExpressPoll Electronic Pollbook system, used to check-in voters at polling locations, was especially popular. The small digital system, based on the Windows CE operating system running on proprietary hardware, eliminated searches through thick paper voter registration logs and gave election workers a simple check-in device that reduced waiting time for voters and increased voter information accuracy.

Fast-forward to 2013: many of the systems purchased in 2002 needed to be replaced—only this time, there was no \$3.2 billion federal outlay to pay the bills. "As we set out to redesign ExpressPoll, lowering costs for customers became our top design priority," says Ken Carbullido, Senior Vice President of Innovations at Election Systems & Software.

A key way to reduce costs was to switch from using proprietary hardware to consumer off-the-shelf (COTS) devices, and ES&S chose a low-priced Android-based device. However, the Android-based ExpressPoll was not as feature-rich as the original Windows CE-based device and didn't meet customer needs effectively. With demand for these electronic pollbooks growing, ES&S needed to find a new platform and fast.



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Kathy Rogers, Senior Vice President of Government Relations,
Election Systems & Software



Company: Election Systems & Software
Website: www.essvote.com
Country: United States
Industry: High tech & electronics
Employees: 450
Partner: [Toshiba](#), [Intel](#)

Company Profile:

As one of the world's largest elections-only company, Election Systems & Software has provided election equipment, software, and services to US municipalities and counties to help run fair and accurate elections for more than 30 years.

Software & Services:

- Windows 8.1 Professional

Hardware:

- Toshiba Encore 2 tablets



TOSHIBA

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Return to Windows

By 2014, prices on Windows-based hardware had dropped dramatically and, after surveying the field, ES&S chose the Toshiba Encore 2 tablet running the Windows 8.1 Professional operating system. The 10-inch Toshiba Encore 2 tablet is powered by the quad-core Intel® Atom™ processor, which provides speed, long battery life, and cost efficiency.

“Switching back to Windows was an easy choice for us,” Carbullido says. “With Windows 8.1, we get a number of benefits, including stability, robust support for peripherals, and the ability to lock down the device. The overall solution is extremely cost-competitive, especially because we can take advantage of our existing application code base and pass those cost savings along to our customers.”

Because the tablet is powered by Windows 8.1, ES&S was able to port its ExpressPoll application to the new tablet in fewer than 60 days and get a new version of the product to market quickly.

Increase poll worker and voter satisfaction

With a Windows-based device, poll workers have an intuitive, easy-to-understand interface that’s similar to the other devices they use in their personal lives. Also, the Toshiba Encore 2 contains lots of built-in extras that eliminate the need for the many peripherals that poll workers contended with. The workers previously had to juggle and plug in barcode readers, signature pads, and other accessories to their ExpressPoll systems to capture voter identification (such as driver’s licenses) and signatures.

By using the Toshiba tablet’s built-in signature pad, barcode reader, and camera, workers can capture everything that they need using just one device, with no clutter or cables. Easier use contributes to faster voter check-in and more accurate voter registration data.

Plus, because the Toshiba device is so small and versatile, election workers can swivel it around to face voters, capturing signatures and scanning identification. This contributes to greater voter transparency.

“We took advantage of the rich capabilities of Windows and its ability to support a port of our application quickly to a new device, which enabled us to provide reliable and ready ExpressPoll systems in a strong, growing market,” says Kathy Rogers, Senior Vice President of Government Relations at Election Systems & Software. “Our new solution is both easy to use and affordable for our customers.”

Morrow County, Ohio, uses the ExpressPoll system and appreciates the simplicity and intuitiveness of the device. “There was a lot of positive feedback from poll workers as they were trained on the ExpressPoll tablet,” says John Stinehelfer, Morrow County, Ohio, Election IT Specialist. “They loved it and didn’t have any questions during the class. It’s so intuitive that they could follow along with my training presentation and showed

understanding immediately. When poll workers use it, calls from them to the election office on Election Day decrease. It gives the poll workers access to the database we have here in the office, and all the tools and info that they need right at their fingertips. They solve problems in real time with it. They can send a voter to the right polling site, give them a provisional ballot, you name it. Election Day is always a long day and we want it to run smoothly. The ExpressPoll helps with that.”

Diminish cost of elections, expand innovation

Carbullido says that the built-in extras in the Toshiba tablet significantly reduce the cost of the newest ExpressPoll system. “Every peripheral adds another \$100 to \$200 to the price of our solution. By switching back to Windows and making the most of the Toshiba device’s inherent capabilities, we reduce the cost of each unit by a third.”

The Toshiba tablet also allows election officials to provide brief training videos on topics such as how to handle nonstandard voting procedures, placing them conveniently on the ExpressPoll home screen.

“Voters are very familiar with mobile devices and expect modern capabilities in their interactions with government,” says Rogers. “With our new Windows-based ExpressPoll system, we are meeting and exceeding their expectations.”

