

ACCESSIBLE

Easy Access for Voters with Disabilities



The eSlate System is fully accessible, allowing persons with disabilities to vote independently and privately.

The eSlate™ Electronic Voting System has won acclaim for its industry-leading accessibility features from organizations that represent voters with disabilities.

Casting a private ballot is one of our most basic rights. However, many voters who face visual or mobility challenges have not been able to fully exercise this right. As a consequence, accessibility of voting systems to people with disabilities has become an important goal for election officials.

From the eSlate's PrecisionVote™ ballot navigation system to voting booths specially designed to accommodate voters in wheelchairs, the eSlate System was designed with accessibility in mind. Hart InterCivic worked with organizations such as the National Federation of the Blind, the National Organization on Disability, and the American Association of People with Disabilities to ensure that the eSlate System meets the most stringent requirements for accessibility by all voters.

The eSlate's PrecisionVote ballot navigation system is easy to learn and use, providing precise, highly accurate selection and confirmation. The eSlate SELECT Wheel is the industry's most accessible method for independently casting a vote. Each eSlate can be configured to include audio capability, and eSlate's light weight and portability make it ideal for voters requiring special access.

The eSlate System has been acclaimed by national organizations representing persons with disabilities. In a recent review of leading electronic voting systems, the American Foundation for the Blind's Technology and Employment Center rated the eSlate as the most accessible voting system (*AccessWorld*, November 2002). Harris County, Texas, was honored in July 2002 with a joint award from the National Association of Counties and the National Organization on Disability for its efforts to expand the voting process and enable disabled voters to exercise their rights at the polling place independently. The award specifically highlighted the accessibility features of the eSlate Electronic Voting System.

ONE SYSTEM FOR ALL VOTERS

eSlate allows all voters, including voters with physical disabilities, to vote using the same system. An eSlate outfitted with a Disabled Access Unit™ (DAU) interface is virtually indistinguishable from an eSlate used by voters with full physical capabilities. Yet, the eSlate's DAU interface accommodates even the most severely disabled voters. All disability features can be used interchangeably with the eSlate's standard interface, allowing the voter to overcome whatever challenges he or she might face in casting a vote privately and independently.

"...We do rate the eSlate as the best machine we looked at. It scored highest in overall usability and our testers liked the easy to use linear ballot and the fact that audio and visual voting can be used simultaneously. We also found the eSlate to have the highest level of cross-disability access, with accessibility features to accommodate people with non-visual disabilities."

Statement provided by the American Foundation for the Blind Technology and Employment Center to Hart InterCivic following their review of voting systems published in the November 2002 issue of AccessWorld Magazine.

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eSlate's SELECT Wheel clicks as voters scroll through each race. eSlate's buttons can be easily identified by shape.

TACTILE NAVIGATION

eSlate's SELECT Wheel provides a perceptible click as it scrolls through each race, a feature that is particularly important to visually impaired voters. eSlate's buttons are carefully designed so they may be identified by their distinct shapes, and the entire set of controls is accessible with one hand.

COMPLETE AUDIO BALLOT READER

With a DAU-enabled eSlate, visually impaired or literacy challenged voters may use the system's integrated audio ballot reader. Through headphones supplied with the system, eSlate's audio ballot reader allows voters to hear the ballot read in a human voice—not a synthesized electronic voice—including audible instructions and confirmation of each vote. Audio is locally recorded, so local pronunciations are correct, and the system supports multilingual audio. Voters can hear and see the ballot simultaneously, avoiding the need to choose whether to listen to or read a ballot—a feature highlighted in the AccessWorld review.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR MOBILITY IMPAIRED VOTERS

The eSlate's SELECT Wheel can be used by voters with severe mobility impairments who cannot use paper ballots or accurately touch a target. Each eSlate, when upgraded to include the DAU interface, also allows voters to use optional externally mounted controls or tactile switches that extend independent access even further. The DAU-equipped eSlate may also be operated by devices such as the "sip-and-puff," sometimes used by disabled voters to operate their wheelchairs or access other electronic devices.

LIGHTWEIGHT AND PORTABLE

The highly portable eSlate readily accommodates voters who cannot enter the polling place or who require that the voting device be placed on a wheelchair tray. The eSlate weighs less than eight pounds when fully equipped with the special access features for the disabled and the battery pack. The eSlate is designed for easy transport to a voter with special needs and for curbside voting.