

**BRAD FRIEDMAN**
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Mainstream Media to American Democracy: Drop Dead! (72 comments)

11.03.2005

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It's been a full two weeks now since the non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) came out with their [107-page report](#) [PDF] confirming what so many of us have been trying to [ring the bell](#) about for so long: The Electronic Voting Machines which are proliferating counties and states across America even as I type, are not secure, not accountable, not recountable, not transparent, not accurate and not adequately monitored or certified by anybody.

To quote from the alarming landmark report:

[C]oncerns about electronic voting machines have been realized and have caused problems with recent elections, resulting in the loss and miscount of votes.

The Mainstream Corporate Media couldn't care less.

The report was requested by several high-ranking members of the U.S. House of Representatives. It culminated a year-long investigation into the secret Voting Machines and Software now being deployed to the tune of millions of tax-payer dollars to privatize our American Democracy.

The release of the report was accompanied by a [bi-partisan News Release](#) which lauded its findings.

That's right. Six high-ranking U.S. Congressmen (3 Dems and 3 Reps) issued the incredibly rare joint News Release together. Two of those Congressmen were Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), chairman and ranking minority member, respectively, of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee respectively. You do understand how rare it is that those two can agree on anything much less issue a joint press release, right?!

And yet, none of the above has been carried by even one wire service or one major American Newspaper. Not one.

News of the landmark non-partisan report and bi-partisan news release was carried on a few Internet sites ([here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) in a few tech journals ([here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) and a couple of tiny independent newspapers ([here](#) and [here](#)). **But there has not been a single wire-service (not AP, not UPI, not Reuters, not AFP etc.) nor a single mainstream American print newspaper (not NYTimes, not Washington Post, not any of them) to run even a paragraph on any of it. Not one.**

While I'd expect the usual crappy coverage of something this important from both the wires and the print media, I am completely without explanation as to why none of them (Not one! Did I mention that?!) bothered to do even the usual sub-par, unsatisfactory, wholly misinformed, shitty job that we've come to expect from the Mainstream Corporate Media.

But why should they bother to run even a paragraph on it? It's only about our VOTE, the very heart of our democracy.

I've tried to encourage the respected [Editor & Publisher](#) to look into the matter. They cover the coverage of such things and it'll be a hell of a lot more difficult for the media to ignore the inquiries of E&P than it would be for them to simply disregard me. Perhaps E&P can find out from the four major wire services

and America's two most important and influential newspapers why the GAO report and accompanying news release confirming that those of them previously labeled as "conspiracy theorists" are now confirmed as nothing of the kind. Perhaps they can find out why those organizations, apparently, consider a report which rocks the very foundation of our democracy to be less than "newsworthy".

I'd encourage you to do so as well by dropping a polite request to E&P that they inquire and report on the matter. Perhaps that'll help get some action. And some coverage. Their address is:

Letters@EditorAndPublisher.com

I hope you'll help. This democracy ain't gonna save itself, ya know. I hope you realize that.

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- **David Corn:** A Grave Indictment, but Grave Questions Remain
- **Jay Rosen:** "We Regret Nothing." Times Editorial Page Breaks Silence on Miller Case

Posted Comments (Page 1 of 2 [»](#)):

Good grief! Thanks for the info. I did my civic duty as you so patriotically implored us to do. Who ever would have guessed what has become of our voting rights? Then again, a psychomedicated antichrist occupies the WH-who would've guessed that, either?

Posted by: LisaP on November 04, 2005 at 12:16am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [[flag it](#)]

This lack of press is terribly suspicious. I had been wondering about the voting machine issue, piqued by Rep. Conyers' 2004 book on the subject:

<http://www.academychicago.com/conyers.html>

Thanks for the post and for suggesting that we e-mail E&P. And thank god for the blogs. And the Internet. And Conyers. And education. 100 years ago we wouldn't have been so educated and able to exchange so much information - that always amazes me.

This is yet another log on the fire... Can you feel the resonant frequency?

Posted by: flaca on November 04, 2005 at 12:20am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [[flag it](#)]

That's it, American democracy is now (unofficially) officially DEAD!

Rest In Peace.

Now, wanna bet dubya will find some way to have himself declared president for life?

Posted by: ktthecarguy on November 04, 2005 at 12:54am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [[flag it](#)]

Brad, thanks for bringing this story out. No, I haven't seen a whiff of this in the online New York Times, where you'd think space limitations for the hard copy edition of The Times would not apply when addressing a story as important as this one. This is the big validation to everyone who ever had fears about the state of

electronic voting.

I have elected to become a permanent absentee voter, so that my ballot is always paper after one experience with a Diebold machine in my precinct and the eerie feeling that even a hard copy printout certifying my votes was little assurance my vote would be recorded error-free.

I realize information overload afflicts all of us, but you're right: there has to be room for the important stories. And this one is, as you say, central to our democratic way of life.

All I can say is, thank Heavens for blog spaces like HuffPo and the internet in general. Makes you wonder what was missed in all the years before the Internet hit critical mass, doesn't it?

Posted by: VDavis on November 04, 2005 at 12:54am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

The GAO, from its days as the General Accounting Office to the present, is one of the few federal agencies that earns its keep, periodically releasing well-researched (and often startling) studies of government process. The subsequent ignoring of their conclusions is nothing new; I remember when one of their projects revealed that Gulf War I weapons systems had almost all underperformed or malfunctioned - including the nearly useless Patriot missile - the exact opposite of what the Pentagon and the related defense contractors were claiming. Barely got noticed.

Your speculation in re "conspiracy theorists" supplies a possible answer: once the meme has been cemented in place, lazy reporters (is that redundant?) seem to find it next to impossible to realize they've been had and to rouse themselves from their torpor and actually examine a story. The Dems (Kerry specifically) should have never thrown in the towel so quickly last November, as Mark Crispin Miller points out in his new book; they helped make questioning of the entire electoral process suspect to many in the MSM.

Maybe we could get Aaron Brown to do something on this...oh, sorry, forgot. Never mind.

Posted by: adios on November 04, 2005 at 12:55am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Mr. Freidman, this is a very important post!

The Downing street memos are another example - they didn't report on that either for weeks.

We on the center/left have got to build our own media infrastructure just as the right has done. The Main-stream-media (MSM) is now part of the elite establishment, owned by just a handful of giant corporations.

If we don't establish our own progressive media, this country is done.

We have to figure out how to get that organized and funded. That is the most important thing we on the left could ever do right now. A democracy just cannot exist without a fourth estate, and as your post points out, we don't have one right now.

I don't understand how so many smart people on the left just don't understand this. I'll guarantee you the right does. They use their conservative media (Fox, conservative radio, and to some extent, the MSM) to sway public opinion on any issue.

We have to get organized on this somehow and ACT! Robert Parry points the way here. Please read a few articles there!

<http://www.consortiumnews.com/archive/media.html>

Posted by: Salient on November 04, 2005 at 12:57am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

It's no surprise. Most of the MSM have even ignored the mind-boggling fact that Donald Rumsfeld owns a big chunk of the Tamiflu company.

Increasingly, the MSM offer consumers the equivalent of junk food -- information without substance.

Posted by: Merlin7 on November 04, 2005 at 01:00am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Perhaps they all knew all along? So, it's not so much an "I don't care" thing. More like a "what else is new" thing... Ya think?

Posted by: nopartygal on November 04, 2005 at 01:01am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Look, we all know the MSM media is failing to do an adequate job.

And we all know that a legitimate news-media is an absolute prerequisite to having a democracy.

So the obvious question is:

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT!!!

The answers are contained in this link:

<http://www.consortiumnews.com/archive/media.html>

We must build our own media as the right has done so effectively.

Come on Arianna, and all you clever pundits on the left. Let's get it organized and do it!

Posted by: Salient on November 04, 2005 at 01:16am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Does this mean that the election in Iraq recently may not be accurate? And how will we ever do the vote necessary to determine whether to leave or not. Oh my! Oh my! Whatever shall I think!

Posted by: Shazam on November 04, 2005 at 01:36am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

http://z.about.com/d/politicalhumor/1/0/x/5/diebold_ad_stalin.jpg

Posted by: adios on November 04, 2005 at 01:45am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

The problem with Democracy is that you need the majority of the people to agree to get anything done -- therefore the real problem is that they need to be educated. The problem with the MSM is that they don't want to educate they want to sell. The problem with elections is that they are subject to the rules of the majority and their vendors -- don't be an ass and act like this is news. Spend your time educating the ignorant. Stop wringing your hands. Since the beginning of time life has been unfair -- you can not be so incredibly naive to think it is so because the GAO says it is so. Get a life.

Posted by: Shazam on November 04, 2005 at 01:49am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Okay. I'm gonna die of this stuff. Paper ballots we count by hand until it's 100% foolproof impervious to tampering. Scream to the party and all the media until it happens.

Posted by: donna on November 04, 2005 at 02:27am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Brad, you are right on! I've been questioning the same media lack of "questioning" the obvious tie-in to the voting machines that the Bush "family" seems to own. Why haven't the Dems raised a storm over the obvious? I am really confused over the lack of leadership shown by the Dem Party!

Posted by: geo2art on November 04, 2005 at 03:48am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

We don't need the mainstream media. They need us.

We should create our own MSM. Calling George Soros, lottery winners and all Americans! Why can't we have truly PUBLIC broadcasting? And it doesn't have to be non-profit. It could just be sane.

Also, there's the internet. E.g., overnight The Huffington Post had a zillion readers and was overtly challenging the NY Times. The New York Times! The technology is there, there could be a nightly news on the net.

The right didn't whine. It created Fox. Why can't we create what we need instead of carping about changing people who are not going to change? They can't. They don't know how.

Posted by: Jean on November 04, 2005 at 04:12am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Here's my idea for presidential voting:

VOTING

- Same all 50 states. (If it's unconstitutional for Congress to legislate that, then let the electorate demand it in each state, or go for a constitutional amendment. Without free and fair elections what good will the Constitution be?)
- Separate from state/local elections.
- Each candidate would be represented by a dollar-bill-sized piece of paper, with their picture, party, date of the election, each on a bright color - red, blue, green, lavender maybe. :)
- The voter would place their choice into the ballot envelope.
- The voter would have access in their booth to a shredder where they would shred the others. (Shredders are a helluva lot cheaper than voting machines.)

COUNTING

- More than one bill, all are tossed.
- Counted by ATM's (what counts paper better than an ATM)?
- Color coding makes separating in a re-count easy.
- If separated by color, they could even be weighed down to the last vote.

Etc.

If you like any of this, please add, subtract or modify in any way that suits you and pass the idea along to your Rep. and Senators.

Posted by: jean on November 04, 2005 at 04:22am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Here is more from New Mexico:

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0511/S00067.htm>

"For example, in one majority Hispanic precinct, the voting machines produced exactly zero votes for John Kerry."

Maybe our President really did steal both elections. It was hard for me to believe but now I may need to apologize to my "Conspiracy Theory" friends.

Posted by: Tecelote on November 04, 2005 at 05:26am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

God Bless Diebold Systems

Posted by: NeoConDeath on November 04, 2005 at 06:00am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

For those willing spend a little time and effort to search for the truth, the MSM is passe.

Whether one is of the left or the right, the MSM no longer has the stranglehold on news and information that it had in the electronic age from 1920-1980.

The days of the big 3 networks, and the NY Times and Washington Post as the monopoly opinion makers are over.

The internet, cable news, and talk radio have killed them forever.

Posted by: Blueto on November 04, 2005 at 06:53am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

As per your suggestion Mr. Friedman, I have emailed the 'Editor & Publisher'.
Thank you for the convenient email link.

I strongly suggest the rest of our readers write in as quickly as possible.

The power of the pen still exists.

"Those that vote decide nothing, those who count the vote decide everything". Quote by Stalin.

Posted by: DragonFly on November 04, 2005 at 06:55am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Dear Mr. Friedman,

Do you know about lotto? Do you see anyone beating those lottery machines?
It can be done for the Vote also. Every voter gets a barcode, then votes. Done deal. One barcode get it at the Secretary of States office at 18 years of age, your for life. Attach it to your ballot. no two alike.

Posted by: dapper on November 04, 2005 at 07:20am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Thanks for writing this story! Voting has been a sham for the past 2 presidential elections. The MSM is more interested in making money, so they write about Brad and Jen! They have lost their way and are no longer interested in providing a public service to american citizens. The fact that it has been two weeks is appalling.

Why our elected officials are not emphasizing this report to the people of america stinks!

Looks like the Rock River Times has the scoop on the issue!

<http://www.rockrivertimes.com/index.pl?cmd=viewstory&cat=2&id=11529>

Posted by: iamindependent on November 04, 2005 at 07:23am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Barcodes are easy to decrypt and steal. A decent scanner could reproduce it digitally, and software to hack the contents would eventually be writtten.

A credit card device would be slightly better, but still could be defeated. The greater problem is not voter

security, but an unbreakable chain of data security that starts from the voter's intent, down to the enumeration and verification process, and that ain't easy, nor will it be cheap.

Nevertheless, it is essential should we ever have faith in this broken process again.

Posted by: Dendroica on November 04, 2005 at 07:35am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0511/S00067.htm>

This subject is in the courts in New Mexico.

I believe accurate voting and vote counting is one of the most important issues before us today- I am so glad to see you on the case.

Posted by: quetlin on November 04, 2005 at 08:03am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Thanks, Friedman, for bringing up 'The Great Electronic Voting Machine Robbery' to a public confused by the Media Mafia. Ever since having to vote on one those questionable machines during the 2004 elections, I have been troubled as I knew that there wouldn't be any record of my vote in case there needs to be re-count, to say the least. All the crooks involved in this caper should be investigated and punished for the grave crime of burglarizing our the votes of many unsuspecting citizens and making a mockery of the great ideals of Democracy.

Posted by: indypandy on November 04, 2005 at 08:07am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

I read the report from the GAO and it is concerning...

However, I am ASTONISHED that neither the mainline press nor the blogs have picked up on the Ohio election tampering by the Republicans and the "Coingate" scandle...

It was recently reported (only) in the Toledo Blade that an indictment was handed down in "Coingate".

Posted by: vafiraball on November 04, 2005 at 08:29am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

The time will come that if the democratic process is allowed to deteriorate, or to be blatantly hijacked, as it seems to be becoming more apparent,

that we will forgo the ballot in favor of the bullet.

Posted by: rebelpatriot on November 04, 2005 at 08:34am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Salient is right! Check out the link Salient listed: <http://www.consortiumnews.com/archive/media.html>

There needs to be a separate Blog to brainstorm ideas, an electronic think tank, if you will. The important thing is that we must begin advertising this issue quickly and effectively.

The "other side" will have a hard time refuting this argument without sounding patronizing and unpatriotic. We must play on that weakness and make them sound even more unpatriotic.

I hate to use their play book and rely upon fear, but there has to be some palpable doubt cast in the public's view of voting machines for any real changes to occur.

Posted by: Mikeatle on November 04, 2005 at 08:59am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

The British do very well with a simple "X" on a piece of paper, placed in a locked box.

However, if Americans INSIST on re-inventing the wheel (think astronaut pen) the Australians have the answer, and it runs on a p.c.

<http://www.wired.com/news/ebiz/0,1272,61045,00.html>

Voting is compulsory in Oz, but that's a whole other argument.....

Posted by: PeteCO on November 04, 2005 at 09:04am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

And everyone wants evidence why MSM is a bunch of sanctimonious clowns who think the world should bow to them and worship every word they produce. Here it is!!!

I don't care if the voting machines are in the hands of private or public org., either can be corrupted or accountable. If this system needs updating, do it. Quit spending my money on any more studies and give results. Keep the lip service to yourself, too. The MSM can now bend over and take it like a man. If that offends them, good! At least I know they heard me.

Posted by: Gamecock on November 04, 2005 at 09:06am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Thanks for the story, and the link, Brad. I've e-mailed E&P and hope that all the rest of HuffPo's readers will do the same. The battle must be joined or the evil empire of "managed democracy" will soon overwhelm us all.

Posted by: FreeBird93307 on November 04, 2005 at 09:11am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Thanks for the link, Brad. I sent a note to E and P.

Jean, brilliant idea! Simple, workable. I'm absolutely sure it will never be seriously considered.

Posted by: willie on November 04, 2005 at 09:13am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

The dirty tricks politics we have seen leaves nothing out of the realm of possibility. Thanks for pointing to a real issues, including voting corruption and media manipulation.

Don't you think the media is more controlled by a few machiavelian types and then just lazy and incompetent. We only have one domestic wire service and CNN, which feeds all the smaller news outlets who then repeat it verbatim with some sizzle or in sound bites. A few influential investigative sources and political pundits and you have just controlled all the information we will ever see. Post some misinformation and propaganda over radio and the internet and now you have sway over the emotions behind any agenda you choose. If the government is corrupted and the media is corrupted, then we are unwittingly corrupted.

Whether it is Invading Iraq, Tax cuts for the rich, Supreme court domination, Pork Peddling, Lobby bootlicking, or plain old cover-up of corruption, lies, cheating and stealing, we have been corrupted by our confidence that someone is actually doing their job.

Thanks Brad for helping do the job of those too corrupt to do it themselves.

Posted by: stanley on November 04, 2005 at 09:31am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

dendroica, 11/04/05, 7:35

I don't think so, not without getting caught, for cheating. Barcodes on the lottery tickets don't make it easy

to get the money.

Posted by: dapper on November 04, 2005 at 09:35am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [[flag it](#)]

Don Rumsfeld owns a sizeable percentage (still minority though) of a company named Gilead, which owns the rights to Tamiflu, which is manufactured by another Company (Swiss) named Glaxo. As a member of the Cabinet he may have an influence on the national flu strategy. Conflict of interest? Your call.

Posted by: suntzu on November 04, 2005 at 09:41 am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [[flag it](#)]

There are too many things to list on a remedial agenda; it is up to the people. We know the conditions we face, and a good step to unplug the television or watch movies made prior to political correctness. Read books published before 1910, with a few exceptions and do your homework.

The gist of all this is we need a hand counted paper ballot period. If we do not restore a hand counted paper ballot now, just when are we going to do so after mountains of unjust laws are passed by installed puppets?

Posted by: SpaceCommand on November 04, 2005 at 09:43am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [[flag it](#)]

But they look sooooo goood on TV don't they? And what would I do without my funnies in the paper? Geez, you guys really don't care about Brad Pitt or Brittany's baby? Hey, what about the whole year of MJ? I just lived for that!

It seems their excuse is always the same. It's old news so we didn't feel like going over it again. EXCUSE ME??? When did they go over it the first time? I musta missed it while puking in the toilet over the missing bride.

Posted by: rbspickles on November 04, 2005 at 09:49am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [[flag it](#)]

Maybe it's because bipartisan cooperation and agreement doesn't sell as many newspapers or pull in as many viewers as the shrill party hacks do.

Posted by: JQ on November 04, 2005 at 10:13am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [[flag it](#)]

Jean,

very good idea. One way to help secure it and an easy way to read would be to use MICR coding on the bottem just like a check.

Posted by: gpc on November 04, 2005 at 10:14am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [[flag it](#)]

Somewhere in America today, I hope one Investigative Journalist reads this post and comments. I hope that one IJ can convince other IJ's to get on this story. Every large media market has 'Local News' and every 'Local News' has a Problem solvers team. Lets get the local Media to get after their local county clerks, we can start by filing for absentee ballots. When an abnormally large request for absentee ballots comes into play, the media will have to cover it and we can help blow the cover on DIEBOLD.

It is obvious why groups like the religous Right, Focus on the Family etc., can make an impact. They have loyal sheep who feed on their words.

We, the active ones don't organize, don't share our concerns in large groups, are generally too lazy to make a difference. But boy, we sure can type and voice our concerns.

Since it is also obvious that we have very weak leadership from our Democrats in office (Reid and Conyers

excepted) we may have to flip the script on our party to move integrity forward.

I'll start with the first statement....

To the Muslim world....I am sorry our President wrongfully declared a crusade on your world. We were wrong to invade Iraq and we are wrong to try to rule you. Help us leave you in peace so you can start to get your world back together.

Posted by: oddball34 on November 04, 2005 at 10:17am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

if wal mart can give us a cash register receipt with name of merchandise and price why can't voting machines do the same in duplicate. one for us and one for the hard copy box. how about getting keith olberman, hope i spelled it right kieth, to shine some light on this

Posted by: jule on November 04, 2005 at 10:28am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

By now, this should not be news anyone except those who have been so thoroughly brainwashed that any exposure to reality could be a devastating jolt. The corporate news media has only one purpose: to wage a constant disinformation campaign to serve its corporate agenda on all domestic and foreign issues. And since most people get their news from their propaganda outlets...the brainwashing will continue unabated.

Posted by: zenon20910 on November 04, 2005 at 10:29am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

I am Done ! with the media . More like the BUSHco MEDIA . I look to blogs .

MSNBC , CNN and of course ! FIX NEWS are more like Reality T.V and a missing people show .

Remember when the media pounded Bill Clinton over a bj ?! The Bush Media (DICK Cheney's words) Can Go F*CK THEMSELVES !

Posted by: Republicansrtraitors on November 04, 2005 at 11:11am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Thanks Brad for sttaying on this issue. You are doing a great job reporting on this. Between this report and Clint Curtis' testimony about Tom Feeney rigging votes in FLA, there should be an investigation on the hill! But we'll have to wait until the dems can take at least one house.

anyway keep up the good work, and everyone should stop by bradblog, have a read and click on a couple of ads.

bradblog.com

Posted by: warbly on November 04, 2005 at 11:24am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Excellent article.

I am not a strong defender of MSM... at least not the way I was up until about five years ago. The NY Times and its Judy Opera, including WMD disinformation that "it didn't realize" was being used to justify a war, has forced me to question MSM articles before I read them. I'm still not sure Pinch or anyone else at the Times was "used". There has to be a communal bed in there somewhere.

One reality is that the internet is changing media dynamics quickly and permanently. If I were running a newspaper of any size, I would find it difficult to figure out where my nitch is from one day to the next.

Most modern newspaper and magazine companies have huge investments in an infrastructure of machinery for the printed word. All of a sudden they find themselves wondering if the increasing cost of raw materials,

and declining subscriptions suggest there may not be a future for the Gutenberg model.

Most MSM outlets have had a web presence for five or ten years, but they post only a fraction of the news and information they continue to place on pulp. They are all trying to figure out how best to get their respective products to their target audiences without going broke by simply giving it away on the internet. Obnoxious advertisements are not the answer. The New York Times' "select" strategy probably has potential, but not in the screwed up manner the Times has approached it.

Without sounding like an apologist, all of these things require thought and transition, and that takes its toll on any organization in terms of focus and even substance.

I believe you are looking at an element of this that may at first seem unrelated to the simple transmission of news: the complete no-show of MSM reporting and investigative reporting that may have indirectly helped the administration sell Americans and Congress a bag of crap wrapped in Godiva foil.

Other than absolutely negligent omissions, like the Judy Saga, I don't believe we can attribute much of this to MSM. It seems to me that it's better to acknowledge the obvious: Karl Rove is a master of deception and dirty tricks, and he got almost all of us. Multiple times. If William Buckley never says another thing with which I agree, his comments about the seriousness of the Plame leak is as well stated as anything I've come across.

And then there is Dan Rather, who was the victim of a prank that severely damaged his career. He was set up and then blindsided. Whether or not one likes Dan Rather is irrelevant.

It was after Rather and CBS were burned that other MSM organizations lost their individual and collective voices. They caved, and it is hard to second guess them in light of the slam-dunk on Rather.

Yes, MSM has failed to fulfill the role it has filled for two centuries. Yes, its alarming. But hopefully it is a combination of transition and dragons that came together at a very bad time, not permanent impairment.

Posted by: Oops on November 04, 2005 at 11:37am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Thanks so much Brad - glad you provided link to E&P - here's my letter to them (copied to my worthless corporate local rag)

Dear Editor,

On HuffingtonPost this morning, I read Brad Friedman's account of the difficulty he has had bringing this issue to the attention of the mainstream media, despite the damning GAO report recently released. I don't watch TV, but as far as I know, the LA Times, hasn't breathed a word.

As a programmer/analyst, I have been trying to alert people for a couple of years now. The problem is that non-techies have NO IDEA how easy it is to insert just 3 or 4 lines of code which will cause your precious little piece of paper to print out with the name of the guy you voted for, while unseen, the vote goes to another candidate. This is not hard to do - it is EASY. I have personally seen this occur in testing healthcare-related software where I work - printout says one thing, database actually contains something different. It took our programmer about 1 minute to remove the "bug" buried in his program because HE knew where it was, but that's the point - it only requires a couple of lines of code, can be easily inserted and deleted - and who would be the wiser?

Posted by: RJA on November 04, 2005 at 11:40am

Is this comment abusive? spam? [**flag it**]

Anybody see the link posted on Altercation in which a computer programmer testifies before a commission that a Florida politician in 2000 asked him to write a computer program that could flip an election result in an electronic voting machine. Apparently it's easy, and with no accountability within the machine, the program can eat itself and be undetectable. I'm not saying they ever used the technology, of course. That would be wrong. Here's the film of the testimony. Note the astounded questions from the panel.

<http://www.iwilltryit.com/fix1.htm>

Posted by: Jen on November 04, 2005 at 11:42am

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I don't if it occurred to most of you who posted on this blog that those terrible voting machines are essentially the same hardware and system software as you and the MSM use every single day.

If you are one of the 95+ percent of computer users using proprietary Windows-based software, there's an easy way to understand how and why the MSM ignores this issue: look in a mirror. You have all the same problems on the computer you used to post to this blog.

And I'm not saying there's not a real problem - I'm just pointing out that it's a much bigger problem than you think - and that you are likely a part of the problem, not a part of any real solution.

Jean's ideas are naive, and would cause more problems than they solve. Just like "voter-verified paper ballots."

There are solutions - but computers are not trivial artifacts; they are the most complex artifacts ever devised by humankind.

By the way, there is no federal right to vote. How important can voting be to any of you if you don't have sense the civic responsibility to read enough of the constitution and our laws to have figured that out? I don't believe voting, or computer error, is important at all to most of you. God knows, though, that I wish both were.

Posted by: johnOneOne on November 04, 2005 at 11:44am

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If there is going to be any "saving it"; it's obviously up to us to do the job.

Keep at it Brad. You are making a difference.

Peace,
UL

Posted by: understandinglife on November 04, 2005 at 11:49am

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I'm talking about you, too, Brad - your website www.bradblog.com is running Microsoft IIS 5.0. You could at least be like HuffPo and run Apache 2.0 on RedHat Linux. And if you don't know what I'm talking about, you don't know enough about electronic voting machines to be suggesting solutions to the problems you see.

Posted by: johnOneOne on November 04, 2005 at 11:54am

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Page 1 of 2 [>](#) [»](#)