

# A French e-voting “catastrophe”

Paperless direct-recording electronic (DRE) used in several cities

By [Jon Stokes](#)

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Region: [Europe](#)

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## Global Research Editorial Note

*“Two types of machines were certified for use in France’s election, both of which are of the paperless direct-recording electronic (DRE) variety now notorious (and hopefully soon-to-be outlawed) in the States: an iVotronic model from American company ES&S, and another model from Dutch company Nedap.”*

*The following report published a week before the French presidential run-off elections on May 6 point to the use of e-voting machines in several French cities. The potential for electoral fraud in the run-off elections –in which Nicolas Sarkozy won with a four point margin– cannot be dismissed and should be the object of an independent inquiry in the cities where e-voting was used.*

## Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, 6 May 2006

One of the more controversial of America’s exports has managed to unite factions from across France’s political spectrum, with the major parties in France’s hotly contested presidential election uniting to inform AFP that a “catastrophe” has taken place. No, I’m not talking about the opening of a new McDonald’s. The catastrophe in question is an electronic voting catastrophe of the kind that [occurred in a number of counties](#) in America during this past November’s mid-term elections.

In the few French cities that used the new electronic machines, the problems encountered were typical of what we’ve seen here in the US: malfunctions and complications that resulted in long lines at the polls and, ultimately, in voters who had to leave without voting. The technical glitches were compounded by some issues that appear to be specific to France. I’m talking about the elderly French’s confusion and general distrust of the machines (as reported by the AFP), responses that are probably rooted in the country’s long and cherished tradition of paper ballots and ballot box transparency—literally, the ballot boxes are see-through, and anyone can monitor them during an election to ensure that there’s no funny business.

In contrast, the American elderly were among the groups that studies showed were the most pleased with touchscreen voting in the November mid-terms, due to its ease of use. I suppose that senior citizens in America may place more trust in computers than their counterparts in France, a trait that appears to be a decidedly mixed blessing.

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paperless direct-recording electronic (DRE) variety now notorious (and hopefully soon-to-be outlawed) in the States: an iVotronic model from American company ES&S, and another model from Dutch company Nedap. Problems with ES&S' line have been well-documented here and elsewhere, and apparently the Nedap units suffer from similar vulnerabilities. The machines were banned in the Netherlands after a hacker compromised one of them in a public demonstration that aired live on Dutch TV. If Dutch hacker Rop Gonggrijp's [comments](#) to the *International Herald Tribune* are to be believed, the encryptionless Nedap machines are as poorly protected as the infamous Diebold AccuVote TS.

A [Reuters report](#) indicates that the Dutch models account for over 80 percent of the French e-voting machines, with the ES&S models making up the remainder. This being the case, I suppose it's not entirely fair to call e-voting an "American export," and indeed this distinction may answer the question of why no French farmer has yet to demolish a polling place with a tractor in protest.

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