

Why optical scan systems are a GOOD idea

1. **They are much less expensive than touch screen systems to deploy** – Since you only need one per precinct, they are much cheaper than TS systems which require you buy five, or more, per precinct. The average cost is \$5,000 per precinct versus \$17,500 for TS systems.
2. **They cost less to store and deploy** – Fewer units means less storage space and less equipment to haul to individual precincts. This can mean the difference between needing a car trunk, or a rental truck, to deliver voting equipment to the precincts.
3. **They require less training** – TS systems are complex, require calibrations, and are easy to damage in transit. An optical scan system is easy to understand, easy to use and robust.
4. **Voting does not stop because the power went off or the scanner failed** – Should you have problems with power or equipment, voters can still vote. Pen and paper does not crash.
5. **The system is self-documenting** - Paper ballots are tangible evidence of voter intent. The voter can see what has been recorded on the paper by their own hand. In the event of software or hardware failure, or questions about the electronic count, the actual ballots can be counted.
6. **Shorter voting lines** – Since voters do not have to wait in line to use a voting machine, voting is faster.
7. **Software/hardware failures doesn't mean lost votes** – Since a tangible record exists of each vote cast, a failure of the scanner or the tabulating computer doesn't mean you get to be on TV explaining why the votes of x-thousand voters have been forever lost.
8. **Mature technology** – OpScan systems have been around several decades and are very reliable. This means that you have a system that works, not a system where you are a guinea pig for the latest attempt to get it right.
9. **Technology everyone understands** – Fill in the box, cast your vote. Is it perfect? Nope, but it is far better than touch a piece of plastic and hope that the magnetic field on a rust-coated piece of aluminum is properly manipulated so that your vote is recorded correctly.
10. **It is hard to cast a completely blank ballot with a paper ballot** – Improperly designed TS systems make it easy for a voter to cast a ballot which is completely blank.

Questions? Please feel free to contact me at david@plan9.org or call me at 336.847.6885.