

FAQ: Can you explain how OmniBallot is Secure?

OmniBallot is an electronic method of delivering and returning ballots via a secure online portal, hosted by Amazon's secure cloud, AWS. Importantly, the ballot that is counted and tabulated is on paper. The AWS cloud has been certified for use by federal agencies under FedRamp certification. FedRamp approval allows Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Defense, FBI, the National Security Agency (NSA) and virtually all other federal security and intelligence agencies to use AWS.

OmniBallot utilizes AWS Object Lock to ensure immutable document (ballot) storage. The voter's ballot selections are encrypted and securely stored in AWS. Object Lock meets all NIST and federal requirements for secure online storage of critical agency data, including ballot data.

The OmniBallot secure portal has been deployed in over 1,000 elections across hundreds of jurisdictions over the last decade. Serving voters in 96 countries around the world since 2010, the OmniBallot Portal is the most deployed balloting portal in the U.S.

Is OmniBallot an "online voting" system?

No. OmniBallot is not an online voting system. At the end of the voting process, a paper ballot is downloaded by the elections administrator and printed for tabulation. A voter verified paper ballot is always available for a hand recount if necessary.

Did you know?

Each of the nearly 8,000 elections jurisdictions in the United States are required by federal law to transmit ballots electronically to military and overseas voters. The majority of those ballots are transmitted by simple email attachments. (Perhaps the least secure method of transmitting sensitive data.) *A key goal of Democracy Live is to improve security relating to the federally required transmission of ballots.*

Who is Democracy Live?

Seattle-based Democracy Live is the largest provider of cloud-based balloting in the U.S. The company has been selected by the United States Department of Defense and deployed in over fifteen states to deliver secure, accessible online balloting to millions of U.S. voters in over 90 countries and on every continent. Democracy Live was awarded the 2019 Accessibility in Voting Award presented at the United Nations, the 2019 AWS Best Civic Tech Award voted on by State CIO's and CTO's and a two-time winner of the Elections Center Independence Award presented to our counties for leveraging OmniBallot for voters with disabilities.

How does OmniBallot work?

Voters using OmniBallot log into OmniBallot portal via any smart device, or computer to access, mark and return their ballot. Voters mark their ballot on their device and are offered a choice to print and mail, or electronically return their ballot. If a voter chooses to electronically return their ballot, they are prompted to credential themselves and sign their name on their smart device touch pad. The signature and ballot is then downloaded from the secure portal by the elections authority for signature review. If the signature is approved, the ballot is printed and tabulated in the same conventional manner as current tabulation.

Independent Security Review

ShiftState Security is a cybersecurity services firm focused on applying enterprise security insights and practices to organizations looking for a more comprehensive approach to security. Founded by veteran FBI Cyber Special Agents Andre McGregor and Jason Truppi, ShiftState provides security assessment, advisory, and implementation services for small to enterprise companies, in addition to consulting on unique projects and initiatives aimed at furthering the digital security landscape. Years of experience securing Fortune 500 and government organizations led to ShiftState's unique strategy on how to operationalize security in any environment, so all organizations have the opportunity to confidently run a secure business.

Prior to the King County election, Tusk Philanthropies engaged ShiftState to conduct a full security review of Democracy Live's corporate infrastructure and security practices. In each assessment, ShiftState works to gain a 360 degree view of the organization's security posture and risk profile by assessing: the security controls and any designated security function in place, the data collection, storage, processing, and encryption mechanisms utilized, access control measures, physical and environmental protections, patching and asset management practices, backup and business continuity procedures, and more. Following ShiftState's review, Democracy Live implemented several additional security mitigations based on recommendations from the review findings. Democracy Live also underwent a penetration test of the system to be used for the King County election specifically.