

FACTSHEET ON VOTING SYSTEMS

S/N	VOTING SYSTEM	FEATURES
NON-ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEMS		
1	The Ballot Box System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ballot box system is the most commonly used voting system. - It typically involves voters marking their choice of candidate on a ballot paper in secret, and placing their ballot paper into a ballot box in the open (open secret ballot). - The number of votes cast is then counted by poll workers and recorded manually on a result sheet.
2	The Queuing System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under this system, voters in a polling unit queue behind a picture or symbol of their preferred candidate. - The number of people behind each candidate is counted and recorded manually on a result sheet. - This system is criticised for preventing secrecy of the vote.
3	The Marble System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The marble system was introduced in The Gambia in the early 1960s to make voting easier. - Under this system, voters cast their marbles in separate iron-made drums for each individual party/candidate. - Votes are then counted by placing the marbles into special trays (with either 200 or 500 holes), which allows poll workers to quickly ascertain the number of votes cast in each drum. - This system is also criticised for preventing secrecy of the vote.
4	Mail Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As the name implies, mail voting involves voting remotely through the postal system. - The ballots are typically mailed to voters before Election Day.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voters then select their preferred candidate and either return the completed ballot by mail or deposit it in a secure dropbox by a certain time on Election Day. - The mail ballots are counted manually by poll workers and recorded.
ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEMS		
5	Direct-Recording Electronic (DRE) Voting Machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DRE machines allow people to vote electronically by marking their votes directly into an electronic device, using a touch screen, push buttons or a similar device. - Voting data is stored by the electronic device, which eliminates the need for a paper ballot. - DRE machines can come with or without a voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT), which is used to provide physical evidence of the electronic votes cast. - To use a DRE machine, the voter must come physically to the polling unit.
6	Electronic Ballot Printers (EBPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EBPs are similar to DRE machines. - They produce machine-readable papers or electronic tokens containing the voter's choice. - This token is then fed into a separate ballot scanner which counts the vote automatically.
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9	Punch-Card Voting Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under this system, voters vote by punching holes in cards using a punch device.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The voter may either place the punched card in a ballot box or feed it into a computer vote-tabulating device at the polling place.
10	Optical Scanning Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Optical scanning systems used specialised computer hardware devices to capture images and software to convert those images to computer-readable data. - There are four main types: Optical Mark Reading (OMR), Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR), and Imaging Technology Optical Mark Reading (OMR). - Most optical scanning systems use OMR technology, which refers to scanners that can recognise the voter's choice on special machine-readable ballot papers.
11	Internet Voting Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under internet voting systems, votes are transferred via the internet to a central counting server. - The vote can be cast from a public computer, from a voting kiosk in a polling station, or from any internet-connected computer accessible to the voter. - Internet voting offers voters the opportunity to vote remotely, from the comfort of their homes.

Sources: International IDEA and The Ace Project¹

¹ International IDEA, *Introducing Electronic Voting: Essential Considerations*, Policy Paper (December 2011), <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/introducing-electronic-voting.pdf>; The Ace Project, *Elections and Technology*, <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/et/eth/eth02/eth02b/eth02b1>; The Ace Project, *Voting with Marbles in The Gambia*, <https://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/837672881>