Overview

The OSET Institute, Inc., is a 501.c.3 nonpartisan election technology research organization. Our flagship initiative is the TrustTheVote Project—a democracy software foundry. Our mission is to increase confidence in elections and their outcomes through public (open source) technology that is verifiable, accurate, secure, and transparent. The following pages describe the Institute’s activities and impacts, which benefit from non-political philanthropic funding, because our work addresses the administration of elections, not campaigns or electioneering.

The vast majority of the OSET Institute’s activities (and use of funds) are invested in our democracy software foundry—the TrustTheVote Project where we design and develop open source software for the administration of elections and voting (Technology R&D in Figure 1). A significant portion of that research work addresses the application and system software, firmware, and trusted computing initiatives including, but not limited to, addressing trusted boot and hardware attestation for critical infrastructure applications.

Our sources of funding include individual private gifts, foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, and government research and development (“R&D”) collaborations. Our intent for 2020 is to greatly expand individual small-dollar donors to the TrustTheVote Project to properly position it for what it is: a “public digital works project of the people, by the people, and for the people.” Nevertheless, we’re expanding our corporate supporters roster, and we continue to pursue larger gifts and research grants.
## Impact

Let’s consider the Institute’s activities with the impact and importance of the work.

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Role and Importance</th>
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<td><strong>Role</strong>: This is primarily open source software development, but also includes R&amp;D activities for physical voting device innovations including firmware and silicon-based security. This amounts to an open source democracy software foundry called the “TrustTheVote Project.” The flagship effort is ElectOS—an election administration technology framework including cloud-based election administration Apps and services, and a software layer for a modified “GOTS-based” voting system. The TrustTheVote Project is also building a number of election administration innovations, mostly voter-facing services to increase ease and convenience of participation. <strong>Importance</strong>: This is the heart and soul of the OSET Institute cause and mission to increase confidence in elections and their outcomes in order to improve and sustain trust in American democracy as well as improves its defense. The OSET Institute is the only 501.c.3 organization of its kind—building a publicly available layer of election administration software technology. This is essential and imperative to revitalizing an imploding sector of government I.T. where there is no commercial incentive to do so, and the government cannot.</td>
<td>The OSET Institute work is global in reach. Public software development is benefiting all western democracies. Today, 40% of inquiries come from abroad. We have an R&amp;D initiative in Canada, and are under consideration for collaborations in the E.U., parts of Africa, India, and the Far East. • Today, the OSET Institute is the supplier of 3rd party voter registration technology to RockTheVote, which in turn provides the software to other organizations including VotoLatino, the NAACP, Student PIRGs and others. This includes Apps and services like canvassing. • The TrustTheVote Project has built voter services portal software with a first implementation in Virginia several years ago, and said software is now under consideration in several states. • There are vital software projects to protect voter registration records and improve voter convenience. • The ElectOS election technology framework is designed with input from 200+ election officials in 28 states. When complete its likely to receive top consideration as a first-ever alternative in dozens of states needing to replace systems by 2022.</td>
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<td><strong>Role</strong>: This is consulting service the Institute offers to two (2) audiences: 1. Commercial vendors of cyber security Apps and services from the consumer-facing brands (e.g., McAfee) to B2B consultancies (e.g., Anomaly, Mitre, Raytheon, Swan Island Networks, etc.); and 2. Election administrators from the state secretaries offices to the city, county, and township registrars. In this capacity, the Institute serves as election administration domain experts. <strong>Importance</strong>: This is vital to helping all parties understand the role of digital security in election administration.</td>
<td>This is a newer aspect of the Institute’s work, with opportunities rapidly increasing. The Institute anticipates this to reach a maximum 10% of our total activities. OSET Institute is developing collaborations with several cybersecurity firms. McAfee is coming aboard as a sponsor. This has also led to the Institute establishing an Election Blockchain Security Alliance to launch in Q1 2020. This work is providing windfall benefit to a different but key segment: the Media. The Institute has an established partnership with NBCUniversal and provides on-air subject matter experts.</td>
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### Public Technology Research & Development

- **TrustTheVote Project**
  - Partnership with Swan Media. The Institute has in Q1 2020+
  - Blockchain Security Advisory
  - Anomaly, Mitre, Raytheon, Swan Island Networks, etc.
  - McAfee is coming aboard as a sponsor.
  - Election Blockchain Security Alliance to launch in Q1 2020.

### Cyber-Security Advisory Services

- **Role**: This is consulting service the Institute offers to two (2) audiences:
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  - Election administrators from the state secretaries offices to the city, county, and township registrars.
- In this capacity, the Institute serves as election administration domain experts.
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- This work is providing windfall benefit to a different but key segment: the Media. The Institute has an established partnership with NBCUniversal and provides on-air subject matter experts.
Role: The rapidly evolving world of election administration in the digital age calls for new legislative initiatives at states and federal levels to provide for everything from funding to security of voting systems. Such legislative initiatives require deep understanding of the technical issues and the impact of related legislation. Responsible regulation, to the extent required, must be developed with an understanding of the underlying technology of election administration that will be impacted by resulting regulation.

Importance: Lobbyists and special interests are bombarding Congress and states’ legislatures. That is to be expected and is part of the political process. However, pragmatic intellectually honest information to help produce responsible legislation is paramount in this sector, given its imperative role in defense of democracy.

The founders of the OSET Institute did not imagine it would become a “Think Tank;” in fact, the mission is to be a “Do Tank.” However, given unique domain expertise in election technology as well as process and policy, the OSET Institute is playing an important role in several states and federal legislative efforts. Today, the Institute, with a team of eight policy specialists, regularly advises Congressional committees, as well as agencies and departments of the national security apparatus. This has become a key and essential impact of our work.

And this capability is also being leveraged by the Media and in our partnership with NBCUniversal.

There is a continuous feedback loop as the Institute is also engaged with the open standards making efforts with NIST and collaborating with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to develop new design guidelines and next generation federal certification processes—all can be and is informed by OSET Institute technology R&D.

In summary, the OSET Institute, in its 14th year of existence, has grown to 60 individuals passionate about the defense of democracy and trust in elections and their outcomes. The mission is global in nature: the OSET Institute has socialized its work in Copenhagen at the Global Democracy Summit for the past two years, and has invitations in 2020 to do so in Paris at the World Government I.T. Summit; in Davos at the World Economic Forum; and in Abu Dhabi at the World Government Summit.

The Institute is also prosecuting U.S. patents to be assigned to the public for its innovations being engineered into ElectOS™ (https://electos.org). This means the election administration and voting technology under development will have a long-term sustained public ownership, not to be co-opted and converted for competitive advantage of any single commercial vendor.

The long-term impact of the OSET Institute will catalyze a reformation and reinvention of the commercial industry for delivering election administration and voting technology. At the same time, this public (open source) technology will begin a systemic change in the administration of elections; restore voter trust in this vital element of democracy; and most importantly, increase public confidence in elections and their outcomes.

Thanks to your continued support, the OSET Institute can continue this important work in defense of democracy. Our mission has become a moral imperative and through your support we will be able to complete the work. Thank you!