Looking for new tech for your local government? Make incremental improvements, so you don’t throw the baby out with the bath water.
If you are frustrated with the technology your city, county, department or agency is using, it’s tempting to throw up your hands and start looking for something new. Surely, there has to be a better software tool for whatever you’re trying to do, some new system that won’t have the same limitations and issues as the current platform. We see a lot of people who believe that the perfect system must be out there — one that can magically unite all their old legacy data and improve operations. But it’s almost always more complicated than that.

I’ve been there and felt your pain. But wholesale change, for instance from one ‘big system’ vendor to another, is always more complicated than you’d think and won’t be seamless. It’s almost always far better to test, experiment, start small, and make gradual, incremental improvements and changes. And that’s what we let you do with CityGrows.

**What’s your procurement process?**

Let’s start there: if you decide you want a new tool, can you just go out and buy it?

Probably not.

One organization I talked to recently had a eight- to twelve-month
process for an RFP process- for an off-the-shelf system. Hiring a vendor to set up the tool could well double that time, and then it might take even more time to actually do the work. And that kind of timeline isn’t so unusual in government. That’s going to be a difficult, complicated process. By the end of it, the technology you originally wanted could already be obsolete.

It also doesn’t help that other people who haven’t used the system might not understand how it’s problematic or why a new one would be better.

And what happens while you’re going through procurement?

You still have to use the old, frustrating software.

But let’s say you are able to make it through procuring a new system. Then what happens?

**Nothing is perfect; the grass is always greener.**

The aphorism holds true in government, too. With any major change, there are going to be speed bumps, features that don’t work as well as they should. Forms might not be setup the way you need and you’ll either have to change how you operate or put in the time and effort to change the system.
**There’s a better way.**

Instead of trying to completely change systems, you can start small. Rather than trying to change everything at the same time, you can (and *should* in our opinion) be able to field test a new tech product on one, two, or a few workflows, to see what it’s like. You can get a sense of how a software platform really works that way. and understand if it’s a good fit for your needs, your staff, and your budget, without having to spend $10–25K before you even see whether it works for you. A demo is always going to make a product or platform look great — you can’t really understand what it’s like to use it, unless you use it.

That’s how we recommend governments use CityGrows. You don’t need to move all your forms and processes over at once before launching. Instead, you can do it one at a time and use those processes as test runs for what implementing CityGrows across your organization would be like.

Unlike most tech tools for government, CityGrows is set up and managed by government employees themselves- that means that the people who are managing processes day to day — the administrative staff who are actually issuing the special event permits, the parking passes, or the dog licenses — get involved in setting up the new system.

And with CityGrows, it’s totally free to get started. You don’t need
to pay anything to try it out and see if it works and there are no upfront setup fees. You can even use it for free and pass along credit card processing fees to constituents. And if you decide to use additional features or support, just pay a monthly fee. (See our pricing page for more info).

With the slower, more incremental process, you’ll be making an immediate difference in the user experience for both government employees and staffers. You’ll let the departments that really need a solution now go first, and the most tech-savvy people on your team get started right away. Then those folks can share their experience and help people who are more suspicious of new technology get comfortable with the idea, without you having to force it.

You’ll discover questions, things you hadn’t considered about what it means to move processes online, and be able to resolve them earlier on, with your initial pilot teams. And you’ll be able to change how you operate or how you use CityGrows without the stress of having to deal with 20 different processes at once.

Setting up CityGrows or implementing any other innovation with gradual, incremental improvements will be smoother and you’ll have a better time with results and benefits that you’ll be able to see in real time.
And in two years, your whole organization will have transitioned to the CityGrows platform. By contrast, if you do a traditional procurement process and wait to roll everything out at once, you might just be starting to implement a new system by then.

Want to improve your government’s systems, one process at a time? Sign up for CityGrows now!

Published in CityGrows · Jul 3, 2018

Thinking about Google Forms or Wufoo for your local government workflow? Think again.
Stop dealing with all these paper forms and don't settle for a form tool that can't handle government work. CityGrows can help! (Photo courtesy of Dvortygirl)

Need to quickly get a form up online? Maybe you have a permit process that you’re trying to digitize, or want a job application that candidates can submit from a website. You might think about using Google Forms or a similar form app like Wufoo or SurveyMonkey. …

Read more · 5 min read
Summertime means summer permits! Using CityGrows for online permitting and licensing for local governments

Summer is prime time for local governments! There are block parties to approve, fish to be caught, beach parking stickers to issue, boat moorings to assign, park grills to reserve, and much more. Which of these summer activities does your town require permits or licenses for? …

Read more · 3 min read
Why start: I just couldn’t sit back

I’ve been thinking a lot recently about why I’m working on ShakingNews, my project to cover and explain what’s happening in state politics (starting in New York).

The last few weeks have not been easy. Two people who had offered to work with me on various pieces of getting ShakingNews…

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A Failure of Policy and a Failure of Politics
Last week, Matt Stoller wrote an important article about the failure of Obama’s financial policies. As inspiring as Obama was as President, many of his policies boosted Wall Street and weakened working Americans across the Midwest. …

Read more - 4 min read
Jan 5, 2017

The Right Goal for A/B Testing

If you’re doing an A/B test, you’re typically looking for what will bring in the most money, either directly (donations, sales, etc.) or indirectly (email signups, link clicks, lead generation forms, petitions or the like). But I want to suggest something that might be contrary to what you’d think:

Unless...

Read more · 2 min read

Dec 12, 2016

How a Small Advocacy Group Can Get Powerful

Angry? Want to start a new organization? Read on...
Are you upset about the election? Angry that Donald Trump seems more interested in making money than knowing what’s going on in the world? Upset that the new cabinet is opposed to the work of government? Scared that a new McCarthyism will doom our planet? …

Read more • 5 min read
Fake News or No News?
The News Opportunity in the Decline of Traditional

It seems the media has found a culprit for Donald Trump’s election: fake news. Websites made up pro-Trump stories because his supporters would read and share them. The Russian government helped disseminate them. These invented news stories changed the dynamics of the race and helped destroy Hillary Clinton’s reputation.

Everyone…

Read more · 6 min read
Talk Less, Listen More: Why Big Data Isn’t Enough

After President Obama’s two successful campaigns, a myth spread around Democratic campaigners. As long as you built a campaign that operated like Barack Obama’s campaigns — canvassing, volunteer leaders, and substantial digital outreach, all guided by data — you’d win. Then, that theory ran into reality. …
It Can’t Happen Here (or can it?): Three Lessons for Fighting Fascism
Over Thanksgiving, I read Sinclair Lewis’ Depression-era work, *It Can’t Happen Here*, his telling of how fascism could come to America.

Like *The Plot Against America*, the politics don’t necessarily make too much sense. In *It Can’t Happen Here*, a Trump-like figure wins the Democratic nomination and then the Presidency…

*Read more · 3 min read*

Nov 23, 2016

**Our Elections Probably Weren’t Hacked… But that doesn’t mean there aren’t other problems**
Regardless of what kind of machine your county uses, your vote may not be counted correctly.

Over the last few days, a lot of folks on the left have taken up the banner of #AuditTheVote. Dale Beran suggested that differences between the Presidential polls and the actual vote in swing states may have been a result of Russian hacking. When I first saw it, I dismissed…

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Like so many people, I was distraught about the results of last Tuesday’s election. But while it’s cold comfort, it’s important to remember that most Americans did not vote for Donald Trump. ...
What’s Next — for America and for Democrats

Like so many people, I was distraught about the results of last Tuesday’s election. But while it’s cold comfort, it’s important to remember that most Americans did not vote for Donald Trump. Fewer than 60% of Americans voted and while states are still counting ballots, Hillary got over a million more votes than
Trump.

In a country of more than 300 million people, only 1 in 5 voted for Trump. That’s not an overwhelming tide of bigotry; it’s not a sweeping mandate to disregard the Constitution.

While it’s still early and Donald Trump has not been inaugurated, he’s already showing a basic disrespect for constitutional principles. His early moves also suggest that he’ll lead a dysfunctional administration full of infighting.

Masha Gessen in her excellent article comparing Trump to Putin makes clear that we need to take the threat seriously. Regardless of whether he attempts to govern as an autocrat, the strategy should remain the same: stand up and prevent Donald Trump from destroying America.

It’s clear that within that small segment that did vote for Trump, at least some of them voted for Obama. Within the 40% of Americans who didn’t vote, some of them voted for Obama in 2008 or 2012. While turnout appears to be broadly similar to 2012 (contra early reports otherwise), we don’t have all the data to know the exact numbers. Nevertheless, it’s largely academic — Democrats lost voters they’ve won before and that flipped enough states to deny Hillary Clinton the Presidency. If we want to save America, we need to stop the bleeding and win those voters back.
How Do We Win Them Back?

We need big plans that excite voters and promise solutions, as Becky Bond and Zack Exley argue in their new book, *Rules for Revolutionaries*. And then we need to present them to voters and argue for them.

Hillary Clinton adopted many of Bernie Sanders’ plans and advocated one of the most progressive platforms of any Presidential candidate ever, but she never focused on that. When she presented plans, they were modest and incrementalist, smart plans that offered advances over the present without changing the world. Most of her campaign wasn’t even about that, though. Instead, she was denouncing Trump.

Hillary Clinton was right about Trump’s unsuitability for the Presidency. She would have made a great president, regardless of her opponent. However — and I say this as someone who voted for her in the primary and helped her campaign in the general election — her lack of vision didn’t engage voters and get them excited to support her.

As Daniel Burnham, the architect and urban planner who did so much to build the Chicago that Hillary Clinton grew up in, put it, “Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood.” Unfortunately, Hillary Clinton presented only small plans, even if they were very progressive ones.
That’s the difference between Obama and Clinton (or for that matter, Bill Clinton and Hillary or Al Gore or John Kerry): Obama offered a new vision of a future America, Hillary Clinton criticized the opposition without clearly offering her own vision. Running on experience and the other candidates’ unsuitability doesn’t inspire people to run out and vote. And with Hillary dogged by (fake) scandals in the final weeks, even swing voters who agreed that Donald Trump was unqualified didn’t vote for Clinton.

On the other hand, Donald Trump was speaking to people’s real fears about the world and the uncertain future. While he had no real plans, he made it clear to his supporters that he understood the challenges they were facing in a way that Hillary Clinton, with her modest goals, never did.

While it’s astonishing to me that people were comfortable identifying as “deplorable,” it was just another sign that Trump acknowledged their worries in a way that Democrats were not. We weren’t even trying to persuade voters to be more open to women and people of color. Moreover, as Nick Wright at Election Data makes clear, pointing out the truth just demonstrates that we don’t understand the real distress for millions of Americans, regardless of what misguided beliefs they hold.

The voters who cast a ballot for Obama did because, at least in 2008, he spoke up and offered change for their lives, and some of
them overlooked his skin color to do so. Then, so many Midwestern communities in states like Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania experienced eight more years of further backsliding.

Bernie Sanders promised fundamental change to a broken system. Hillary Clinton backed away that rhetoric, even as she adopted that platform. That left just Donald Trump offering change and some voters succumbed to their darkest impulses because Hillary Clinton was not speaking to them.

If we want to win enough states to win Congress and prevail in the electoral college, Democrats need to present a message of how America will look in the future, something that people want and will take action to achieve (volunteering, donating, and voting). The next two to four years will provide the opportunity to contrast a progressive future with a scary and dysfunctional present under Donald Trump and Republican leadership.

The Next Four Years

We don’t know exactly what Donald Trump will do as President but the first week has certainly stirred up fears. John McLaughlin, acting Director of the CIA under George W. Bush put it simply: “The worst-case scenario would come about in the Trump presidency if he simply turns out to be who he says he is.” That
said, Trump might encounter a very similar political environment like President Obama has faced where legislative action is difficult but executive action is virtually unfettered.

Donald Trump has virtually unlimited executive power. He might not be able to rip up NAFTA but assuming he can push the bureaucracy to act, he can deport millions of people. He can set the FBI upon activists and political opponents and the Department of Justice can indict Hillary Clinton or anyone else Donald Trump wants to harass. He can relax sanctions on Russia, provoke terror attacks in the Middle East, and sow doubts about America’s willingness to protect our allies in Europe and Asia. And if those actions benefit the Trump Organization, well, as long as Congressional Republicans are cowed by Trump, there’s little anyone can do to stop him.

Republicans will be able to simply reverse regulations protecting the environment and loosening the strictures on banks. However, actually enacting policy won’t be easy. It almost always requires compromise, appeasing various groups with conflicting desires. If anything saves the Affordable Care Act, it’ll be the difficulty of legislating. Replacing it with something that keeps insurance companies, hospitals, doctors, and other interest groups happy is unlikely and repealing Obamacare without a solution would leave millions without healthcare and just invites backlash.
Republicans don’t have a wide majority in Congress. A popular upheaval against ending Medicare, Medicaid, and Obamacare might spook enough Republicans to result in a blockage where little gets through over the next two years. When that happens, we should celebrate dissent and welcome any Republicans who stand against Trump and his proposals.

Nevertheless, Trump and the Republican Party will have responsibility for everything that happens in America. The Framers of the Constitution constructed our government so that it’s rare either party has complete power. For the last six years, we’ve banged our head against the wall as Obama tried and failed to push progressive legislation through Congress. Republicans won’t have that obstacle.

With that power, they’ll have responsibility to “Make America Great Again” and if they fail, they’ll have trouble blaming others. They control Congress, the Presidency, and a majority of state houses. If unemployment goes up, that’s their fault. If health care premiums go up or coverage goes down, that’s their fault. If jobs continue to be outsourced and technology keeps displacing workers, that’s Republicans’ fault. If the world becomes more unsafe, that’s something Donald Trump and Republicans are responsible for causing.

The Path to Winning Back America

https://medium.com/@michaelspitzerrubenstein/whats-next-for-america-2487c04cccb4b
Republicans’ responsibility creates an incredible opportunity for Democrats to win in 2018 and 2020, as long as they stand strong against Trump and Republicans. And as activists who care, we can start organizing now, regardless of where we are, to build people power, educate our communities, elect candidates who will stand up to Trump, and keep our Democratic leaders acting as the opposition.

Democrats must resist and not collaborate with Trump and Congressional Republicans. That means no compromise because any compromise will mean that Democrats share the weight of responsibility for poor decisions.

When the debt ceiling needs to be increased, Democrats in Congress need to ask themselves: are we willing to accept responsibility for what this money will go towards? If Donald Trump proposes an infrastructure bill that rips up environmental regulations or worker protections, Democrats need to question whether they are willing to campaign on those policies. If the answer is no, then there is no possibility for compromise.

We must stand up against everything, especially if it targets workers (and their unions) or people of color, two of the most vulnerable segments of the Democratic coalition. Unless Donald Trump and Republicans are backing Democratic proposals to build more housing, support mass transit, and protect workers,
without any conditions, Democrats need to resist the urge to compromise.

Democrats are the opposition party and have a duty to oppose. Every mistake, every problem that comes up, we need to hang around Republicans’ necks. In the 2018 and 2020 elections, we need to make it clear that we are opposed to everything Donald Trump and Republicans are doing.

While we can’t lose hope, it’s going to take a long-term six-year plan to win back America.

In 2018, we’ll win back the House, the Senate, and take state legislatures around the country. It won’t be easy — Democrats will probably need to win about 25 House seats and 3 Senate seats — but it’s doable with a large enough wave of support. In 2010, Republicans elected 6 senators and 63 representatives. In 2006, Democrats won 5 senate seats and 31 seats in Congress.

That will require organizing everywhere, reaching out to voters who we might have previously written off as racist or sexist or homophobic. We can’t assume that anyone is irredeemable because if there is a major backlash to Trump, it’ll come in unexpected places. We need to be there already so that we can capitalize on that and ride the wave to victory.
A wave allowing Democrats to win back all of Congress would be remarkable, especially given the paucity of targets in the Senate right now. Democrats would probably need to win every contested Senate race. However, over the next two years, Senators can die, resign, run for other offices, or be appointed to Trump’s cabinet, opening up more competitive races. It is, nonetheless, possible.

Even if we can only win the House and not the Senate in 2018, we can start investigating everything Trump has done: his taxes, how he won the election with Russian help, and everything he does in office. From state houses, we can fight voter suppression and make it easier for everyone to vote. We can also strengthen the unions and community organizations that have played such a role in building political power for working people. Besides being morally just, those policies will also help Democrats win in future elections. Without unions and Latino community groups in Nevada, we almost certainly would not have won there this year.

In 2020, we can defeat Donald Trump, win back even more control of Congress, and win even more state houses. With those wins, we’ll be able to investigate all the abuses and crimes of Donald Trump and his administration as well as banks and other private sector criminals.

Without being vindictive, Democrats need to show that they’ll
stand up against crime and will fight for justice. Not doing so the past eight years is why some voters abandoned Democrats and allowed Hillary Clinton, a dedicated public servant who made a few mistakes, as equal to a sexual assaulting crook who made money by defrauding both workers and his eponymous company’s stockholders.

2020 is especially important because that’s the year of the Census and so new district lines will be drawn for Congress and state legislatures after that election. Right now, so many of those lines are Republican gerrymanders so reforming those lines will make it easier for Democrats to win in 2022. Ending gerrymandering is also a good opportunity to demonstrate that Democrats are committed to fixing democracy, and as California has shown, we don’t need to ridiculously bend the rules to win; we just need fair districts.

By 2022, we can have established a secure dominance that will allow us to enact real progressive policies and transform America to help all people.

But what vision?

But as we established at the beginning, it’s not enough to just talk about winning, we need to present big plans for how Americans will be better off. The Clintonian New Democratic path of
moderation and small incremental reform has now lost repeatedly in almost every Presidential election in which it’s been tried.

Instead, we need to center the experiences of working people and demonstrate our commitment to policies that will transform our economy to help working people. That will appeal to both white workers and the people of color who will benefit the most. We need to strengthen unions and community groups that represent and wield power for people too poor to donate to a political campaign or hire a lobbyist. And we can level the playing field by instituting campaign finance reform and stopping industry capture of government. Those aren’t just the right things to do but are also key to building sustained progressive political power.

For Democrats and for all people who care about America, this is a time for choosing: will we collaborate with Donald Trump or will we resist. While we don’t know exactly what he’ll do, either way we need to stand up, fight for our values and win.

Decades from now, our children and grandchildren will ask, “What did you do when Donald Trump was elected President?” Let’s make sure we have a good answer.
Our Elections Probably Weren’t Hacked... But that doesn’t mean there aren’t other problems

Michael SpitzerRubenstein  Nov 23, 2016  · 7 min read
Over the last few days, a lot of folks on the left have taken up the banner of #AuditTheVote. Dale Beran suggested that differences between the Presidential polls and the actual vote in swing states may have been a result of Russian hacking. When I first saw it, I dismissed it as a conspiracy theory (and even the computer scientist who suggested an audit agrees there probably wasn’t any hacking). However, with news media reporting on it, it’s worth thinking more on how we run elections in America and all the problems with it.

**Elections are a mess — that makes them more difficult to steal**
The electoral college is just one of the many problems with how the Presidential election works. More importantly, our elections are run at the state and local level and every state has its own rules about who is eligible to vote, how things work when someone gets to the polling place, what machines are used and how votes are counted. In many places, this is determined at the county level, so your county funds the election board, buys the voting machines, hires poll workers, and actually administers the election.

The theory is that this diversity of systems created an opportunity for Russian hackers to hack specific electronic voting machines and change the vote totals. But it’s not so easy to do without a cloud of suspicion.

Election results aren’t just reported at the state and county level but at each individual precinct. In most places, the results are broken down by each individual election district (the exact terminology varies by state). If the results in one neighborhood were out-of-whack, people would notice.

Indeed, in other cases with fraudulent election results, there was evidence. People noticed and said, “hey, why did candidate X win so many votes here? Why did so many more voters turn out to vote only for this one candidate but the rest of their ballots were blank?”
Now, it’s theoretically possible that Russian hackers changed only enough votes to throw the election without leaving any suspicious numbers or affecting downballot results for Senate, Congress, state and local offices in weird, inexplicable ways. But Trump won Wisconsin by only 30,000 votes. The Russian hackers would have needed to be incredibly well-versed in American politics down to the precinct level to switch just enough votes to help Trump win very narrowly.

**Is that possible?**

Sure.

It’s about the same realm of possibility as me jumping off the roof of a building and landing on top of a moving car on my feet ready to fight the bad guys coming at me, without ever having practiced that move before. Which is to say it’s the kind of thing that happens only in movies.

**But that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t #AuditTheVote.**

In part because of our federal system with diverse responsibilities for elections, we don’t do a very good job of making sure every voice is heard and that every vote is counted.

Many systematically set up barriers to prevent voters from even
registering. We’re no longer in the days of the Jim Crow-era South where elections administration officers would simply refuse to register African Americans, but many states still don’t make it easy to become a voter.

Only 11 states allow same-day registration (plus North Dakota, which doesn’t have voter registration). Several states require voters to register more than a month away from the election. Despite efforts to institute national voter registration forms, some states only reluctantly accept them. In 2004, Ohio tried to institute a rule that they would accept only forms printed on the right weight of paper, so if you printed out the voter registration form at home, it would not have been accepted. The Motor Voter Law required the DMV and other government offices to offer voter registration forms; it’s frequently ignored. New York requires voters trying to change parties to re-register almost a year in advance. If you were convicted of a crime, you may or may not be allowed to vote depending on the state.

**In total, it’s not so easy to register to vote.**

But what if you were able to register?

It’s not necessarily any easier to vote.

Haven’t voted in a while or had a problem with your mail?
You could be marked as inactive and not allowed to vote.
Infamously, in 2000, Florida’s Secretary of State Katherine Harris
removed thousands of voters from the rolls because their names
were similar to formerly-incarcerated people.

Want an absentee ballot?

Many states require an explanation for why you need an absentee
ballot and can’t vote in person (New York does this). If you live in
state with a no-excuse vote by mail system or have an excuse,
you can request a ballot but you typically need to request it weeks
ahead of time. Even then, it could get lost in the mail and never
arrive. You could receive it and lose it, in which case you might
not be able to vote. You could send your absentee ballot back and
it could get lost in the mail, never arriving at your local board of
elections. All those forms typically need to be mailed in and
postage costs money meaning it’s not free to vote.

Suddenly realized that you’ll be out of town on election day?

Tough luck — you probably can’t vote unless you realized before
the absentee ballot deadline or your state has early voting.

Don’t have time to wait in line for hours to vote?

Out of luck.
Show up at the wrong polling place, even if it’s in the same district? (Maybe it was your polling place in the previous election and you were supposed to go to a different precinct but didn’t receive a notification).

Not going to be able to vote there.

Show up at the polling place and your name isn’t on the list?

Even if you get to the right place, elections administration offices almost always lack the resources they need to maintain data properly. They are often used as patronage positions to stow friends and people who can’t hack anything else. We don’t value elections administration and so it’s not a coincidence that the people working at the polls are frequently senior citizens who’ve been doing it for years or decades. You may be able to cast a provisional ballot but the poll workers might not know to offer that opportunity.

Something wrong with your ID?

Again, you might not be able to vote. Some states don’t have any ID requirements others have very strict requirements. In either case, they are inconsistently applied by poll workers who don’t necessarily know what they are doing so you might be asked for your ID in a state without an ID requirement. If you live in a state
like Wisconsin with strict voter ID requirements, you might not have the right kind of ID. Even if you do, though, a poll worker might not think you do have the right ID and could prevent you from voting.

I’ve been involved with various campaigns for more than 12 years now, since volunteering on Dick Gephardt’s presidential campaign in 2004, asking Iowa Democrats to caucus for him. I’ve encountered a lot of voters. However, until I helped the Clinton campaign with their SMS hotline before the election, I had never before encountered the true breadth of issues that can prevent someone from voting.

But let’s say you do show up and are able to vote. Will your vote be counted?

Hopefully, but not necessarily.

Ballot-counting machines are imperfect. When I tried to vote on Election Day, I filled out the ballot, put it in the machine and the machine jammed. The poll workers were able to fix it but that took time; time during which hundreds of other people were waiting to vote.

If I filled out my ballot incorrectly, I have no way of knowing that my vote wasn’t counted. The podcast 99% Invisible did an episode
about ballot design and wouldn’t you know: these organizations without much in the way of resources or expertise create ballots like the infamous butterfly ballot that are counter-intuitive and lead to voters to incorrectly cast ballots.

Some states use electronic voting machines without any paper trail so if something goes wrong, there’s no way to see what should have happened.

Ballots regularly get lost (during the 2000 recount, election workers found boxes of uncounted ballots and that’s not unusual) and provisional and absentee ballots face the worst of it. For the most part, there’s also no way of finding out whether your ballot was accepted and never any way of being sure that it was counted correctly.

Unless there’s a recount, it’s likely that many votes aren’t counted correctly. And if there is a recount, one party or another is trying to prevent certain votes from being counted.

With that morass of problems, many Americans are prevented from exercising their right to vote, whether they know it or not.

And none of that requires any hacking.
Auditing the election returns probably won’t turn up any signs of hacking or foul play but it might reveal some of the dark underbelly of how our elections run. And if it prompts any changes to make it easier to vote, that would be a success.