

## Operating Principles

A Statement of How We Do What We Do

The Open Source Election Technology (OSET) Institute, a Silicon Valley based 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit election technology research organization, is challenging the status quo of many efforts in electoral technology reform, applying entrepreneurial principles to our cause.

We necessarily eschew tactical or piecemeal change, recognizing that innovation in the machinery of elections must be holistic, strategic and above all, transformational. Therefore, we are guided by four operating principles reduced to practice in our flagship effort, the [TrustTheVote™ Project](#) working on the front lines of electoral technology and process reform:

1. **Catalyze** transformational innovation in the critical democracy infrastructure of elections administration and voting.
2. **Pursue** an audacious agenda, think big, be willing to take aggressive risks and conduct all efforts in a goal-oriented manner.
3. **Apply** proactive approaches to the work that engage elections stakeholders in meaningful ways with measurable impact.
4. **Solve** the challenges of elections administration and voting by inventing applications, devices, and services that people can see, touch, and try, and which bring ease, convenience, and even delight to the experience of administering, conducting, and for citizens, participating in the electoral processes of American democracy in a digital age.

### What Success Means

Success of the TrustTheVote Project means causing historical change in the machinery of elections, in a massively scalable manner, that demonstratively and markedly improves the mandate of trustworthy elections: the highest possible assurance of verifiability, accuracy, security, and transparency.

**Our strategy is delivery, because *code causes change*<sup>SM</sup>.**

There are 10 characteristics of the TrustTheVote Project that are delivering on our operating principles:

1. **Unbridled Innovation.** Designing, from the ground-up, an open source holistic elections technology framework that addresses all aspects of the voting ecosystem including both elections administration and voting processes.
2. **Standards Driven.** Driving open data standards for transparency and interoperability with government IT infrastructure.

3. **Collaborative Model.** Placing stakeholders—elections officials from all over the country—at the center of our work, rather than source code, and nurturing the stakeholder relationship to bring about tacit approval of our efforts to catalyze massively scalable adoption of our work.
4. **Publicly Accessible IP.** Pursuing an aggressive intellectual property asset portfolio assigned to public ownership through a combination of open source licensing and global patent protection.
5. **Catalyzing the Industry.** Providing the research, development, education, and support for election technology innovation in order to reinvigorate a commercial market for the adaptation, deployment, service, and support of elections and voting systems based on this publicly owned critical democracy infrastructure.
6. **Pursuing Integrity.** Catalyzing fundamental change in federal certification processes, helping the EAC and NIST with a new, modern component-based model for certifying the integrity of voting systems.
7. **Evolving Procurement.** Helping reshape government procurement policy in a manner that preserves the important objectives of equity, fairness, and transparency in those processes, while enabling fair market opportunity for open source alternatives and opportunity for a wider spectrum of organizations to compete for contract opportunities to supply digital innovation.
8. **Evangelizing Open Source.** Educating states, counties, and jurisdictions on the benefits and costs of open source alternatives.
9. **Fostering Excellence.** Developing a pathway and roadmap for innovation in elections to advance ease, convenience, and even delight in the administrative role and voter participation in the most critical part of our democratic process: public elections.
10. **An Eye on Global Application.** Finally, it is our aspiration to pursue global application of this work in any democracy worldwide.

These are our operating principles and characteristics of conduct, and we are steadfastly committed to their constant exercise.

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